

Orientation: Contra Costa Commission for Women and Girls

A basic level-setting presentation to the Women and Girls Commission — its history, authority, structure, responsibilities, and how to serve as an effective community ambassador.

Commissioners were required to read Bylaws, Advisory Body Handbook, and 3 related meeting memos from the County in advance. This is to reinforce that action.

Presented by Marilyn Cachola Lucey, Chair

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

ADVISORY COMMISSION



PURPOSE (Bylaws, Article II)

The Commission shall provide information and advice to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and other entities, as necessary, relating to the health and welfare of women and girls in the county.

- Areas of focus will include, but are not limited to,
 - socio-economic conditions,
 - workplace issues,
 - social treatment of gender issues, and
 - health and safety for women and girls.

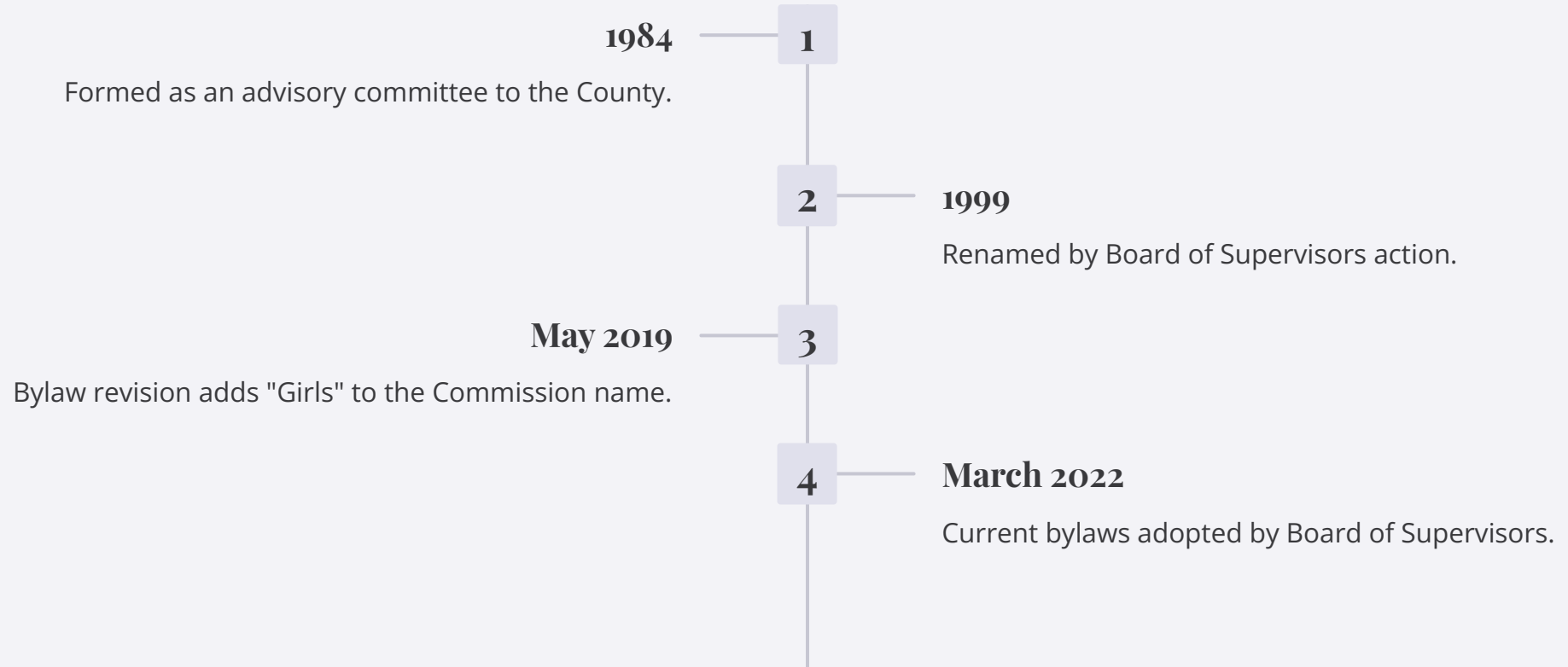
Advisory Body Handbook

Page 6: **Advisory bodies should seek to fulfill the goals and objectives for which they were created.**

Page 8: Every year the **Board of Supervisors will review and evaluate** one-third of the advisory bodies that it has established. Therefore, each individual advisory body will be reviewed once every three years. The sunset review enables the Board of Supervisors to evaluate the purpose, scope, and **effectiveness of each body**, review any legislative or policy changes that may have occurred, **and consider proposed changes** to areas such as the advisory body's mandate, membership, or long-term goals.



