



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 10/28/2025

To: Board of Directors of Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: Grant Davis 707-547-1900, Lynne Rosselli 707-524-3771
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) Appointment of Retiree Extra-Help

Recommended Action:

- A) Pursuant to Government Code §7522.56, approve the appointment of Joan Hultberg as an Administrative Officer II, to fill a critically needed position within 180 days of her retirement, with an appointment date as early as October 28, 2025.
- B) Adopt a Resolution Authorizing Adjustment to the Board Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 for the Sonoma Water General Fund in the amount of \$34,340 for the Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) Appointment of Retiree Extra-Help. (4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

Pursuant to the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA), Government Code §7522.56, an exception can be made to reappoint a retiree as extra-help provided the governing body certifies that the appointment is necessary to fill a critically needed position in those circumstances where 180 days from the date of retirement has not yet passed. This approval must be in a noticed public meeting and not on a consent calendar. The Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) is requesting the appointment of Joan Hultberg as an Administrative Services Officer II in a retiree extra-help capacity to assist in providing critically needed federal funding monitoring, tracking, risk assessment, and compliance; technical support to the Financial Services Division through continued planning, coordination, and implementation of finance-related strategic plan goals; and planning, coordination, and review of documentation for a Letter of Credit in support of the 2025 Biological Opinion and for the official statements needed to issue Revenue Bonds to fund critical infrastructure upgrades.

Discussion:

Pursuant to the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA), Government Code §7522.56, an exception can be made to reappoint a retiree as extra-help provided the governing body certifies that the appointment is necessary to fill a critically needed position in those circumstances where 180 days from the date of retirement has not yet passed. This approval must be in a noticed public meeting and not on a consent calendar. PEPRA includes other requirements in order for a retiree to be eligible for an Extra-Help appointment, such as not having accepted a retirement incentive and not having accepted unemployment arising out of prior public appointment. The individual and delegated agency staff have completed the Retiree Extra-Help Compliance Form certifying the appropriateness of the appointment.

Joan Hultberg retired on September 1, 2025, from the position of Administrative Services Officer II, Grants and Funded Projects Manager. She entered Sonoma Water service on January 10, 2007, as a WA Technical Writing Specialist in Sonoma Water's Engineering Division, followed by promotions to Department Analyst on May 29, 2012, Administrative Services Officer I on June 4, 2014, and Administrative Services Officer II on April 30, 2024, in the Grants and Funded Projects/Finance Section of Sonoma Water's Business Services and External Affairs Division.

At the time of her retirement, Ms. Hultberg led Sonoma Water's Grants and Funded Projects Section. For more than twelve years, Ms. Hultberg was instrumental in creating and managing a very robust and successful grants program with more than 40 active grants and \$67 million in committed state, federal, and local funding that continues to offset millions of dollars in expenditures and significantly reduces the rate impacts to our customers. Through her essential leadership, excellent management, and technical writing and editing skills, the number and complexity of grants and collaborative partnerships grew. She worked closely with Sonoma Water management and staff from all divisions to ensure adequate funding for high priority projects and led efforts to develop processes to strategically identify and pursue grant and low interest loan funding opportunities. She built relationships with funding agencies, and her expertise in grant-funded programs ensured that Sonoma Water remained compliant with some often very complex terms and conditions and under rigorous state and federal audits. She attended meetings with Sonoma Water's advocacy consultants to ensure the grants and funded projects team had the most up-to-date information on possible future federal and state funding opportunities. She developed procedures, processes, and resources to assist the grants and funded projects team in accomplishing their work, and through many successes, brought visibility and recognition to Sonoma Water's grants program.

In January 2025, the federal funding landscape changed dramatically. Recent presidential executive orders have resulted in a new framework for how federal grants are reviewed, awarded, and rescinded. Federal grant program requirements and conditions also are being altered significantly. Being aware of the vulnerabilities of specific federal funding opportunities is imperative. Given the pace of modifications to federal grant funding requirements and Sonoma Water's reliance on outside funding, it is critically important to have Ms. Hultberg's expertise to research and analyze program requirements and conditions in order to evaluate the level of risk to Sonoma Water.

