



Consent Item 12

TO: Ava Community Energy Board of Directors

FROM: Annie Henderson, Chief Customer Officer

SUBJECT: Sponsorship Agreement with the Oakland Roots Sports Club for the 2024 season of the Roots and Soul soccer teams

DATE: December 20, 2023

Recommendation

Approve a Resolution authorizing the CEO to negotiate and execute a Sponsorship Agreement with the Oakland Roots Sports Club (“Oakland Roots SC”) for the 2024 season of the Roots and Soul. The \$196,000 sponsorship would make Ava Community Energy (Ava) the exclusive Clean Energy Partner of both teams, and the benefits include back of jersey logo placement for both teams, field signage, on-site activation space, and broadcast and streaming commercial spots.

Background and Discussion

Oakland Roots is the first purpose-driven professional sports team in the United States. Their United Soccer League (USL) team is one of the fastest-growing brands in American sports, and they are one of the only remaining professional sports teams in Ava’s service territory. 2023 marked the inaugural USL-W season for the club’s affiliated women’s soccer team, Oakland Soul.

Oakland Roots SC partnerships combine sponsorship opportunities with community impact, creative storytelling, player integration, and employee engagement. Ava is a

founding partner of the Roots, sponsoring the team since 2018, and was also a foundational sponsor of the Oakland Soul in their first and only season (2023).

Ava had a 3-year Partnership Agreement with the Roots, which ran through the 2023 season, and a 2024 Agreement would begin as that term concludes. The past Sponsorship provided significant brand and program promotional opportunities for Ava (as East Bay Community Energy). Our partnership has helped Ava communicate with a diverse local fan-base and have our brand associated with a fun, popular form of community entertainment. Ava's marketing team activated an informational booth at most home games to connect with thousands of attendees at their (usually) sold-out home matches and received digital promotions, streaming television advertising, and other promotional benefits, as described in the Staff Memo presented to the Board in May 2021.

In addition to the benefit of on-site activation presence, this 2024 sponsorship package would make Ava the exclusive Clean Energy Partner of both Roots and Soul, would place the full Ava logo on the back of team jerseys (including on their merchandise jerseys), provide on field signage, and allocate "clock wraps" and commercial spots during streamed games. Additional benefits include social media posts, a press release, and game tickets.

Ava's previous three years of sponsorship of the Roots were at the \$125,000 per year level, and our sponsorship of the Soul in 2023 was \$10,000. The primary reasons for the increase in sponsorship cost for 2024 include the back-of-jersey logo placement (not a previous benefit for Ava), exclusivity as the clean energy partner, and due to their ongoing growth as a brand - as reflected in record levels of fan attendance at games, high levels of merchandise sales, ongoing social media follower growth, and overall valuation as a franchise. The Oakland Soul was recently awarded New Organization of the year by the USL-W soccer league and the USL-W League Fans' Choice Award for "Best Kit".

Ava staff were able to compare this partnership deal with other professional sports sponsorships executed by public agencies including Sacramento Municipal Utility District (with Sacramento Kings, Sacramento River Cats, and Sacramento Republic FC), San Diego Community Power (with San Diego Padres, San Diego Wave FC, and San Diego Loyal SC), and San Jose Clean Energy (with San Jose Earthquakes) to ensure that Ava's sponsorship benefits are commensurate with cost and with comparable sponsorships executed by peer agencies.

Fiscal Impact

The recommended partnership level is \$196,000 (\$150,000 for Roots and \$46,000 for Soul), and the FY2023-24 budget includes \$505,000 for major sponsorships. Amounts paid out to date and expected through the end of the fiscal year, inclusive of this updated sponsorship, will fall within this budget.

Committee Recommendation

This item was scheduled to be presented to the Marketing, Regulatory, and Legislative committee meeting on December 15th, 2023, but the meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum.

Attachments

- A. Resolution of the Board of Directors Delegating Authority to the CEO to Negotiate and Execute a Sponsorship Agreement with the Oakland Roots Sports Club for the 2024 Season of the Roots and Soul Soccer Teams

RESOLUTION NO. R-2023-xx

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OF AVA COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO THE CEO TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE OAKLAND ROOTS SPORTS CLUB FOR THE 2024 SEASON OF THE ROOTS AND SOUL SOCCER TEAMS

WHEREAS The Ava Community Energy Authority (“Ava”) was formed as a community choice aggregation agency (“CCA”) on December 1, 2016, Under the Joint Exercise of Power Act, California Government Code sections 6500 *et seq.*, among the County of Alameda, and the Cities of Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Piedmont, Oakland, San Leandro, and Union City to study, promote, develop, conduct, operate, and manage energy-related climate change programs in all of the member jurisdictions. The cities of Newark and Pleasanton, located in Alameda County, along with the City of Tracy, located in San Joaquin County, were added as members of Ava and parties to the JPA in March of 2020. The city of Stockton, located in San Joaquin County was added as a member of Ava and party to the JPA in September of 2022. The city of Lathrop, located in San Joaquin County, was added as a member to Ava and party to the JPA in October of 2023. On October 24, 2023, the Authority legally adopted the name Ava Community Energy Authority, where it had previously used the name East Bay Community Energy Authority since its inception.

WHEREAS Ava has sponsored the Oakland Roots Sports Club’s soccer team The Roots, since its inception in 2018; and

WHEREAS Ava has sponsored the Oakland Soul soccer team, since its inception in 2023; and

WHEREAS sponsorship of local events, sports, the arts, and entertainment is an ongoing component of Ava’s marketing and branding efforts to increase public awareness about Ava’s programs and services.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF AVA COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Board of Directors hereby authorizes the CEO to negotiate and execute a Sponsorship Agreement with Oakland Roots Sports Club in the amount of \$196,000 (\$150,000 for the Roots and \$46,000 for the Soul), for the 2024 season of the Roots and Soul soccer teams, and the Agreement will be approved as to form by General Counsel.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 20th day of December, 2023.

Elisa Márquez, Chair

ATTEST:

Adrian Bankhead, Clerk of the Board