



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 3/24/2026

To: Board of Supervisors, Board of Directors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: M. Christina Rivera/Andrew McLaughlin, 565-3776

Vote Requirement: Informational Only

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Consolidated Fee Hearing - Summary

Recommended Action:

Receive summary of resolutions and/or ordinances adjusting department and agency fees and charges included in this agenda, to be effective on July 1, 2026, unless otherwise noted.

Executive Summary:

The Constitution and laws of the State of California allow for the collection of certain fees and charges for cost recovery of government activities that provide a specific benefit or service or are in place for regulatory purposes such as issuing licenses or performing inspections. Each year the County departments and agencies review for adjustment and/or new service delivery user fees, rates, and charges based on actual costs incurred to provide service and projected costs estimates for the coming fiscal year.

This year, six departments are submitting adjustments to fees as part of this package. Individual items for each department are included separately on today's agenda, including Permit Sonoma, Health Services, Public Infrastructure (for the Airport), the Sheriff's Office, Agriculture/Weights & Measures, and two fees presented by the County Executive's Office (on behalf of the Sheriff's Office).

A total of 12 fees are being eliminated and 30 new fees are being introduced. For FY 26-27, overall, countywide labor cost increases are projected to be moderate, at about 3% due to programmed labor cost changes. As such, more than 65% of all the fees that are increasing, are increasing by 10% or less. However, about a third of fees that are increasing are increasing by more than 10%. These increases are tied to sharp cost increases for certain services and supplies, including pharmaceuticals and vaccinations, fuel, software licensing, and internal service costs like insurance. In total, if the proposed adjustments to fees and charges are approved, the revenue derived from the net changes will be approximately \$2,713,822.

Discussion:

Government entities provide a mix of services. Some of these, such as justice services, provide general public benefit and are funded out of general-purpose revenue or specific revenue sources. Others provide specific benefits to those receiving the service, such as use of County property, or issuing of licenses or permits for specific actions. The costs of these services may be fully or partially offset by collection of fees from those who receive the specific service or benefit.

The County's [Financial Policies <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/county-administrators-office/budget-and-operations/financial-policies>](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/county-administrators-office/budget-and-operations/financial-policies), which are annually adopted by the Board during budget hearings, include two items that speak to use of fees:

- Programs financed by charges for services, fees, grants, and special revenue fund sources shall pay their full and fair share of all direct and indirect costs to the extent feasible and legally permitted which will include cost recovery towards future assets and/or system replacement.
- Departments requesting new or increased revenues from fees, permits and user charges shall submit these requests to the Board of Supervisors for consideration during the Board's annual fee hearing process or at a separate hearing. ... If permissible by law, fees and charges should cover all costs of the services provided, unless otherwise directed by the Board of Supervisors, to provide for public benefit.

In line with the second policy, annually staff presents ordinances and resolutions adjusting and adding user fees, rates, and charges based on operating cost estimates for the coming fiscal year, at what is referred to as the Consolidated Fee Hearing. In accordance with Government Code 6062(a) public notice was given through publication of notice of the fee hearing on two successive weeks with at least five days between publications.

For FY 26-27, overall, county-wide labor cost increases are about 3%, which is moderate when compared to prior years. Salary increases are generally limited to cost-of-living adjustments from negotiated one-year extensions of labor agreements, while benefit cost increases are also low, in part due to strong returns of the Sonoma County Employees Retirement Association in calendar year 2024. These returns helped keep pension rates from increasing significantly. Health-related benefit costs are also low, because higher costs for the employer share of health insurance premiums for active employees is being offset by reduced employer contributions for retiree health benefits. As such, more than half of fees are increasing by 3 percent or less and two-thirds of fees that are increasing are doing so by 10% or less. Some fees are increasing at higher rates due to specific changes to services and supplies costs or to time study reviews that have reassessed total amounts. Details are found below and in individual departmental items.

Items in the Package

The attached report includes fee adjustments from six departments: Permit Sonoma, Public Infrastructure (for the Airport), Health Services, the Sheriff's Office, Agriculture/Weights and Measures, and the County Executive's Office on behalf of the Sheriff's Office. Together, these items contain adjustments to approximately 1,000 fee items. A summary of these changes is attached, and a brief description of each item appears below.

Permit Sonoma

Permit Sonoma is proposing increases to 614 fees. About one third of these fees are slated to rise by about 3 percent, in line with County cost increases. The rest of the increases are by 7-15 percent. These larger increases are primarily coming from the Engineering and Survey Unit, the Hazardous Materials Unit, and the Fire Prevention Unit, as part of the department's incremental effort to solve a pre-existing gap between actual costs and recovered costs. Should the fee revisions be approved, the department anticipates an additional \$1,275,701 in cost recovery revenue in FY 2026-27. These adjustments do not reduce the previously approved subsidy which will remain in place to continue to subsidize the cost of delivering services. Additionally, Permit

Sonoma is proposing one new fee for cost recovery of the fully burdened hourly rate of a Professional Geologist in the Permit Services Division.

