



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2021-0482, **Version:** 1

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**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  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Sonoma Water Allocation Change Requests

**Recommended Action:**

Adopt a Resolution effective July 13, 2021 to:

- A) Add one (1) full-time equivalent Senior Office Assistant and delete one (1) full-time equivalent Office Assistant II in the Records Management/Clerical Services Section of the Sonoma Water Administrative Services Division to provide a higher level of support;
- B) add one (1) full-time equivalent Human Services Systems and Programming Analyst in the Sonoma Water Computer Instrumentation/Applications Support section of the Water/Wastewater Operations Division to support continued maintenance and development of internal applications;
- C) Add three (3) full-time equivalent Water Agency Mechanics to the Operations and Maintenance Division to support completion of time critical infrastructure repair projects.

**Executive Summary:**

The level of Sonoma Water's administrative support work has changed in the last years, requiring more specialized knowledge and greater attention to detail along with a more significant consequence of error. To provide this level of support, Sonoma Water requests to replace one Office Assistant II allocation with a Senior Office Assistant to provide a higher level of support to the organization.

Sonoma Water requests adding one Human Services Systems and Programming Analyst to the IT team. This position is required to perform continued maintenance and development of internal custom software supporting financial processing, compliance data, and business workflows.

Sonoma Water must dedicate resources in the Operations and Maintenance Division toward completion of time critical infrastructure repair projects. Due to aging infrastructure Sonoma Water requests the addition of three Water Agency Mechanics to support the maintenance, replacement, and repair of valves, meters, and other appurtenances associated with its water transmission and wastewater systems. This work will reduce the need for costly emergency repairs by addressing known issues before a failure occurs.

The Sonoma County Human Resources Department and County Administrator's Office have reviewed this request and concurs with the recommendation.

**Discussion:**

### **Senior Office Assistant (SOA) Add/Delete**

The nature of the administrative body of work at Sonoma Water has changed significantly. The work requires the individuals in these positions to format, process and proof Sonoma Water's agenda items submitted to its Board of Directors, as well as process mandated letters, regulatory and technical time sensitive documents that have statutory requirements. Formatting various reports, requests for proposals, and processing water supply agreements are among the other duties. These duties require technical proficiency to navigate our systems and constant communication with staff regarding content to ensure critical deadlines are met. The SOA position is responsible for oversight of and compliance with the overall processes, and must ensure accuracy and attention to detail in the final product. The complexity of these processes and the level of responsibility are more appropriate for the SOA classification than the Office Assistant II (OAIL).

This is a critical request as the clerical support section is currently understaffed due to turnover and retirement of long-standing, full-time personnel. Use of temporary extra help is only a short-term solution as the services the position provides are ongoing. Further, the complexities and responsibilities of the position have grown over time, including learning and then training and assisting staff with new software such as Assetworks, Sonoma Water's fleet management database and OnBase, an electronic record management software. Training is time-consuming and on-going making it better suited for a full-time permanent employee.

The primary duties of the SOA will be the following:

- Format, proof and process board agenda items
- Format letters, requests for proposals, and reports
- Obtain senior management signatures and track agreements
- Upload document images onto an electronic management system
- Provide support to the front desk and dispatch vehicles to staff
- Be proficient with the ability to support staff in using Assetworks and On Base
- Serve as a backup for construction bid process by ordering and distributing specs/plans, setting up bid space, and tracking the time for accepting the bid documents
- Take meeting notes

### **Human Services Systems and Programming Analyst Add**

Sonoma Water requests to add 1.0 FTE Systems and Programming Analyst to support, develop, and maintain existing custom software applications. Human Services Systems and Programming Analyst is the job classification that aligns with the duties and responsibilities required of this position by the department. For the past fifteen (15) years, Sonoma Water contracted with a software developer to create and maintain several custom line-of-business software applications. The contractor recently found alternate employment, leaving Sonoma Water with a pressing need to support custom software comprising financial processing, compliance data, and business workflows. Financial processing applications calculate water delivery and produce customer billing. Compliance data-gathering applications are used to process regulatory compliance and environmental data. Business applications are used to structure and facilitate internal business processes and workflows such as contracting, project management, and grant tracking.

Sonoma Water attempted to meet its business needs with commercially available software, including formal solicitation for financial applications, and was unable to find suitable solutions. County ISD replied to a support request indicating they currently have insufficient staffing to absorb this work. Use of extra-help does not provide desired continuity nor the necessary technical skillset, which includes the development of

institutional knowledge and an understanding of evolving Sonoma Water processes including how customer contracts are codified in software. It is this combination of skills and understanding which permit software modifications without risking application performance or reliability. Continuing to meet this need with long term contract help is untenable as the workload exceeds that of a full-time employee; the former contractor worked over 30 hours per week and was augmented by as many as 3 extra-help programmers. Additionally, the risk of contracting and the subsequent loss of “institutional knowledge” of the interactions between technology solutions and business and administrative processes is costly and difficult to overcome.

