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Page 1: Questionnaire

Q1 Candidate Information

Candidate Name: **Jenni Veitch-Olson**

Email:

Phone:

Website: **N/A**

Do you identify as LGBTIQ? **No**

Are you a GLBT Alliance member? **No**

Office you seek to be elected to: **Watsonville City Council**

Q2 Please choose the option best describing your candidacy: **Open Seat**

Q3 Please describe your qualifications for the elected position you seek. Include your main issues, priorities if elected, key endorsements, plus anything else that you'd like our members to know about you and your candidacy.

I am running for Watsonville City Council because we have a vibrant, healthy, and strong future ahead for all in our community, and I am committed to working with you to solve problems and deliver results. I serve on the Planning Commission, was the Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission, and was on the Board of Directors for CASA of Santa Cruz County. I am proud of my leadership in creating safe spaces for children and families, including upgrades to many of Watsonville's parks. With a strong commitment to building collaborative partnerships among social service providers, law enforcement, and community leaders, I have served on the South County Homelessness Steering Committee, Watsonville Mayor's Youth Violence Prevention Task Force, National Night Out planning committee, and the Watsonville Police Department's Post Incident Team. I organized the two Watsonville Food Truck Block Parties and helped to coordinate the first Open Streets Watsonville event. I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree from Santa Clara University, a Master of Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and completed doctoral coursework from there. I have worked in the nonprofit sector, special education, and as a college educator. I would be honored to have your vote.

Q4 Why are you seeking the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots LGBTIQ political organization, the GLBT Alliance?

I am seeking the endorsement of the GLBT Alliance because I believe in equity and justice for all people. Every person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect and to have their personhood fully recognized. I am committed to this work, and seek the support of like-minded folks.

Q5 Please tell us about any past or current experiences or involvement you've had addressing LGBTIQ issues or work you've done to support the LGBTIQ community.

I have been involved with the Pajaro Valley Pride celebration as a representative for the Santa Cruz Derby Girls and an employee of Digital NEST, the tech workforce center for young adults in Watsonville. Digital NEST received the Outstanding Organization recognition from the Queer Youth Leadership awards, and we are proud of the safe space that we provide for students in our community. Additionally, my husband is a Presbyterian minister, and we have chosen to stay in the Presbyterian Church USA (PC USA) denomination because of the open and affirming position that this denomination has taken.

Q6 What historic political or civil rights struggles are you familiar with that impact LGBTIQ equality?

My graduate school research focused on the intersection of gender, sexuality, race, and musical performance. I studied Leontyne Price, the first African American opera diva, and how her embodiment of Verdi's "Aida" represented her personal struggle as a black woman in opera. For this research, I developed a deep knowledge of African American history, women's history, and gender studies; all areas that intersect with LGBTIQ history and equality.

Q7 What is your philosophy about working with minority communities of which you are not a member, and how will this manifest in your future work with the LGBTIQ community?

As a cis-gender, white woman, I have always tried to empathize and identify was that I can best be an ally to the LGBTIQ community. I have chosen to intentionally open my eyes to the oppression of others in my community.

Q8 Please describe any programs you know of that impact the LGBTIQ community and that are governed by or funded through the elected office you are running for? Include any suggestions you may have for improving these programs.

The City of Watsonville has a very small budget for community grants for social service agencies. The City recently awarded Digital NEST with a very small grant that I wrote. I work in fund development for the NEST. I will continue to advocate for organizations that provide safe spaces for all people.

Q9 If elected, how would you use your position to help further issues of importance to the LGBTIQ community?

I will continue to be an ally. I will be an ally in the faith community, the roller derby world, the nonprofit sector, and as an elected official in the City of Watsonville.

Q10 If you receive the GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

Yes, please send me the GLBT Alliance's logo (jpg file) so I can proudly announce the endorsement on my campaign literature, social media and website!