



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 2/11/2025

To: Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Water Agency, Board of Commissioners of the Community Development Commission, and the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Resources

Staff Name and Phone Number: Janell Crane, 707-565-2885; Spencer Keyword, 707-565-3568

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Creation of New Registrar of Voters Job Classification

Recommended Action:

- A) Adopt a Concurrent Resolution amending Salary Resolution No. 95-0926, Appendix A - Salary Tables, Department Heads - Unit 52, to establish the new classification and salary for Registrar of Voters, effective February 11, 2025.
- B) Adopt a Resolution introducing, reading the title of, and waiving a full reading of a proposed Ordinance amending Chapter 21, Article I, Sec. 21-5 of the Sonoma County Code, Civil Service, placing the Registrar of Voters in the Unclassified Service in the County's Civil Service System. (First Reading)
- C) Adopt a Resolution adding 1.0 full-time equivalent Registrar of Voters to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department, effective February 11, 2025.

Executive Summary:

The County's Human Resources Department is responsible for managing the County-wide classification and compensation plan. Periodically, new job classifications are established in response to new or changing operations and job responsibilities. New job classifications and allocation changes must be adopted by the appropriate Board or Commission.

Agenda Date: 2/11/2025

This report reflects work that Human Resources has completed in response to January 28, 2025, direction and decision by the Board of Supervisors to separate the Registrar of Voters from the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department. The purpose of the separation is to provide greater capacity to enhance the County's ability to administer elections, expand voter engagement, ensure compliance with evolving legislative, policy, and voting-related cybersecurity advancements, and to separate the responsibility of election oversight from an elected official to an appointed department head.

The recommended actions in this item include establishing a new department head job classification, the Registrar of Voters; introducing an Ordinance to amend Chapter 21, Article I, Section 21-5 of the Sonoma County Code, Civil Service, to place the new classification in the Unclassified Service; and temporarily adding an allocation to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department, where it will reside until the new department is officially established, no later than the start of the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year (FY). Establishing this classification and adding the position now will allow for the recruitment of this position to begin promptly.

Total position costs (salary and benefits) will be between approximately \$286,948 and \$348,767 depending on the step of the incumbent. Funding will be added for the position in the FY 2025-26 budget for the new Registrar of Voters department from the General Fund. The Registrar of Voters function is partially funded through reimbursements related to state and local elections. Actual General Fund contribution levels will vary based on the election cycle.

Discussion:

The Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Office is comprised of four functional areas - 1) County Clerk; 2) Recorder; 3) Assessor; 4) Registrar of Voters. While the County Clerk, Recorder, and Assessor functions of the office have significant areas of overlap, the work of the Registrar of Voters is isolated. Over the last decade there have been significant changes in the field of elections, and the oversight and administration of the Registrar of Voters Division requires a full-time department head. Due to the unique and complex nature of elections work, there has been a trend toward the Registrar of Voters becoming its own separate department in numerous other counties in the state, including Marin, Solano, San Joaquin, Tulare, and Monterey. Additionally, the Assessor is a constitutional officer and by state law must be elected, while the Registrar of Voters can be appointed.

On January 28, 2025, the County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor and the County Executive presented an item to the

Board recommending the creation of the stand-alone Registrar of Voters Department. The creation of the stand-alone department will strengthen and enhance the County's ability to administer elections, expand voter engagement, ensure compliance with evolving legislative, policy, and voting related cybersecurity advancements, and eliminate potential conflict of interest and separate the responsibility of election oversight from an elected official to an appointed department head.

As a result of the Board's approval of staff's recommendation, Human Resources was tasked with developing a new Registrar of Voters job classification. Human Resources has completed the work and now presents the Registrar of Voters classification for adoption in the County's Classification Plan.

Registrar of Voters

Under general policy direction of the Board of Supervisors and the County Executive, the Registrar of Voters will provide leadership, administrative policy, and operational direction for the Registrar of Voters Department, including analyzing and interpreting legislation affecting the work of the department and performing a variety of complex work in the planning and conducting of all federal, state local elections. The Registrar of Voters is appointed by the Board of Supervisors and reports to the County Executive. The full job description can be found in Attachment 1.