Prior to retiring, Ms. Hultberg conducted an assessment of Sonoma Water's federally funded projects and programs and developed a federal funding risk plan that requires ongoing monitoring, documentation, and consultation with Sonoma Water management and county counsel. Her efforts are needed to delve into legislative programs and evolving political developments impacting Sonoma Water's outside sources of funding.

Ms. Hultberg has played a leading role in several finance-related strategic plan activities that remain critical to continue, including the following:

- Working with Sonoma Water management to ensure adequate funding for high priority projects to support strategic plan goals.
- Developing processes to strategically identify and pursue grant and low interest loan funding opportunities.
- Refining plan to improve procurement processes.

- Monitoring federal proclamations and executive orders pertaining to federal funding and assessing grant impacts.
- Reviewing and providing input on instructions to improve internal budget processes.
- Developing policies, procedures, and guidance for grant compliance for consultants and Sonoma Water staff.
- Planning, coordinating, and reviewing documentation needed to issue a Letter of Credit for the 2025 Biological Opinion and revenue bonds to fund critical infrastructure upgrades.

Due to the time-critical nature of pursuing outside funding opportunities, ensuring compliance with new federal funding requirements, and issuing Revenue Bonds to fund critical infrastructure upgrades, it is paramount that Ms. Hultberg continues to provide timely support as may be required for the success of these efforts.

Although Sonoma Water has filled the full-time position vacated with Ms. Hultberg's retirement, her replacement has not yet accumulated her extensive technical support skills and experience with funding compliance in a changing federal landscape. At a minimum, Sonoma Water needs to continue to use Ms. Hultberg's relationships and skill sets through fiscal years 2025/2026, 2026/2027, and 2027/2028. It is therefore respectfully requested that consideration be given to appointment of Joan Hultberg as Retiree Extra-Help to continue this time-sensitive work to keep these critical efforts on track.

Sonoma Water has consulted with the county Human Resources Department, which supports the recommended action.

In accordance with Government Code section 7522.56, Sonoma Water management is asking the Board to certify as follows:

- Joan Hultberg's appointment to Administrative Services Officer II, Retiree Extra-Help is necessary to fill a critically needed position within 180 days of her retirement date;
- Joan Hultberg did not accept retirement incentives upon her retirement; and
- Joan Hultberg's appointment shall not exceed 960 hours per year.

Per Internal Revenue Code section 401(a)(36), Joan Hultberg meets the requirement of being of normal retirement age.

If the Board of Directors makes the foregoing certifications, Joan Hultberg will be hired as of October 28, 2025, as Administrative Services Officer II, Retiree Extra-Help.

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment: N/A
N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment:

The Water Agency Strategic Plan: Organizational Goal 1; Increase organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and resilience to natural disasters.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

None.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$70,729	\$72,851
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$34,340		
Total Expenditures	\$34,340	\$70,729	\$72,851
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF		\$70,729	\$72,851
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$34,340		
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$34,340	\$70,729	\$72,851

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The cost of the extra help retiree position is approximately \$68,670, assuming a total usage of 960 extra help hours at \$71.53/hour. It is projected that 480 hours or \$34,340 will be expended in Fiscal Year 2025/2026 and 960 hours will be expended in Fiscal Years 2026/2027 and 2027/2028, assuming a 3% COLA. FY 2025/2026 additional appropriations in the amount of \$34,340 from Sonoma Water's General Fund are required. A budgetary resolution has been submitted with this item.

Salary is budgeted in Sonoma Water's General Fund which is funded through property tax revenue and grants. The General Fund is reimbursed by our enterprise funds through project costing. Sonoma Water's cost accounting system allocates labor costs to Sonoma Water projects specific to its enterprise funds.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

This is a Retiree Extra-Help appointment; no permanent allocations are being added or changed.

Attachments:

Resolution

Agenda Date: 10/28/2025

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None.