Commission Establishment





Authority & Governance Hierarchy

Bylaws are the primary rulebook governing Commission operations, structure, and conduct.

Hierarchy of authority:

Brown Act

County Advisory Body Policies

Bylaws

Roberts Rules of Order

Membership, Appointment & Eligibility

Maximum Size

Up to **15 members** plus one Alternate At-Large member. The Alternate is non-voting except when filling in for an absent At-Large member. (Bylaws, Article III, Section 1)

Appointment Process

District and At-Large Members are appointed by the **County Board of Supervisors**. Terms are fixed and staggered; incumbents are eligible for successive terms. (Bylaws, Article III, Section 3)

Eligibility Requirements

Members must be **at least 18 years of age** and work and/or reside in Contra Costa County. Membership should broadly represent community diversity. (Bylaws, Article III, Section 1)

The Membership Committee handles recruitment, interviews applicants, and recommends candidates for appointment. (Bylaws, Article III, Section 5)

Commissioner Responsibilities

→ Attend & Participate

- Attend Commission meetings
- **Serve on at least one standing and/or special committee annually**
- Actively engage in Commission work

(Bylaws, Article III, Section 2)

→ Be an Ambassador

- "Be an ambassador and **proponent of the Commission...**"
- Represent women and girls in your district
- Bring community voice into Commission deliberations

(Bylaws, Article III, Section 2)

→ Comply with County Policy

- Comply with Contra Costa County policy for Board Appointees concerning Conflict of Interest and Open Meetings
- **3 trainings within 3 months of appointment**

(Bylaws, Article III, Section 2)

**"The officers of the Commission shall comprise the Executive Committee"
— including a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. (Bylaws, Article IV)**



Chair

- Conducts meetings
- Develops agendas
- Serves as official spokesperson
- Prepares annual reports for the Board of Supervisors
- Ensures trainings are completed



Vice-Chair

- Maintain Commission's historical record
- Manage time at meetings
- Supports the Chair
- Assumes all obligations and authority of the Chair in their absence



Treasurer

- Creates annual budget
- Reports monthly on Commission's financial activity
- Coordinates deposits and disbursements through the County Administrator's Office into the County Treasury



Secretary

- Takes minutes
- Posts agendas and minutes
- Maintains attendance records
- Manages the distribution lists
- Monitors Commission email/mailbox

Committees: Structure & Purpose (Bylaws, Article VI)

Legislative

"...recommend legislative solutions..." (Article II, Purpose)

Identifies and recommends legislative priorities, monitors legislative agendas, serves as liaison on policy initiatives, and prepares informational materials.

Membership

"...champion opportunities..." (Article II, Purpose)

Nominates officers, interviews and recommends applicants, onboards new members, recommends membership strategies, and monitors attendance and roster.

Public Relations

"...increase awareness..."

"...celebrate achievements..." (Article II, Purpose)

Links the public to the Commission; maintains social media, prepares newsletters, manages subscriptions, issues press releases, and maintains the website and logo.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE: Formed by the Chair or majority for a specific purpose; time-limited and cease to exist after the designated task is complete.

Committees consist of a MINIMUM OF 2 and a MAXIMUM OF 4 MEMBERS unless otherwise approved by the Chair.

Committee chairs provide written monthly activity reports; only the full Commission may act on committee recommendations. (Bylaws, Article VI)

Meetings, Noticing & Quorum

Regular Meetings

Held at **7:00 pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month.**

Agendas must be publicly noticed on the Commission webpage and at the Clerk of the Board in Martinez **at least 96 hours prior.**

(Bylaws, Article V, Section 1)

Special Meetings

Called by the Chair; must be noticed **at least 24 hours prior**, specifying time, date, place, and purpose.

(Bylaws, Article V, Section 2)

Quorum & Voting

"A quorum is one Member more than one-half of the authorized Members."

Proxy voting is not permitted. Conflict-of-interest disclosure and recusal are required where impartiality could be constrained.

