



Consent Item 6

To:	Ava Community Energy Authority
From:	Dan Lieberman, Director of Marketing
Subject:	Approving a Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Sponsorship Agreement with the Oakland Roots Sports Club for the 2025 season of the Roots and Soul soccer teams
Date:	January 15, 2025

Summary/Recommendation

Staff recommends authorizing the CEO to negotiate and execute a Sponsorship Agreement with the Oakland Roots Sports Club ("Oakland Roots SC") for the 2025 season of the Roots and Soul because our ongoing partnership has provided significant marketing and brand value.

Financial Impact

\$175,000 total for the 2025 season of the Roots (\$141,000) and Soul (\$34,000) teams. Note that Ava's sponsorship of these teams in 2024 totaled \$194,000. Funds have been allocated in the current FY budget for this level of sponsorship.

Analysis and Context (with deadlines as applicable)

Oakland Roots SC is the first purpose-driven professional sports team in the United States. Their United Soccer League (USL) men's 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, and employee engagement. Ava is a founding partner of the Roots, sponsoring the team since 2018, and similarly was a foundational sponsor of the Oakland Soul, sponsoring them since their inaugural season (2023).

Ava's past sponsorship provided significant brand and program promotional opportunities for Ava. Our partnership has helped Ava communicate with a diverse local fan-base and have our brand associated with a fun and popular form of community entertainment. Ava's marketing team activated an informational booth at most home games, in order to connect with thousands of attendees at their (usually) sold-out home matches, and received digital promotions, streaming television advertising, and other promotional benefits.

In addition to the benefit of on-site activation presence, this 2025 sponsorship package would continue Ava's standing as the exclusive Clean Power 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, messaging on the stadium video board, and be a presenting partner for our Coliseum Bike Valet and also of a drone light show. Additional benefits include social media posts, a press release, and game tickets. Note that for the first time, both teams' home games in 2025 will be played at the Oakland Coliseum. This location change will make the games BART accessible, and there will be more fan seating available than in past seasons.

Ava's past sponsorship levels are as follows:

- 2019 - \$25,000
- 2020 - \$25,000
- 2021 - \$125,000 (moved up to USL)
- 2022 - \$125,000
- 2023 - \$125,000 (plus \$10k for soul)
- 2024 - \$196,000 (\$150k Roots/ \$46k Soul), first time with our logo on the jerseys

For 2025, Ava has evaluated which elements of past seasons' sponsorships have provided the most value, and we are focusing on those elements. In past seasons, our sponsorship agreement included digital streaming assets, such as a branded clock wrap and 0:30 video commercials. But, we are aware that the game stream is shown globally; therefore, it is of greater value for a partner that services a large geographic market than Ava. For 2025, we are declining those digital streaming opportunities, instead focusing on in-game promotions, which lowers our sponsorship cost compared to last year.

Committee Recommendation

Ava staff presented this recommendation to the Marketing, Regulatory, and Legislative committee on December 20, 2024 and the committee supported the proposal, agreeing that it should be included as a consent item for this Board meeting.

Attachments

A. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. R-2025-XX

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OF AVA COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE OAKLAND ROOTS SPORTS CLUB FOR THE 2025 SEASON OF THE ROOTS AND SOUL SOCCER TEAMS

WHEREAS Ava Community Energy Authority (“Ava”) was formed as a community choice aggregation agency (“CCA”) on December 1, 2016, under the Joint Exercise of Powers 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 Joint Powers Agreement (“JPA”) in March of 2020. The City of Stockton was added as a member to Ava in September of 2022. The City of Lathrop was added as a member to Ava in October of 2023. San Joaquin County was added as a member to Ava in July 2024. On October 24, 2023, Ava 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’s marketing activities seek to inform our customers about the benefits that Ava’s electricity provides, as well as introduce customers to programs that Ava offers that might save them money and/or improve environmental outcomes;

WHEREAS Oakland Roots Sports Club (“Oakland Roots SC”) is a leading professional sports franchise that is community-focused and whose sponsorship affords partners access to a large local fan base;

WHEREAS Ava has sponsored Oakland Roots (men's team) and Oakland Soul (women's team) since their inception as follows:

- 2019 - \$25,000
- 2020 - \$25,000
- 2021 - \$125,000 (moved up to USL)
- 2022 - \$125,000
- 2023 - \$125,000 (plus \$10k for soul)
- 2024 - \$196,000 (\$150k Roots/ \$46k Soul), first time with our logo on the jerseys; and

WHEREAS the 2025 season of these teams provides new, exciting opportunities to engage fans at the Oakland Coliseum, both through mass communication (signage, PA announcements, social media, etc.) and one-on-one engagement at an exhibit booth during game days, at a lower price point than in 2024.

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

Section 1. Authorize the CEO to negotiate and execute a sponsorship agreement with the Oakland Roots SC for the 2025 season of the Roots and Soul in consultation with legal counsel, at a not to exceed amount of \$175,000.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 15th day of January, 2025.

Jack Balch, Chair

ATTEST:

Adrian Bankhead, Clerk of the Board