



Mental Health Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR  
November 3, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Mental Health Commission

Submitted by: Dr. Margaret Fine, Chairperson, Mental Health Commission

Subject: Reappointment of Andrea Prichett and Edward Opton to the Mental Health Commission

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution approving the re-appoint Andrea Prichett to the Mental Health Commission, as representative of the general public interest category, for a second-three-year term beginning November 4, 2022 and ending November 3, 2025. And re-appoint Edward Opton as a representative of the general public interest category, for his first term ending January 21, 2023 and his second-term beginning January 22, 2023 to January 21, 2026.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Mental Health Commission is authorized to be composed of thirteen members. However, there are presently four vacancies on the Commission. These vacancies impair the Commission's ability to adequately review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs.

Approval of the recommended action will keep 2 two positions filled and allow the Commission to move one step closer to having a full and diverse complement of commissioners to review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs.

BACKGROUND

California State law requires that appointments to the Mental Health Commission meet specific categories, who may serve up to nine years consecutively. The general public interest category may include anyone who has an interest in and some knowledge of mental health services. The special public interest category includes direct consumers of public mental health services and family members of consumers, which together must constitute at least fifty percent or seven of the commission seats. Direct

consumers and family members shall each constitute at least 20% of the commission membership. Two members shall be residents of the City of Albany with at least one of these seats filled by a direct consumer or family member.

Currently, the Mental Health Commission consists of the following openings: two Berkeley Special Public Interest Commissioners; two Berkeley General Public Interest Commissioners; one Albany General Special Interest Commissioner; and one Mayoral appointee.

At its August 23, 2022 special commission meeting, the Mental Health Commission interviewed Andrea Prichett who is a teacher with the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD), a board member of the Berkeley Flea Market, and a police accountability advocate. Ms. Prichett is a founder and leader for more than 32 years of Berkeley Copwatch, a nonprofit organization “dedicated to monitoring the police and non-violently asserting our rights”.

Ms. Prichett has served on the Mental Health Commission for 3 years. One of her main focuses has been on people living with mental illness and substance use issues and disorders and the interactions with law enforcement, as well as non-police crisis response service to distressed people in the community. She has spoken on and shown videos of police encounters with people living with mental illness to the Mental Health Commission to illustrate this work. In addition, another of her main focuses is diversion of people with mental illness and substance use issues and disorders away from policing and further avoiding involuntary commitment and transfer to the county psychiatric hospital or criminal legal involvement and incarceration at the county jail. In July 2022, Ms. Prichett was one of 6 Commissioners to visit the crisis stabilization center, Amber House, located in Oakland. Amber House provides voluntary 23-hour emergency crisis stabilization services (1<sup>st</sup> floor) and a crisis residential home (2<sup>nd</sup> floor).

On August 23, 2022 the Mental Health Commission passed the following motion:

Re-Appoint Andrea Prichett to the Mental Health Commission

M/S/C (Opton, Turner) Make a motion to re-nominate

PASSED

Ayes: Escarcega, Fine, Jones, Opton, Kimber- Smith, Turner; Noes: None; Abstentions: Prichett; Absent: Taplin

At its August 23, 2022 special commission meeting, the Mental Health Commission interviewed Edward Opton for the General Public Interest seat. Mr. Opton is a retired attorney and has a Ph.D in clinical psychology and has volunteered at the National Center for Youth Law to improve mental health treatment for children in foster care. Mr. Opton has also been active in the community working on numerous issues that affect the community. Mr. Opton has served on the Mental Health Commission for 3 years. One of his focuses has been people living with mental illness and substance use issues and disorders and the intersection with law enforcement, the criminal legal system, and

incarceration systems in Berkeley and Alameda County, as well as non-police crisis response service to people in crisis in the community. In addition, he has focused on diversion of people with mental illness and substance use issues and disorders away from policing and further avoiding involuntary commitment and transfer to the county psychiatric hospital or criminal legal involvement and incarceration at the county jail. In June 2022, he was one of 4 Commissioners to visit the crisis stabilization center, Amber House, located in Oakland. Mr. Opton further served as the Mental Health Commission appointee to the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force.

On August 23, 2022 the Mental Health Commission passed the following motion:

Re-Appoint Edward Opton to the Mental Health Commission

M/S/C (Kimber-Smith, Prichett) Make a motion for the re-appointment of Ned (Edward Opton)

PASSED

Ayes: Escarcega, Fine, Jones, Prichett, Kimber- Smith, Turner; Noes: None;

Abstentions: Opton; Absent: Taplin

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the recommended action will allow the Mental Health Commission to move one step closer to having a full and diverse complement of commissioners to review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

#### CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position

#### CONTACT PERSON

Jamie Works-Wright, Commission Secretary, (510) 981-7721

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RE-APPOINTMENT OF ANDREA PRICHETT AND EDWARD OPTON TO THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST

WHEREAS, membership of the Mental Health Commission is composed of thirteen appointments by the City Council as a whole, including one appointment by the Mayor (*or designee*), six special public interest appointments, two appointments of residents of Albany (*one of which shall be a representative of the special public interest category*), and four general public interest appointments; and

WHEREAS, with the ongoing implementation of the Mental Health Services Act, the City of Berkeley will need to have a full complement of diverse appointees to the Commission to review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs and to fulfill its mandate; and

WHEREAS, the Mental Health Commission, at its August 23, 2022 meeting recommended the re-appointment of Andrea Prichett and Edward Opton to the Mental Health Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council re-appoint Andrea Prichett to the Mental Health Commission, as representative of the general public interest category, for a three-year term beginning November 4, 2022 and ending November 3, 2025. And re-appoint Edward Opton as a representative of the general public interest category, for his first term ending January 21, 2023 and his second-term beginning January 22, 2023 to January 21, 2026.