



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

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Approved 01/14/2026
Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 19th, 2025
5:30pm – 7:30pm
Regular Meeting

**Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms**
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 5:39 PM.

Present: Julie Howard (District 1), Dennis Webb (District 2), Sandy Brown (District 3), Julissa Espindola (District 4), Mark Correira (District 5), Scott Harway (City of Capitola), Rachel Dann (City of Santa Cruz), David Sanguinetti (City of Scotts Valley), Celeste DeWald (City of Watsonville)

Staff: Dave Reid (Director – OR3), Rebecca Hurley (Deputy Director – Parks), Juan Perez Alvarez (Administrative Services Manager – Parks), Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha (Admin Aide/COAB Liaison – Parks)

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

No modifications.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No oral communications.

4. ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA (item 8)

Motion to approve the consent agenda: Webb/**2nd**: Dann/All in favor.

Regular Agenda

5. COUNTY STAFF REPORT

Director Dave Reid reported that recruitment for the Senior Analyst position is ongoing and has been narrowed to five candidates. Final interviews are anticipated in early December, pending completion of County backend processes. He also noted that OpenGov has been procured for the grant database and County staff is actively working to set up the system. Deputy Director Hurley shared that the Board of Supervisors approved County project allocations for fiscal year 2025–26. Allocations for fiscal year 2026–27 will be considered during budget hearings in June.

COAB Questions

Commissioner Correira requested additional information regarding the free green waste program mentioned during the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 21st, 2025.

- Director Reid explained that the Fifth District Supervisor used discretionary funds to pilot Free Green Waste Days in the San Lorenzo Valley. Due to the program's success, other Supervisors proposed using Measure Q funds to pilot the program in additional districts. County staff are exploring a countywide voucher-based program as an alternative.

Commissioner Howard asked if the approved projects would be on the website.

- Director Reid noted that the goal is to have the projects visible, but it would be good to have a landing page for them.

Information Items

6. Review of Proposed Measure Q Grant Program..... page 3.

Director Dave Reid introduced the item and invited feedback on the proposed conceptual framework for the Measure Q Grant Program. He outlined a tentative timeline to finalize the framework by January, present it to the Board of Supervisors, and launch the grant application process in mid-January. The application period is anticipated to remain open for approximately six weeks. Following the application period, staff anticipate approximately eight weeks for review and screening, depending on the volume of applications received. A recommended project list would be brought to the COAB in May, along with a preliminary funding proposal, and possibly followed by a final funding proposal at a later date. The timeline between April and May remains flexible. Depending on the grant type, execution of grant agreements is expected to begin shortly after funding approvals, with grantee reporting required one year after funds are awarded. Deputy Director Rebecca Hurley highlighted several policy items for COAB consideration, including allowable indirect cost reimbursement, limitations on consecutive funding, and the use of reimbursement versus advance payments.

Public Comments

- Three members of the public provided comments.

COAB Discussion

Commissioner Howard asked County Staff for clarity on when the Measure Q Grant Program would be presented to the Board of Supervisors. She emphasized that any draft grant guidelines presented to the Board should also be publicly posted, noting that while offline discussions are helpful, materials should be available for public review.

The COAB agreed to review the proposed framework slide by slide to provide detailed feedback on each section:

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Commissioner Correira expressed support for starting with a one-year grant cycle, with the option to consider longer cycles in the future. He noted that the first year would help the County better understand program needs, workload, and potential shortcomings.

Commissioner Dewald supported an annual grant cycle, with one-year grant periods for Tier 1 projects and up to two-year grant periods for Tier 2 projects, noting that larger grants involve greater variability in implementation and factors outside the County's control.

- **Director Reid** clarified the distinction between the grant funding cycle and the grant performance period, noting that staff had considered a two-year funding cycle. He added that COAB discussion so far indicated a preference for annual funding, with flexibility to allow longer performance periods when appropriate.

Commissioner Howard asked about encumbrance and liquidation deadlines for funds.

- **Director Reid** responded that contract durations would align with grant performance periods and that internal accounting processes would allow funds to be carried across fiscal years, while remaining mindful of administrative burden. **Deputy Director Hurley** added that reporting timelines would be structured accordingly.

Commissioner Webb emphasized that Measure Q funds are intended to address environmental issues, which may arise quickly, and cautioned that a two-year application cycle could limit the County's ability to respond to urgent needs. He advocated for a shorter, annual grant cycle and noted that managing a high volume of projects would be a favorable challenge.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Chair Dann raised concerns about staff capacity when considering an annual grant cycle.