As the work is core to financial, business, and compliance reporting processes, developing in-house skills and maintaining institutional knowledge and continuity is important to Sonoma Water’s success. Therefore, this body of work is most appropriately assigned to an internal permanent employee who will have the following primary duties:

- Creating, modifying, and maintaining custom software applications used by various sections including Finance, Engineering, GIS, and Environmental, by using web, application, and database programming
- Repairing software if errors or changes occur with data inputs, process changes, or reporting output
- Understanding, maintaining, repairing, and advising on:
  - financial processing applications that calculate water delivery and produce customer billing,
  - compliance data-gathering applications used to gather and process regulatory compliance and environmental data, and
  - business applications that facilitate internal business processes and workflows such as contracting, project management, and grant tracking
- Employing coding skills to make software modifications without risking application performance or reliability
- Creating and maintaining a software codebase and technical documentation
- Creating and maintaining business process and functional documentation
- Gathering, documenting, and meeting business requirements.
- Advising management on software solution selection, software lifecycle, and developing technology roadmap

### **Water Agency Mechanic Add**

To address aging infrastructure needs Sonoma Water requests to add three Water Agency Mechanics to the Operations and Maintenance Division. Additional resources are needed to perform maintenance, replacement, and repair of both the wastewater treatment and water supply systems. The wastewater system requires upgrade and replacement of numerous lift stations. The water transmission system requires maintenance and replacement of valves, meters and other appurtenances in various areas, including the following:

- 1) Cathodic protection to address corrosion
- 2) Replacement of valves and meters to address leaks
- 3) Pumping plant maintenance and pump replacement

There is a critical need to address the steady increase in planned projects becoming emergency repairs due to insufficient staffing resources. Current staffing is not adequate to address all the present priority needs nor those anticipated in the near future. Due to timeframe and cost of hiring contractors, and the ongoing nature of the work, adding permanent mechanic allocations is both more cost effective and expedient. As we continue to manage the risk associated with our aging systems, additional mechanics will be able to address

the maintenance needs as they develop, and more importantly, before they become emergencies. The cost to address emergencies is much greater than normal maintenance or scheduled replacement of infrastructure. This important work aligns with our Board's Strategic Goals of Organizational Excellence, Goal 1; and Resilient Infrastructure, Goal 2.

Upon approval of the request, Sonoma Water will recruit immediately to address current needs, including priority valve and meter replacement work needing immediate attention. Within 6-months Sonoma Water will begin to see the positive impacts of this expanded workforce in both water supply and wastewater infrastructure. This will result in minimization of leaks and help address the State mandate to eliminate exfiltration of wastewater.

The primary job responsibilities of the new Water Agency Mechanics will be repair and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment and distribution systems, specifically:

- Replacement of valves, meters and other appurtenances associated with the water transmission system
- Cathodic protection to address corrosion
- Replacement of valves and meters to address leaks
- Pumping plant maintenance and pump replacement
- Upgrade and replacement of wastewater system lift stations

**Prior Board Actions:**

None.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 21-22 Adopted</b>	<b>FY22-23 Projected</b>	<b>FY 23-24 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$824,327	\$840,813	\$857,629
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$824,327</b>	<b>\$840,813</b>	<b>\$857,629</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF	\$824,327	\$840,813	\$857,629
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$824,327</b>	<b>\$840,813</b>	<b>\$857,629</b>

**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 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. Appropriations for these positions being requested are included in the FY 2021-22 Adopted

Budget.

Adding a 1.0 FTE SOA allocation and deleting 1.0 FTE OA II allocation represents an increase in salary and benefits of \$14,934. If filled by the start of FY 21/22 the increase in costs would be \$15,233 in FY 21/22, \$15,538 in FY 22/23, and \$15,849 in FY 23/24 assuming a 2% COLA each year.

The increase in annual salary and benefits for the addition of 1.0 FTE Human Services Systems and Programming Analyst allocation is \$177,528. If filled by the start of FY 21/22, the increase in costs would be \$181,079 in FY 21/22, \$184,700 in FY 22/23, and \$188,394 in FY 23/24 assuming a 2% COLA each year.

The increase in annual salary and benefits for the addition of 3.0 FTE Water Agency Mechanic allocations is \$615,701. If filled by the start of FY 21/22 the increase in costs would be \$628,015 in FY 21/22, \$640,575 in FY 22/23, and \$653,386 in FY 23/24 assuming a 2% COLA each year.

<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>
Office Assistant II	\$3346.35 - \$4066.41	0	1
Senior Office Assistant	\$3812.47 - \$4635.15	1	0
Human Services Systems and Software Analyst	\$7,404.06-\$9,000.71	1	0
WA Mechanic	\$7,609.29 - \$9,249.42	3	0

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

If approved, this request will change Sonoma Water's allocation tables as follows:

Office Assistant II allocations will decrease from 1 to 0

Senior Office Assistant will increase from 6 to 7

Water Agency Mechanic will increase from 18 to 21

Human Services Systems and software Analyst will increase from 1 to 2

**Attachments:**

Resolution

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

None.