

To: The Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County
Department or Agency Name(s): District Attorney
Staff Name and Phone Number: Renate Amantite 565-3150
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Hiring Freeze Exemption for a 0.5 FTE attorney position in the District Attorney's Office

Recommended Actions:

Approve a hiring freeze exemption for a 0.5 FTE Deputy District Attorney IV position in the District Attorney's Office.

Executive Summary:

The 0.5 FTE Deputy District Attorney IV position was frozen as part of a countywide hiring freeze approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 11, 2018, which called for a hiring freeze on all positions not currently under recruitment and vacant for longer than nine months. The position allocation was being held for an attorney who started parental leave and scheduled to return to work on March 26, 2019. The 0.5 FTE attorney position was included in the fiscal year 2018/2019 adopted budget and is necessary for efficient operation of the District Attorney's Office.

Discussion:

1. ISSUE/PROBLEM TO BE RESOLVED

Unfreeze 0.5 FTE Deputy District Attorney IV position that was being held for an individual on extended parental leave.

2. FACTS

When the Board approved a hiring freeze on December 11, 2018, the District Attorney's Office had 1.5 FTE positions affected: 1.0 Legal Secretary II and 0.5 Deputy District Attorney IV.

The attorney position became vacant on March 19, 2018 when the attorney in that position accepted a full time position. Near the time of this vacancy another attorney advised us of a change in their family circumstances and made a request to change to a part-time work schedule starting in early 2019. The District Attorney decided to hold the vacancy for this employee and gave

them a verbal approval for the change. The District Attorney is committed to fostering a family supportive work environment. The employee returns from paid parental leave March 25, 2019 and expects to return part-time. The work of the District Attorney's office has changed over the years with case referrals now more difficult and time consuming to file. The investigations have become more complex to review and prosecute due to changes in the law and technological advances. This part time position allows the District Attorney's Office the opportunity to retain the skills of a talented attorney who is experienced in handling the demands of the position at a part time salary.

3. ANALYSIS

Restoring the position will support Sonoma County's desire to be a family supportive employer and allow the District Attorney to fulfill a commitment made to a valued employee.

The District Attorney's Office was prudent in its decision to hold the position for an experienced attorney who is able to step into the job without additional training. Holding the position also allows the department to fill the position without incurring recruitment and training expenses.

4. ALTERNATIVES

If the position is not restored, the alternative is that the employee will decide to either quit, since fulltime will not allow them to meet their family's needs, or they will return fulltime. If they quit, the department will lose a knowledgeable and skillful prosecutor. If they return fulltime, against the best needs of their family, their work product and morale may suffer and could have a negative impact on their co-workers and ultimately on justice in Sonoma County.

5. RECOMMENDATION

We respectfully request that the Board of Supervisors unfreeze the 0.5 FTE attorney position in the District Attorney's Office to support the effort to retain experienced staff, save on recruitment costs, and support the County's goal for being a Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community.

6. STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

No subsequent Board activity will be required

Prior Board Actions:

December 11, 2018 – Board approved a countywide hiring freeze for all positions vacant longer than nine months.

June 2018 – Board adopted the Fiscal Year 2018/2019 Budget which authorized funding that included this 0.5 FTE attorney position.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 18-19 Adopted	FY19-20 Projected	FY 20-21 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	34,653	141,443	143,989
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	34,653	141,443	143,989
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	34,653	141,443	143,989
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	34,653	141,443	143,989

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Funding for this position is already included in FY18-19 District Attorney Budget as a general fund supported position. The FY18-19 cost of \$34,653 is the cost for March 26– June 30, 2019.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A – I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)
(see Narrative)			

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

The District Attorney's Office has 44 fulltime attorney positions and two half time attorney positions currently allocated. No request is being made for a new position, just the opportunity to fill a current vacancy which was being held and promised to an employee with a growing family.

If the Board does not approve the filling of this position, this employee will either decide to quit or decide to return in their fulltime-designated capacity. If the employee quits this would result in the loss of an experienced prosecutor. If the employee chose to return fulltime when they already determined this does not meet the needs of their family, it might impact their productivity.

Attachments:

None

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

N/A