



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 3/26/2024

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**To:** Board of Supervisors and Board of Directors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** County Counsel, Human Resources, and County Administrator

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Robert Pittman, Janell Crane, M. Christina Rivera 707-565-2431

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** All

**Title:**

Sonoma County Code Revision to the County Administrator's Duties and Responsibilities

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Adopt a Resolution introducing, reading the title of, and waiving full reading of an Ordinance to Redesignate the Position of County Administrator As County Executive and Shift Supervision and Appointing Authority Over Specified Department and Agency Heads to the County Executive.
- B) Adopt a Concurrent Resolution amending Salary Resolution 95-0926, Salary Tables, to revise and retitle the County Administrator class specification to County Executive and the Director of Permit and Resource Management to Director of Permit Sonoma, effective March 26, 2024.
- C) Approve the revised class specifications of department head job classifications to reflect the changed appointing authority and/or reporting structure, and other associated edits.

**Executive Summary:**

The Board of Supervisors ("Board") adopted a five-year Specific Plan in March 2021. The Specific Plan consists of five pillars, including Organizational Excellence. The Organizational Excellence pillar commits the County to providing superior public service to Sonoma County residents. The Board finds that in order to serve Sonoma County residents and fulfill the County's state and federal mandates, the County organization must be efficient and effective, fiscally responsible, and accountable.

The Board further finds that shifting supervision of the County's department and agency heads under the County Administrator creates operational efficiencies and improves the organization's overall effectiveness. Accordingly, the Board desires to strengthen the County's operational structure by moving to an enhanced oversight county administrator structure and shift appointing authority for certain department heads, as well as delegate daily oversight and supervision of all department and agency heads to the county administrator, except where otherwise provided by state law. The Board further desires to denote this shift by redesignating the head of the county administrator's office as the "county executive."

Excluding Sonoma Water, Agricultural & Open Space District, and County Counsel, the net result of the ordinance revision will move the appointment and direct oversight responsibility to the CAO position for the director positions for Economic Development, Health Services, Office of Equity, Public Infrastructure, and Regional Parks. Therefore, in conjunction with the ordinance changes, Human Resources recommends the class specification for County Administrator be revised and re-titled to County Executive, and edits to eighteen

department head class specifications to reflect the changed appointing authority and/or reporting structure, as well as associated edits, including retitling the Director of Permit and Resource Management to Director of Permit Sonoma to better align the title of the position with the department's name. To mitigate span of control challenges one additional Assistant CAO position (for a total of 2) will be included as part of the FY 24/25 budget hearings. If the Board introduces the proposed ordinance on March 26, 2024, it will be brought back on the consent calendar for adoption on April 16, 2024. If adopted by the Board on April 16, 2024, the ordinance will take effect 30 days thereafter on May 16, 2024.

**Discussion:**

Background

The County delivers services to the community through the work of 23 operational and elected departments and agencies, 8 of which currently are appointed by and/or report to the CAO position. The duties, and responsibilities for the County Administrator position are included [in Section 2-8 of the Sonoma County Code <https://library.municode.com/ca/sonoma\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=CH2AD\\_ARTIIOFEMGE\\_DIV2COAD>](https://library.municode.com/ca/sonoma_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH2AD_ARTIIOFEMGE_DIV2COAD).

Sonoma County 2021-2026 Strategic Plan is based on the following pillars: Climate Action & Resiliency, Healthy & Safe Communities, Racial Equity & Social Justice, Resilient Infrastructure, and Organization Excellence. The Organization Excellence (OE) pillar includes a focus to be efficient and effective, while being fiscally responsible and accountable. Relevant to the pillar's intent, in 2022 the Department & Agency Head Association (DAHA) considered and recommended an oversight structure where the CAO position would directly support non-elected department heads' performance intended to improve in a direct and timely manner communication and feedback between the Board and the departments' executive leaders.

Subsequently, on March 21, 2023, the Board received options to transition to a County Executive Officer model where the CAO becomes responsible for day-to-day oversight of all non-elected department-agency heads/directors, except where otherwise provided by state law. The counties listed in the 2023 report with a County Executive Officer oversight structure were: Sacramento (~11,000 employees); San Diego (~8,200 employees); Riverside (~20,000 employees); Ventura (~8,000 employees); Santa Barbara (~4,600 employees); Contra Costa (~9,000 employees); Alameda (~3,700 employees), and San Mateo (~3,000 employees).

