



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0099, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: Susanne Oliver 524-1155; Lynne Rosselli 524-3771
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Sonoma Water Allocation Change Requests

Recommended Action:

- A) Adopt a resolution effective March 10, 2020, amending the department allocation table to add one (1) full-time equivalent Accounting Technician, delete one (1) full-time equivalent Senior Account Clerk, and to convert one (1) time limited Administrative Services Officer II allocation with an end date of February 6, 2023, to ongoing.
- B) Adopt a resolution authorizing adjustments to the Board Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 for the Sonoma County Water Agency General Fund for \$1,361; net increase to add a 1.0 full-time equivalent Accounting Technician allocation and delete a 1.0 full-time equivalent Senior Account Clerk. (4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

A significant increase in grants and funded projects since 2017 has impacted the section's workload. Replacing a Senior Account Clerk position with an Accounting Technician will provide a higher level of support for the Department Analyst and Accountant II, including the ability to take direct responsibility for managing the database of Sonoma County Water Agency's (Sonoma Water) funded projects, invoicing all reimbursable projects in Enterprise Financial System (EFS), maintaining financial compliance applicable to the funding source, and monitoring labor compliance for new and ongoing projects.

Sonoma Water's Emergency Response Section is currently managed by an Emergency Response Manager who is in an Administrative Service Officer II time limited allocation. The position will expire on February 6, 2023. Due to the critical and ongoing nature of emergency preparedness and response, Sonoma Water is requesting the allocation be converted to a permanent full-time equivalent allocation.

Sonoma County's Human Resources Department has reviewed these requests and concurs with the recommendations.

Discussion:

Accounting Technician Add/Delete

The Grants and Funded Projects team in the Finance and Administration Division of Sonoma Water works collaboratively to create a revenue producing operation that currently has \$39 million in active grant awards,

and an additional \$18.7 million in grant applications pending decisions by various funding agencies. The Grants and Funded Projects group carries a heavy workload. The number of grant awards and the volume of grant management and compliance tasks continues to grow. The complexity of reporting and invoicing to federal and state grant agencies has also increased as has the number of agency partners working collaboratively on grant funded projects.

In April 2017, the Board of Directors (Board) directed Sonoma Water to enter into agreements with each Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) to provide technical, outreach, grant writing and administrative support. These agreements have resulted in three \$1 million grant awards, which will be administered through 2022. In November 2019, three additional grant applications were prepared on behalf of the GSAs and are anticipated to be awarded in the first half of 2020. The Grants and Funded Projects team has also prepared applications and is administering awards for joint projects with Permit Sonoma and Transportation & Public Works.

The group currently administers, tracks, and reports on approximately 70 separate projects funded by federal and state grant 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. These financial reports require copious and detailed documentation, and strict adherence to state and federal regulations. Non-adherence can jeopardize current and future funding.

Replacing a Senior Account Clerk position with an Accounting Technician will provide a higher level of support for the Department Analyst and Accountant II, including the ability to take direct responsibility for managing Sonoma Water's internal database of funded projects, invoicing all reimbursable projects in EFS, maintaining financial compliance applicable to the funding source, and monitoring labor compliance for new and ongoing projects. The Accounting Technician will:

1. Review consultant/contractor agreements related to specific projects to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations
2. Develop, analyze, and finalize fiscal reports for funded projects that will be used to track project progress
3. Collaborate with project managers and grant specialists to meet reporting deadlines outlined in the funding agreement
4. Assist the grant finance team on budget development for new grant applications

This staffing adjustment will provide Sonoma Water a significant return on investment for a relatively low cost. Alternatives analyzed included maintaining the current organizational structure, and hiring an extra help Accounting Technician. With no change, current staff will continue to work more than 40 hours per week, increasing the likelihood of costly errors, missed deadlines, and staff burnout. Replacing a Senior Account Clerk with an Accounting Technician is less expensive than hiring an additional extra help position, and the work to be performed is ongoing, not temporary in nature. Replacing the position with an Accounting Technician will allow the Grants and Funded Projects section to better distribute work between the Department Analyst and Accountant II by offloading EFS invoicing, providing consistent database entry and management, and analyzing regulatory financial and labor compliance for each project. The cost of this program improvement would be very small compared to the benefit gained.

Administrative Services Officer II Conversion

After the October 2017 fires, the County Administrator’s Office and Sonoma Water identified the need for dedicated support for recovery efforts tied to agricultural and open space lands and the protections and resilience of the County’s water and species resources. In January 2018, the Board approved a resolution adding one Administrative Services Officer II time limited classification to the Sonoma Water allocation table. The position was to be responsible for collaborating with multiple County departments and external organizations to integrate existing plans into the County’s Recovery and Resilience Plan and then oversee implementation. The time-limited allocation was set to expire on February 6, 2023. Salary and benefits for this position are budgeted in the General Fund which is funded through property tax revenue and grants. The General Fund is reimbursed by our 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.

In October 2019, the ASO II time limited allocation became vacant. After the recent Public Safety Power Shutdown and fire events, Sonoma Water worked closely with the County’s Emergency Management Director to debrief and identify critical needs and potential gaps. It was determined that due to the specialized functions at Sonoma Water, both the County and Sonoma Water would benefit if Sonoma Water dedicated an internal resource to an Emergency Manager role, providing oversight to Sonoma Water’s emergency planning and response and working in close collaboration with the County’s Emergency Management team on planning and response to emergency events. The vacant Administrative Services Officer II time limited position was subsequently filled in January 2020 with an Emergency Manager whose primary responsibilities are the oversight and management of the Emergency Response and Preparedness Section at Sonoma Water. Given the critical nature of these activities and responsibilities, the ongoing need for disaster planning now and into the future, and the unpredictable nature of natural disasters, Sonoma Water requests the allocation be converted from time limited to permanent.

Prior Board Actions:

January 23, 2018 - Board approved changes to the Sonoma Water allocation table adding one ASO II Time Limited classification.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$5,606	\$5,774
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$1,361		
Total Expenditures	\$1,361	\$5,606	\$5,774
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$1,361	\$5,606	\$5,774
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$1,361	\$5,606	\$5,774

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Salary and benefits are budgeted in the General Fund which is funded through property tax revenue and grants. The General Fund is reimbursed by our 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 full time equivalent Accounting Technician allocation and deleting a 1.0 full time equivalent Senior Account Clerk represents a net increase in the last quarter of FY 2019/2020 labor costs of \$1,361 (based on an annual cost of \$97,410/yr minus \$91,967/yr for an annual increase of \$5,443). For FY 2020/2021 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$5,606, and \$5,774 for FY 2021/2022 assuming a 3% cost of living adjustment each year. The budget adjustment for FY 2019/2020 can be absorbed in the existing budget. FY 2020/2021 and FY 2021/2022 appropriations will be budgeted in these fiscal years.

The Administrative Services Officer II position was already budgeted and planned for in FY 19-20, 20-21, and 21-22. There are no fiscal impacts during this period.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Accounting Technician	\$4,174.24 - \$5,073.44	+1.00	0
Senior Account Clerk	\$3,941.18 - \$4,789.94	0	-1.00
Administrative Service Officer II time limited	\$7,851.05 - \$9,543.36	0	-1.00
Administrative Service Officer II regular full time	\$7,851.05 - \$9,543.36	+1.00	0

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

If approved, this request will increase Sonoma Water’s allocation tables as follows:

Administrative Services Officer II allocations will remain the same

Accounting Technician from 1 to 2

Senior Account Clerk from 2 to 1

Attachments:

2 Resolutions

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

None