(Bylaws, Article V, Section 3)

Meeting Rules

Only discuss what is on the agenda

Move, then Second, then Discuss, then Vote

Receive recognition from the Chair before speaking

Time limits and turns per speaker may employed for meeting management and equitable participation

Rules of discussion or debate may be employed for decorum

The Brown Act & Open Government

California's Brown Act is the statewide open-meetings framework for local agency legislative bodies and advisory bodies. Its core principle: local public bodies conduct **"the people's business,"** and their actions and deliberations must be conducted openly.

"All meetings of the Commission and... committees shall comply with the Brown Act..." (Bylaws, Article V, Section 4)

In day-to-day practice, Brown Act compliance affects how agendas are posted, how the work of the body is conducted through formal actions, and how public participation is facilitated.



Remote Participation & Accommodations

Brown Act Compliance

Remote/teleconference attendance carries technical noticing and accessibility requirements under the Brown Act. The Legislature has periodically authorized time-limited alternative teleconferencing rules with specified noticing and public-commenting requirements.

ADA Accommodations

Public bodies use an ADA-style request process: provide advance notice (commonly 48 hours) to the clerk/staff contact describing the accommodation needed. Agencies make "reasonable efforts to accommodate persons with disabilities."

Commissioner Takeaway

Remote attendance and accommodations are governed by (1) the Commission's Brown Act compliance obligation and (2) County accommodation practices administered through staff support and Clerk processes.

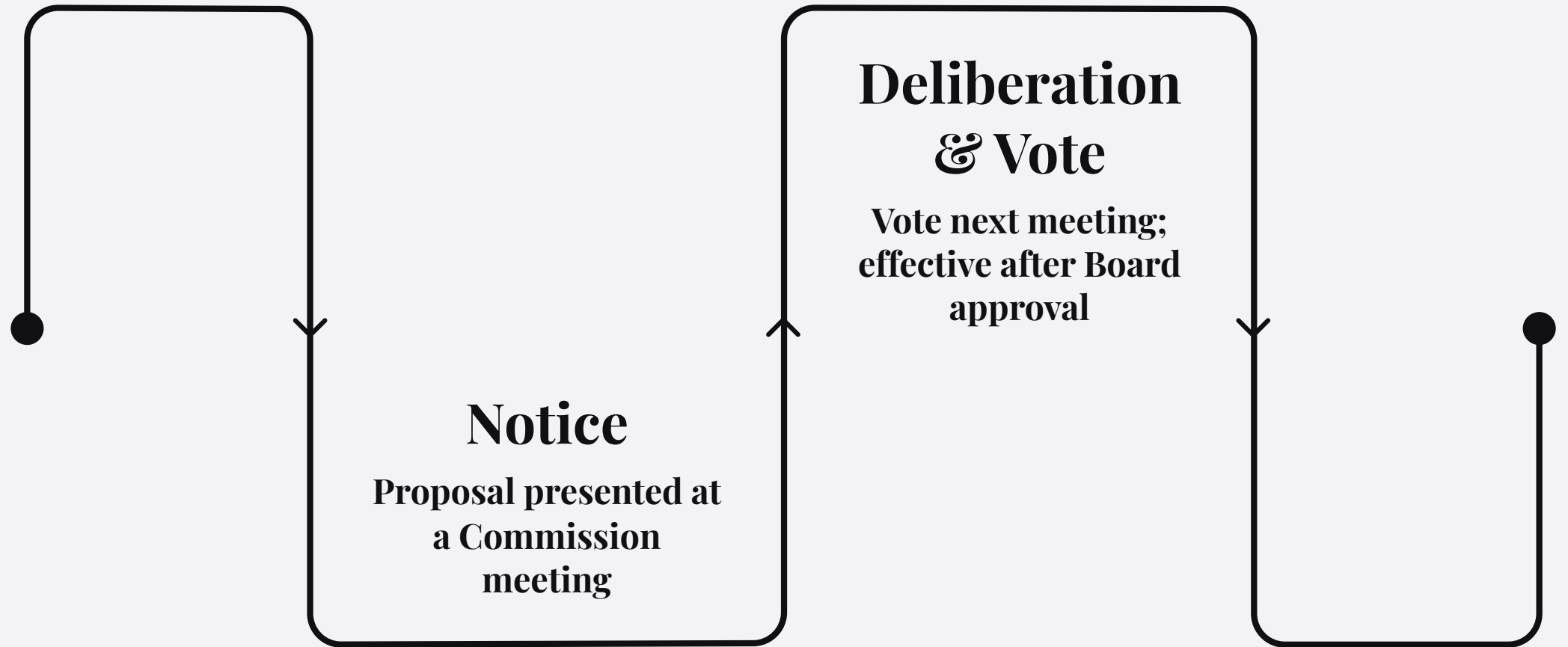
CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

If a Commissioner is in a position to materially benefit from a decision made by the Commission, they are required to disclose and abstain or recuse themselves from the decision action.