Given the CAO incumbent just started her appointment on February 1, 2023, at the end of the March 2023 discussion the Board decided to postpone revising the County's oversight structure.

During the one-year performance review of County Administrator M. Christina Rivera, the Board gave direction to bring forward revisions to the Sonoma County Code that, where permissible under the applicable provisions of California statutes, would result in non-elected department/agency heads being appointed and directly supervised by the CAO. The proposed revisions do not include for the General Manager of Sonoma Water, the General Manager of the Agricultural & Open Space District, or County Counsel.

Ordinance

The proposed ordinance amends the code to expand the oversight of the County Administrator and redesignates the position as the "County Executive." In addition to the eight department heads currently overseen by the County Executive, the proposed Ordinance would move day-to-day oversight of the

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Agriculture Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures, the Executive Director of the Economic Development Board, the Director of the Department of Health Services, the Director of Public Infrastructure, the Director of the Office of Equity, and the Director of Regional Parks under the County Executive, subject to the limitations imposed by state statute and any additional parameters established or directed by the Board.

Additionally, the proposed revisions would make the County Executive the appointing authority for the following department heads: the Executive Director of the Economic Development Commission, the Director of Health Services, the Director of Public Infrastructure, the Director of the Office of Equity, and the Director of Regional Parks. It would also charge the County Executive with completing the performance evaluation for all department and agency heads with the exception of the four elected department heads-the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector, the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor-Registrar of Voters, the District Attorney, and the Sheriff-Coroner. Finally, the Ordinance would make corresponding changes to the establishing legislation for all department heads and related clean-up changes throughout the Sonoma County Code.

#### Updated Job Classes Descriptions

Human Resources reviewed the County Administrator class specification, as well as specifications for eighteen department head job classifications. In addition to revising and retitling County Administrator to County Executive, Human Resources found that language used to describe appointing authority, reporting structure, and unclassified status, among other things, in department head specifications has been inconsistent and is not in alignment with either the current or proposed organizational structures. As a result, Human Resources has suggested edits which specify these positions work under general policy direction of the Board and the County Administrator, they are either unclassified or outside of the Civil Service System, who they are appointed by, who they report to, that department heads are required to enter into an “at will” employment service agreement, and other associated edits, including retitling Director of Permit and Resource Management to Director of Permit Sonoma to better align the title of the position with department’s name. Human Resources seeks the Board’s approval to revise the specifications as presented.

As noted, to mitigate span of control challenges, a second Assistant CAO will be submitted for the Board’s consideration as part of the FY 24/25 budget hearings.

#### **Strategic Plan:**

N/A.

#### **Racial Equity:**

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

No

#### **Prior Board Actions:**

March 21, 2023 file [2023-0326 <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6065792&GUID=33EB010C-FEDD-4FC9-AE29-3F31FA48D0E7&Options=&Search=>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6065792&GUID=33EB010C-FEDD-4FC9-AE29-3F31FA48D0E7&Options=&Search=>): The Board of Supervisors reviewed Departments’ and Agencies’ Appointment and Oversight Structure.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY23-24 Adopted</b>	<b>FY24-25 Projected</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0
Additional Appropriation Requested		\$420,000	\$435,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$420,000</b>	<b>\$435,000</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF	\$0	\$420,000	\$435,000
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$420,000</b>	<b>\$435,000</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Ordinance change action will not by itself result in a fiscal impact. Given the expanded CAO (Chief Executive Officer) appointment and performance responsibility for departments heads from 7 to 12, in addition, to continuing to be the principal executive advisor for department and agency leaders appointed by the Board and/or Sonoma County’s Superior Court Judge, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant CAO will be submitted for the Board’s consideration as part of the FY 24/25 budget hearings.

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

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

See fiscal narrative for potential FY 24/25 staffing augmentation.

**Attachments:**

1. Ordinance restructuring the CAO position.
2. Legislative Digest of proposed Code Changes.
3. Resolution introducing, reading the title of, and waiving full reading of the proposed Ordinance.
4. Concurrent Resolution amending Salary Resolution 95-0926, Salary Table Scales, to revise and retitle the County Administrator class specification to County Executive.
5. Attachment A - Appendix A - Salary Table Scales.
6. County Executive class specification.
7. Department Head class specifications.

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

None