Public Infrastructure (Airport)

Unlike the other departments in this item, the Sonoma County Airport operates as an enterprise and does not receive General Fund support. The airport proposes to increase 87 fees for FY 26-27. The median increase for these fees is 8%, up slightly from the previous year. Increases reflect the recovery of costs, and are in line with comparable airports such as Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey and Redding. 13 new fees are proposed for terminal advertising, ground leases, and special events. Most revenue from the airport's fees for FY 26-27 come from terminal rates and charges, and charges for advertising signage.

If approved, the proposed fee changes for the airport are estimated to generate approximately \$1,040,780.

Health Services

The Department of Health Services is proposing increases to 183 fees. Of those fees that are increasing, 113 (61%) are increasing by 3% or less, in line with county labor costs. Larger increases are coming almost exclusively from Animal Services, where costs for spay and neutering, vaccinations, pharmaceuticals, and other services and supplies have risen sharply. Most Environmental Health fees are not increasing, with increased costs being offset from the Fee Stabilization Fund. 15 new fees are proposed, including site plan and project review fees for cannabis dispensaries, fees for tests performed at the microbial diseases laboratory, soft serve inspection fees, and fees associated with food safety at farmers' markets.

If approved, the proposed fee changes for Health Services are estimated to increase revenues by approximately \$342,793.

Sheriff's Office

The Sheriff's Office is recommending adjustments to 77 fees, 59 of which are increasing, 16 are of which are decreasing, and 1 which is proposed to be eliminated. Of the fees that are increasing, the majority are set to increase by 3% or less, again reflecting labor cost increases. Those slated to increase by larger amounts include fees for morgue hazardous materials disposal, vehicle use, and fees associated with upgraded telecommunications network equipment. The Sheriff's Office is also recommending 1 new fee in the Investigations Bureau for fingerprinting during the application process for Concealed-Carry Weapons Permits (CCW). Effective September 1, 2026, all applicants for new and renewed CCW permits are required to submit fingerprints. Previously, only new applicants were fingerprinted. The fingerprinting fee is established to recover the costs of a Deputy II's time performing interviews of applicants, interviewing references, and entering data into the Department of Justice (DOJ) Live Scan system. Revenue from this fee is based on a projected 527 CCW applications in FY 26-27.

The proposed changes are estimated to increase revenue by \$24,895. This is the net total of \$30,389 in revenue related to new and increasing fees, and a revenue decrease of \$5,494 related to fees that have been adjusted down.

Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures

The Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures is proposing increases to 62 fees. Fifty-eight of the 62 are proposed to increase by 3% or less, in line with overall county labor cost increases. Two notable exceptions are a large increase to a fee associated with Accela permitting software, and a large increase to the fee associated with implementation costs for a new hazardous materials project management software.

If approved, the proposed fee changes are estimated to increase revenues by \$20,633.

County Executive’s Office

The County Executive’s Office prepares two state-authorized fees on behalf of the Sheriff’s Office. The first is the Criminal Justice Administrative Fee, or Jail Booking Fee, which would be charged to arresting agencies if the state failed to appropriate \$35 million statewide to fund counties for jail bookings. This fee has never been charged and is not anticipated to be charged in FY 26-27; however, in accordance with state law, the fee is recommended to increase by 4.3%.

The second fee is the Jail Access Fee, which, per state law, is charged to an arresting agency if certain non-felony bookings exceed a rolling three-year average for these types of bookings. This fee is based on the cost of booking operations.

For FY 26-27, this fee is increasing to \$1,511.85. The fee is collected by the Sheriff’s Office for the support of booking operations. The amount of revenue expected is difficult to predict because it is dependent on how actual bookings for certain offenses relate to averages. Sheriff’s Office bookings data suggest that local law enforcement agencies are not exceeding their rolling 3-year averages to the extent seen in previous years, so the estimated revenue to be collected from this fee after the increase is \$9,020.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

March 25, 2025 - Fiscal Year 2025-25 Consolidated Fee Hearing

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY24-25 Adopted	FY25-26 Projected	FY26- 27Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$2,713,822	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$2,713,822	

Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		\$2,713,822	
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources		\$2,713,822	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

If all fee packages are adopted as recommended the total new revenue generated is expected to be \$2,713,822 which will support increased costs in the various departments. Information on individual departmental revenues is found in the following items.

Staffing Impacts:

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

- Executive summary of fee changes
- Numerical summary of fee changes
- Additional Revenue Expected from New Fees
- Fee Hearing PowerPoint Presentation Final
- Public Notice - Pre Adoption Ordinance Summary Fees
- Fee Hearing Presentation FY 26-27

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None