Human Resources conducted a salary review of the County's typical comparator agencies to determine the appropriate salary range for the new job class. In consideration of both market data and internal equity alignment with other department head positions, staff recommend the salary range for the Registrar of Voters be set at \$15,629-\$18,996/monthly (\$187,548-\$227,952/annually). This places the salary for the Registrar of Voters at the market average of comparable classifications with oversight of standalone elections operations at the County's comparator agencies. The attached Concurrent Resolution establishes the Registrar of Voters and salary range within the County's Salary Resolution.

Civil Service Ordinance

In November 1994, the voters approved changes to the Civil Service Ordinance that allow the Board of Supervisors to exempt department head positions from the Civil Service System. In order to establish the proposed position as a department head and unclassified, which means an at-will position that serves at the pleasure of the Board and/or County Executive, the Civil Service Ordinance must be amended. This involves a two-part process in which there is a first reading and the introduction of the Ordinance (Attachment 4) on

Agenda Date: 2/11/2025

February 11, 2025, and at the Board's next meeting on February 25, 2025, the Ordinance will be officially approved. Technically, the effective date of the Ordinance change will be 30 days from the date of the Board's final approval. However, this does not prohibit the initiation of recruitment efforts for the Registrar of Voters.

Recommendations

Adopt the new job classification of Registrar of Voters and the respective salary at \$18,996 top monthly step, introduce the Ordinance Exempting the Registrar of Voters from the Civil Service System, and add the position allocation to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department.

Assuming the classification is adopted, a recruitment for this position is forthcoming with an estimated opening date later this month.

Note: The new Register of Voters Department has not been officially created in the County system and budget as of yet; however, an allocation must be established in order to begin recruitment efforts to fill the position with an incumbent. As such, the allocation is being added to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department. The new Registrar of Voters Department will be created for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year. Once the new department is established, the Registrar of Voters allocation will be re-allocated from the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department to the new department.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

January 28, 2025 (item 27; 2025-0075): Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution introducing an Ordinance to separate the Registrar of Voters from the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department; provide for the appointment of the Registrar of Voters by the Board of Supervisors, and shift supervision of the Registrar of Voters under the County Executive.

FISCAL SUMMARY

	FY24-25 Adopted	FY25-26 Projected	FY26-27 Projected
Expenditures			
Budgeted Expenses		\$350,000	\$350,000
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$350,000	\$350,000
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources		\$350,000	\$350,000

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Human Resources estimates the annual salary and benefits costs for this position will be approximately \$350,000. There are not anticipated to be current fiscal year impacts as the recruitment to fill the position is likely to take the remainder of the current fiscal year. The budget for the new Registrar of Voters Department will be included in the budget planning process for the 2025-2026 budget.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Registrar of Voters	\$15,629-\$18,996	1.0	

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

One full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Registrar of Voters allocation will be added to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Department Allocation List as a temporary placeholder until the Registrar of Voters Department is created.

Attachments:

1. Registrar of Voters Job Classification Specification
2. Resolution 1: Concurrent Resolution amending Salary Resolution 95-0926, Salary Tables, to establish the new classification and salary for Registrar of Voters.
3. Resolution 1: Attachment A - Appendix A - Salary Tables
4. Resolution 2: Resolution introducing, reading the title of, and waiving full reading of a proposed ordinance to amend Chapter 21, Article I, Sec. 21-5 of the Sonoma County Code, Civil Service
5. Proposed Ordinance amending Chapter 21, Article I, Sec 21-5 of the Sonoma County Code, Civil Service
6. Redline of proposed changes to amend Chapter 21, Article I, Sec. 21-5 of the Sonoma County Code, Civil Service
7. Pre-adoption summary
8. Resolution 3: Resolution amending the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor's Department Allocation List.

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

N/A