



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 2/27/2024

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: Susanne Oliver 707-524-1155
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisorial District(s): All

Title:

Sonoma Water Allocation Request

Recommended Action:

- A) Adopt a Resolution amending the Department Allocation List of the Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) to add 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Water Agency Senior Technical Writing Specialist and 1.0 FTE Administrative Services Officer II and delete 1.0 FTE Water Agency Technical Writing Specialist, effective February 27, 2024.
- B) Adopt a Resolution Authorizing Adjustment to the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 for the Sonoma Water General Fund in the amount of \$62,759 for the Sonoma Water Allocation Change Requests. (4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) staff recommend the addition of two key positions to enable the Finance Section of the Business Services Division to provide high-level financial services and ensure improved financial management, security, and stability for Sonoma Water.

Sonoma Water requests replacing one Water Agency Technical Writing Specialist allocation with a Water Agency Senior Technical Writing Specialist (Senior Technical Writing Specialist) and adding an Administrative Services Officer II (ASO II) to provide a higher level of support in the Finance section of the Business Services Division.

Discussion:

Two key positions are requested in the Financial Services Section of Sonoma Water's Business Services Division to achieve strategic plan goals, meet financial obligations, and effectively administer and perform the accounting, budgeting, long range financial planning, financing, grant funding, and overall financial management for 64 separate funds spanning 21 enterprises.

Senior Technical Writing Specialist Position Request:

The Grants and Funded Projects team in the Financial Services Division of Sonoma Water works collaboratively to create and expand a revenue-producing operation that currently manages \$89.2 million in active grant projects, and an additional \$20 million in grant applications pending decisions by various funding agencies. Revenue from grants has grown more than 150% in the past five years, and that translates to substantial cost

savings to our rate payers.

The Grants and Funded Projects Section currently administers, tracks, and reports on approximately 65 separate projects funded by federal, state, and local grant and loan programs. Reporting and reimbursement requests require independent analysis and research, and depending upon the funder's requirements, must be submitted monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually. The complexity of reporting and invoicing to federal and state grant and loan agencies has continued to increase and requires copious and detailed documentation, and strict adherence to state and federal regulations.

In all these types of funding, Sonoma Water is required by law to continuously monitor and assess program compliance. This includes internal processes, as well as those of grant partners, pass-through entities, and sub-contractors and consultants. Sonoma Water is also required to undergo mandated rigorous federal and state funding agency grant program audits to ensure compliance.

Given the growing program, and increased monitoring, reporting and management requirements, Sonoma Water is requesting to delete a vacant Technical Writing Specialist and replace it with a Senior Technical Writing Specialist. This position will oversee the most complex grants and assignments in the section, researching, writing, and managing grant proposals and awards. The Senior Technical Writing Specialist will provide guidance to other technical writing specialists, coordinating, assigning, and reviewing their work. The position will also serve as a primary point of contact for funding agencies, fielding questions and concerns, and maintaining effective communication and compliance.

The Senior Technical Writing Specialist will take direct responsibility for managing Sonoma Water's administration of currently funded projects; monitoring program compliance across activities, contracts, and partners; maintaining relationships and clear communication with funding partners; and researching, identifying, and matching available funding resources to meet specific project needs.

Administrative Services Officer II Position Request:

Sonoma Water manages a \$226 million budget for water supply, water transmission, sanitation, flood control, general and other administrative funds, debt service funds, and internal service funds. The Finance Section is not properly resourced to achieve financial strategic plan goals, meet financial obligations, and effectively administer and perform the accounting, budgeting, long range financial planning, financing, grant funding for more than 58 active projects, and overall financial management for 64 separate funds spanning 21 enterprises.

The entire budgeting and financial planning and reporting body of work including rate setting for the Water Transmission System and eight sanitation districts and zones is currently managed by the Division Manager, one ASO II, and two ASO I's along with support staff. Significant time critical assignments (long range financial plans, financial reports and analysis, financing plans, rate studies, and advancing strategic plan goals) have not been completed because the Finance Section is not sufficiently resourced, and consistent overtime is not sustainable. As the section attempts to keep up with work demands, the Division Manager has been performing work that would more efficiently and effectively be shared between two ASO II's who support the Division Manager and who can delegate appropriate work to their respective staff.

