COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 3/3/2026

File #: 26-167

To: Board of Supervisors

From: County Administrative Office

Agenda Section: Departmental

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:
Clarification of Process for Pending and New Complaints During Grand Jury Review of the Board's Code of Conduct

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Provide direction to staff regarding how to proceed with pending complaints and any new complaints that may arise while the Grand Jury is reviewing the Board's current Code of Conduct.

STRATEGIC PLAN:
This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Core Services/Other
Strategic Plan Category: 9999 - Core Services/Other

DISCUSSION:
The Board of Supervisors previously adopted a Code of Conduct to establish standards of behavior, expectations for professional conduct, and a framework for addressing concerns regarding Board member actions.

Subsequently, questions were raised regarding the fairness and implementation of certain provisions of the Code. On November 4, 2025, the Board directed staff to refer the policy to the Civil Grand Jury for review and to request recommendations regarding potential amendments for future Board consideration.

In light of the pending Grand Jury review and the concerns raised about procedural fairness, staff is seeking direction on how to proceed with complaint review processes under the current Code until additional clarity is provided. The current Grand Jury term concludes at the end of the fiscal year.

At present, there is no clear direction regarding how to proceed with complaints that have been received but not finalized, nor is there guidance on how to address any new complaints that may be submitted during the review period. Staff also seeks direction on whether any interim procedures should govern complaint intake, evaluation, and processing while awaiting the Grand Jury's response.

Absent clear direction from the Board, staff lacks the authority and guidance necessary to ensure that complaints are handled in a consistent, equitable, and legally defensible manner.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

General Fund

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:
There is minimal expense associated with the processing and review of complaints other than staff time which has been included in the FY 2025-26 budget. Any investigations conducted, will impact the Board of Supervisors budget. Those impacts are currently unknown.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impact:
See above.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
None

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
Board discretion

ATTACHMENTS:
Code of Conduct

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:
Meeting of: 11/4/25
File No.: 25-1323