(Bylaws, Article V, Section 3)



Amending the Bylaws



This "notice + deliberation" design reduces surprise changes and supports transparent governance. Amendments are recommended by the Commission and become effective only upon approval by the Board of Supervisors. (Bylaws, Article VIII)

Reporting Community Voice to the Board (Activity)

The Chair holds an annual reporting responsibility to the Board of Supervisors. (Bylaws, Article IV, Section 3)

Commissioners contribute to that pipeline by elevating community voice effectively.



Aggregate & Pattern-Based

Present themes and trends — not isolated anecdotes.



Grounded in Process

Explain how you heard it: listening sessions, partner meetings, targeted outreach.



Connected to Real Impacts

Show what the issue causes for women and girls in real life.



Actionable

Recommend what the County can do — policy, partnerships, pilots, funding priorities.

 **Goal: Elevate the needs, voices, and priorities of the women and girls in our community.**

Being an Effective Ambassador

External Duty

Listen, connect, and represent women and girls across your district.

Build relationships with community organizations, attend partner meetings, and **surface issues that may not reach formal channels.** (Bylaws, Article III, Section 2)

Internal Duty

Translate community voice into Commission deliberations and formal communications to the Board of Supervisors.

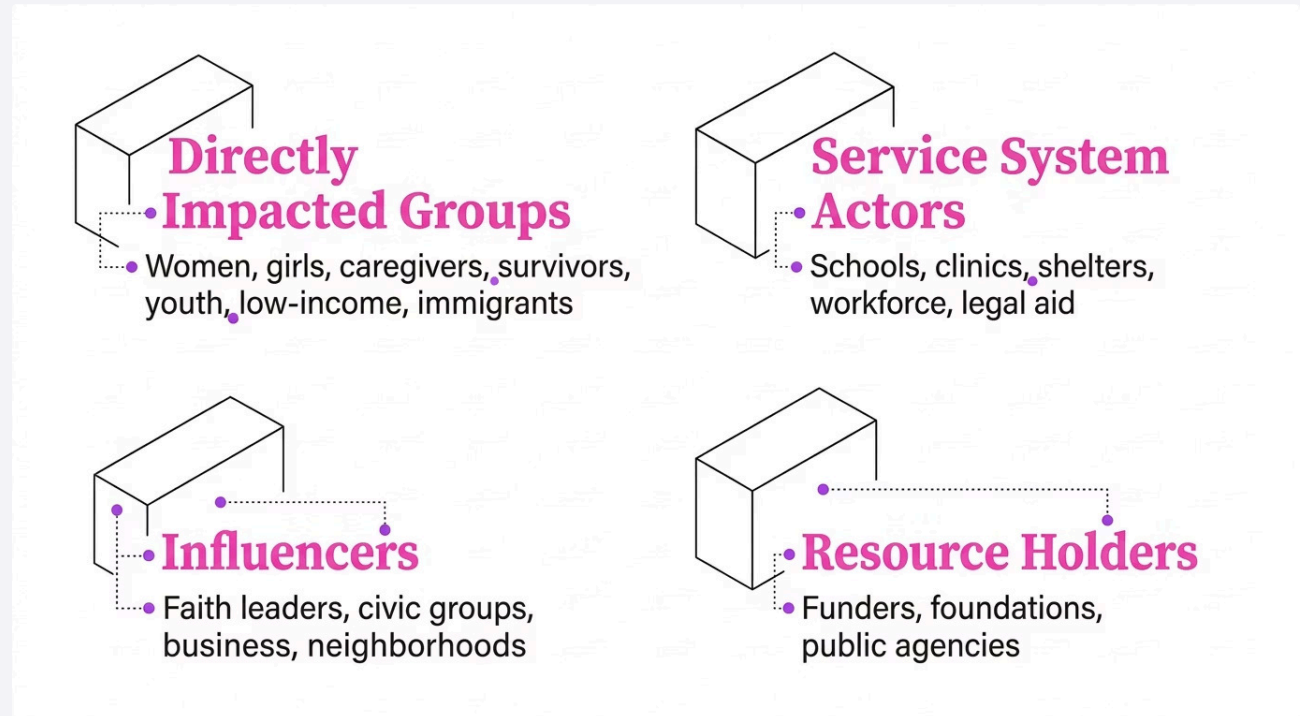
District members must communicate regularly and **meet quarterly** with their **appointing Supervisor.** (Bylaws, Article III, Section 2)