Adding an ASO II in the section will provide higher level support for the Division Manager, including the ability to take direct responsibility for managing budgeting and long range financial planning for Sonoma Water's

sanitation funds, managing sanitation rate setting and billing functions, overseeing procurement processes and the Grants and Funded Projects team, and assisting the Division Manager with strategic planning initiatives. The position will also free up the existing ASO II to focus on accounting functions, and budgeting and long-range financial planning for administration, water supply, water transmission, and flood protection funds, and will allow the Division Manager to work on higher level priorities and have sufficient support to advance strategic planning priorities.

The ASO II will assume responsibility for 26 sanitation enterprise funds, procurement processes, management of the Grants and Funded Projects team, and will assist the Division Manager with advancing the Finance Section's strategic plan initiatives. The position will supervise two ASO I's and their respective staff.

Sonoma County Human Resources has reviewed these requests and is in agreement with the job classifications. □

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment

N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment

This item directly supports Sonoma Water's Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following goal, strategy, and action item.

Goal: 1. Organizational Excellence - Strengthen the organization and workforce to perform our core functions and responsibilities.

Strategy: 1.3 Ensure financial integrity and stability by implementing sound and equitable practices to meet infrastructure and service needs.

Action Item: 1.3.1 Ensure adequate funding and increase grant revenues to support priorities.

Action Item: 1.3.2 Further develop budget tracking tools, long range financial plans, and fiscal processes.

Action Item: 1.3.3 Update and refine plan to improve procurement processes.

Action Item: 1.3.4 Initiate development of business plans to improve flood and sanitation financial and operational stability.

Adding the requested allocations will provide Sonoma Water with the appropriate staffing to continue efforts toward achieving these strategic goals.

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

N/A

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$62,759	\$255,984	\$266,224
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$62,759	\$255,984	\$266,224
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$62,759	\$255,984	\$266,224
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$62,759	\$255,984	\$266,224

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Salary and benefits are budgeted in the General Fund which is funded through property tax revenue and grant awards. The General Fund is reimbursed by Sonoma Water’s enterprise funds through the overhead rate using project costing. Sonoma Water’s cost accounting system allocates labor costs to Sonoma Water projects specific to its enterprise funds.

Adding a 1.0 FTE Water Agency Senior Technical Writing Specialist allocation and deleting a 1.0 FTE Water Agency Technical Writing Specialist represents a net increase of \$4,895 in labor costs for FY 2023/2024 (based on an hourly increase of \$7.06 and an annual cost of \$14,685 prorated for 4 months). For FY 2024/2025 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$15,272 and \$15,883 for FY 2025/2026 assuming a 4% COLA each year.

Adding a 1.0 FTE ASO II allocation represents a net increase of \$57,864 in labor costs for FY 2023/2024 Q4 (based on an annual cost of \$231,454). For FY 2024/2025 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$240,712 and \$250,341 for FY 2025/2026 assuming a 4% COLA each year.

FY 2023/2024 additional appropriations in the amount of \$62,759 from Sonoma Water’s General Fund are required. A budgetary resolution has been submitted with this item. FY 2024/2025 and FY 2025/2026 appropriations will be budgeted in those fiscal years.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Water Agency Senior Technical Writing Specialist	\$8,757.21 - \$10,644.31	1	
Water Agency Technical Writing Specialist	\$8,007.58 - \$9,732.94		1
Administrative Services Officer II	\$9,463.65- \$11,503.51	1	0 <input type="checkbox"/>

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Agenda Date: 2/27/2024

If approved, this request will change Sonoma Water's allocation tables as follows:
Water Agency Senior Technical Writing Specialist allocations increase from 2 to 3
Water Agency Technical Writing Specialist allocations decrease from 8 to 7
Administrative Services Officer II allocations increase from 2 to 3

Attachments:

(2) Resolutions

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

None