



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 11/4/2025

File #: 25-1323

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Supervisor Steve Madrone

Agenda Section: Time Certain Matter

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

1:30 P.M. - Consider Additional Mitigating Actions to Address Supervisor Bushnell's Conduct

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Consider removal as Board Chair; and
2. Consider removal from Boards, Commissions and Ad Hoc assignments; and
3. Consider referral of the matter to the Grand Jury to review Supervisor Bushnell's conduct and to provide recommendations on changes to be considered for the Board of Supervisor's Code of Conduct; and
4. Appoint two members of the Board of Supervisors to draft a correspondence to the Grand Jury; and
5. Take other actions as necessary.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Core Services/Other

Strategic Plan Category: 9999 - Core Services/Other

DISCUSSION:

Following completion of the complaint review and investigation process, and in accordance with the Board of Supervisors Code of Conduct and Ethics, the Board of Supervisors, prior to this item, considered censure against Supervisor Bushnell based on sustained findings demonstrating that she raised her voice, spoke in a hostile manner, and cursed at employees.

Such conduct undermines public trust, compromises the effective functioning of County government, and violates County ethical standards and workplace conduct policies. In light of these findings, the Board may consider further actions designed to restore public confidence, ensure a safe and respectful working environment, and uphold the standards of ethical governance expected by and owed to the residents of Humboldt County.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics requires Board members to maintain professional conduct, practice civility, refrain from abusive behavior, and support a positive workplace environment. Sustained violations are subject to public censure. Additionally, the county's Harassment and Abusive Conduct policies prohibits conduct that creates a hostile or adverse environment for employees.

Pursuant to Board policy and its established authority to manage internal governance, leadership assignments, and committee appointments, the Board may take action to remove the Chair assignment and rescind Boards, Commission and Ad Hoc appointments in order to protect the public interest and ensure lawful, ethical, and effective operations of county government.

In addition, Supervisor Bushnell has raised concerns regarding due process under the Code of Conduct framework. While the Board is confident in and committed to following the policies and procedures currently in place, it recognizes the importance of maintaining public confidence in the process. Accordingly, it is recommended that this matter be referred to the Grand Jury for independent review and to request evaluation of the Code of Conduct for potential changes or clarifications. It is recommended that two members of the Board of Supervisors be appointed to draft and transmit a formal request to the Grand Jury.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

General Fund

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is minimal cost, other than staff time, associated with these actions.

STAFFING IMPACT:

The conduct of Supervisor Bushnell impacts staff morale and workplace culture in a negative way, violating the Boards Code of Conduct and Harassment policies.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board of Supervisors could take no further action beyond censure or direct alternative corrective actions consistent with Board authority.

ATTACHMENTS:

Code of Conduct
Harassment Policy
Boards, Commissions and Ad Hoc Assignments

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: N/A
File No.: N//A