



Mental Health Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR
June 27, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Mental Health Commission
 Submitted by: Paul Kealoha-Blake, Mental Health Commission Chair
 Subject: Appointments of Margaret Fine and Vylma Ortiz to the Mental Health Commission

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the appointments of Margaret Fine and Vylma Ortiz to the Mental Health Commission, as representatives of the General Public Interest categories, for a three year term beginning June 28, 2017 and ending June 27, 2020.

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 five 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 fill two of the vacancies, 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 nine 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.

At its April 27, 2017 meeting, the Mental Health Commission interviewed Margaret Fine who is a Public Interest Lawyer. In the 1990's as a legal aid attorney in Baltimore MD., Ms. Fine accessed mental health and other related-government systems for over 250 individuals she represented who were living with HIV and AIDS. Additionally, while working in Lancaster, Pennsylvania Ms. Fine served mainly women suffering from domestic violence by representing them in obtaining restraining orders from their abusers. As a Deputy Attorney in Philadelphia, Ms. Fine also previously served African American children and youth involved with the Child Welfare System. Many of the clients Ms. Fine represented were in need of mental health services and supports. Ms. Fine grew up in Berkeley and is an individual who has a mental health condition in remission. In order to help individuals in need, Ms. Fine is very interested in learning more about the public healthcare and mental health systems in the City of Berkeley and Alameda County. The Commission Secretary has determined that Ms. Fine is eligible for one of the available Berkeley General Public Interest Seats on the Mental Health Commission.

The Mental Health Commission passed the following motion at the April 27, 2017 meeting:

M/S/C (Marasovic, Posey) Recommend the nomination of Margaret Fine to the Mental Health Commission.

Ayes: Cheema, Heda, Kealoha-Blake, King, Marasovic, Posey **Noes:** None;
Abstentions: None; **Absent:** Davila, Michel

At its April 27, 2017 meeting, the Mental Health Commission interviewed Vylma Ortiz who is a licensed attorney that volunteers with the National Lawyers Guild and occasionally works with private clients. She is also a volunteer radio producer and host for 94.1 KPFA community radio. Ms. Ortiz has had an interest in mental health issues ever since she was a Deputy Public Defender in San Jose in the late 1990's, when she noticed that of all the problems that her clients faced while in the criminal justice system, having mental health issues made the situation all the more intractable. The Commission Secretary has determined that Ms. Ortiz is eligible for one of the available Berkeley General Public Interest Seats on the Mental Health Commission.

The Mental Health Commission passed the following motion at the April 27, 2017 meeting:

M/S/C (Marasovic, Posey) Recommend the nomination of Vylma Ortiz to the Mental Health Commission.

Ayes: Cheema, Heda, Kealoha-Blake, King, Marasovic, Posey **Noes:** None;
Abstentions: None; **Absent:** Davila, Michel

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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

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 concurs with the content and recommendations of the Commission's Report.

CONTACT PERSON

Karen Klatt, Commission Secretary, Health, Housing & Community Services, 981-7644

Attachments:

1: Resolution

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

APPOINTMENTS OF MARGARET FINE AND VYLMA ORTIZ TO THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION AS REPRESENTATIVES 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 April 27, 2017 meeting, recommended the appointments of Margaret Fine and Vylma Ortiz to the Mental Health Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley appoints Margaret Fine and Vylma Ortiz to the Mental Health Commission as representatives of the General Public Interest categories, for three year terms ending on June 27, 2020.