



AGENCY: City Council
MEETING DATE: September 26, 2022
DEPARTMENT: Administration
PRESENTED BY: P. Ducey, City Manager
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AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TITLE:

Receive Report and Consider Adoption of City Council Resolution Approving Anti-Bullying Policy

ISSUE:

The City of Fort Bragg has community members and activists attack City employees in an aggressive and personal way, especially in the past four years. These hostile attacks are both verbal at public meetings as well as in written public comments, using demeaning language and vitriolic attacks that have led to physical, mental, and emotional challenges for targeted employees. Some employees have resigned rather than endure the personal attacks. Others continue to perform their responsibilities while working in an atmosphere of chaos and intimidation. It's clear that the emotional toll is overwhelming to all City staff, not just those targeted by bullies. Besides the emotional cost, bullying raises serious concerns for the physical safety of both City employees and residents alike.

The nexus between bullying and violence is clearly established. The vast majority of school shootings and workplace violence have their origin in bullying. Furthermore, occupations that require daily public interaction, such as government workers, have the highest workplace violence. The threat of violence resulting from bullying creates a need for an Anti-Bullying Policy that will ensure a safe workplace free of violence. The City cannot wait for such an incident before taking action to prevent such a horrible event.

The purpose of this policy is to communicate to all employees, including supervisors, managers, and executives that the City of Fort Bragg will not *in any instance* tolerate bullying behavior.

ANALYSIS:

A recent study from the Workplace Bullying Institute showed that the "Prevalence of bullying is up 57 percent from 2017, and nearly 60 million Americans have been affected by bullying."

This Anti-Bullying Policy defines workplace bullying as the following:

Workplace bullying is intentional behavior by any employee, supervisor, elected official, member of the public, vendor, non-employee, contractor, or appointed official aimed at an individual employee or group of employees that a reasonable person would find hostile, intimidating, offensive, or intended to create an abusive work environment whether verbal, written or electronic.

The City has seen up close that workplace bullying has many repercussions. It destroys morale, erodes trust, cripples initiative, and results in loss of workplace productivity. The health implications can include depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and gastrointestinal disorders, often leading to absenteeism and resignations. More importantly, we can never be sure how an employee will react to ongoing harassment, including hurting themselves or someone else, including the bully. This policy will prohibit workplace bullying by and against city employees, applicants for employment, and others in the workplace environment, including members of the public.

The City of Fort Bragg is committed at all levels of the organization to creating an environment free from bullying and workplace violence. These efforts to establish a cohesive policy along with a report form will make it possible to track and report instances of bullying.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the Anti-Bullying policy and Incident Report Form.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Provide alternative direction to staff regarding policy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACT:

None.

CONSISTENCY:

None.

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:

If approved List implementation actions necessary and anticipated timeframes for completion.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Anti-Bullying Policy
2. Incident Reporting Form
3. Resolution

NOTIFICATION:

None.