Commissioner Webb expressed support for the overall framework and noted that, given the lack of competition in the San Vicente area, it would be appropriate to remove a lower funding limit for San Vicente projects and avoid pausing the San Vicente set-aside, while supporting a pause for other tiers if needed.

Commissioner Brown stated that the proposed framework appears to be a reasonable approach for the first grant round and appropriate to test during the initial year.

Commissioner Correira asked whether allocating funds on a percentage basis had been considered, noting that unspent funds could accumulate interest over time and potentially support larger projects or additional mini-grants.

PROPOSED SCORING RUBRIC

Commissioner DeWald noted that Tier 2 criteria do not explicitly include multi-benefit or countywide impact, despite being referenced in the program description, and suggested incorporating multi-benefit into the scoring rubric, potentially under community benefit. She also observed that innovation appears to be weighted more heavily in Tier 1 than Tier 2.

Commissioner Correira requested clarification on the availability of bonus points, how Measure Q language is incorporated into the scoring rubric, and how alignment with Vision Plan priorities is evaluated.

- **Deputy Director Hurley** clarified that bonus points are capped at five. She explained that Measure Q language is incorporated into the scoring rubric through the project prioritization principles adopted in the Vision Plan, including match funding, multi-benefit projects, and benefits to disadvantaged communities. She noted that these criteria are included in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 scoring rubrics. She also outlined a multi-step evaluation process, consisting of third-party initial scoring, staff review, and final recommendations to COAB.

Commissioner Howard recommended awarding additional points to Tier 2 maintenance projects to ensure long-term project value and emphasized the importance of transparent scoring criteria that can be clearly explained to applicants.

Vice-Chair Espindola asked about feasibility and delivery timelines for mini-grants within a 12-month period.

- **Director Reid** responded that while grant durations would remain relatively short to ensure timely distribution of funds, the County would consider some flexibility in Tier 1 mini-grants performance periods.

Commissioner Brown noted that some organizations may need additional time to secure matching funds and supported allowing flexibility to negotiate longer grant terms when appropriate.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Howard asked if administrative costs are included in indirect costs. She suggested working with grantees on advance payment amounts, using quarterly progress reports instead of semi-annual reports, and including impact metrics in applications. She noted that lower indirect costs could earn higher points in the scoring rubric and encouraged staff to clearly communicate how the public can be involved in the grant program review process.

- **Director Reid** clarified that indirect costs refer to other costs not directly associated with the project (utilities, insurance, etc.).

Commissioner DeWald supported a 10–15% cap on indirect costs and allowing unused amounts to be applied as match. She emphasized the importance of separating progress reports from reimbursement requests and ensuring that indirect costs do not consume a large portion of grant funds. She also cautioned against negotiating advance payment amounts to avoid the perception of favoritism among grantees.

Commissioner Webb supported 10–15% cap on indirect costs and suggested incorporating competition in scoring for lower indirect costs.

Commissioner Correira suggested a 10% cap on indirect costs to encourage competition. He expressed concern about advancing large amounts of funding, noting that projects could encounter issues. He also recommended requiring progress reports before additional reimbursements and asked what the County would do in the case that multiple applications were received from one agency.

- **Director Reid** stated that each application would need to be evaluated on its own merits. He noted that concerns regarding multiple applications from the same organization would be addressed if and when such a situation arises, emphasizing that this is a new process and the County will be learning and adjusting as the program is implemented.

Chair Dann appreciated the attention given to how the public will perceive grant spending. She supported lower advance amounts for larger grants and noted that the applicability of prevailing wage should be clearly indicated on the County's website. She agreed that progress reports are important but emphasized that the required reporting frequency should not place an undue burden on grantees. She also recommended consistent branding for completed projects and encouraged public outreach by both the County and grantees to ensure transparency in how tax dollars are being spent.

Summarized Feedback from COAB

- Support for allowing indirect costs up to 15 percent. Tier 1 would not get bonus points for lower indirect costs, but Tier 2 would be eligible.
- Agreement to pause further decisions regarding funding limitations and grant cycles until the first grant cycle is complete.
- Advance payments are limited to a maximum of 25 percent per County policy. Tier 1 grantees may request up to 25%, while Tier 2 grantees may request up to 15% with justification.

Action Items

7. **Discuss and approve a special meeting on January 14th, 2026**..... Page 6.

Motion to approve special meeting: Brown/2nd: Espindola/All in favor.

Consent Agenda

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Board Member may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda. Members of the public must request that a Board Member pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

8. **Approve minutes from October 8th, 2025**..... page 5.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. None

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, February 18th, 2025

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