"Be an ambassador and proponent of the Commission..." (Bylaws, Article III, Section 2)

Stakeholder Engagement & Mapping (Activity)

Stakeholders are people or organizations who can affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity.

Stakeholder engagement is the **structured** practice of building **two-way relationships** so Commission recommendations are **community-informed**, implementable, and equity-centered.



Listening to Women & Girls in Your District (Activity)



Attend Partner Meetings

Join existing community meetings **hosted by trusted organizations** to hear issues in authentic settings.

Confidential Channels

Use confidential listening channels when **safety** is a concern — for example, with survivors of violence.

Targeted Outreach

Reach underrepresented groups that may not show up to formal meetings through **intentional, culturally responsive outreach**.

Before something comes forward to the commission, ASK...

1

How does this connect to our purpose?

Every item we take up should have a **clear, articulable connection to the commission's core mission**. If we can't explain that connection, it may not belong on our agenda.

2

Who does it impact?

Understanding who is affected — and how — helps us make decisions that are grounded in **real consequences for real people**, not just abstract principles.

3

What is the goal?

What outcome are we trying to achieve? Being **explicit about the goal** helps us evaluate whether our decisions are actually moving us toward it.

When we can answer all three questions clearly, we're ready to move forward. When we can't, that's a signal to pause and get clearer before proceeding.

Our Commitment

We apply the **same lens** to every topic that comes before us. **No exceptions** based on relationships, preferences, or political considerations. The same standard, **every time**.

When we ask them consistently, we build a **track record** of fairness that the communities we serve can **trust**.

For Each Topic, We Ask:

1. Who benefits?

Who stands to gain from this decision?

2. Who might be left out? Whose voice is missing? Who is not at the table?

Are there people or groups whose needs aren't represented?

3. What barriers exist?

What structural, practical, or systemic obstacles might prevent people from benefiting equally?



“
What would they say we focus on?
Imagine someone new to us, who doesn't know our history and our purpose, has attended the last few months of meetings. Does what that outside observer saw match our stated purpose?
”

“
What do we spend the most time on?
Where does the majority of our meeting time actually go? What topics, questions, or dynamics are the focus of our energy and attention?
”

📄 **The key question:** If there's a gap between how we spend our time and what we say we're here to do — that gap is worth closing.

Systemic Issues : Inform and Listen, Never Endorse or Campaign

HR 1 - Substantial Funding Cuts

H.R. 1 (enacted July 2025) imposes significant, structural cuts to federal funding for health and food assistance programs, which California counties estimate will create up to **\$9.5 billion per year in new costs and lost revenue**. The law shifts these costs from the federal government to state and local governments, threatening to, or requiring counties to, cut funding for public hospitals, mental health services, and social services. **(National Association of Counties)** Counties are being forced to consider reducing services or using local tax dollars to fund these previously federally supported programs. This could impact other essential county services like public safety and homelessness services. **(California Budget Policy Center)**

Measure B - Generate revenue to make up the gap

To help Contra Costa County address cuts in federal funding; support local services such as health care, supplemental food assistance, and other general county services; shall Contra Costa County adopt a five-eighths of one cent (0.625%) temporary general sales tax for 5 years, **providing an estimated \$150,000,000 annually**, and subject to annual audits? **(Contra Costa County)**

Transit - Public system financial issues

Contra Costa County faces significant transit impacts due to Bay Area-wide financial deficits, including potential **BART service cuts** (60-minute frequencies, reduced weekend service) and major AC Transit route changes. Post-pandemic low ridership, high operating costs, and expiring pandemic aid threaten severe cuts, prompting a proposed November 2026 sales tax measure to save services. **(California Transit Association)**