



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** Human Resources  
**Department No.:** 064  
**For Agenda Of:** June 4, 2024  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:**  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Department Kristine Schmidt, Human Resources Director, 805-568-2800  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Carlos Silvas, Employee Relations Division Chief, 805-884.6805

**SUBJECT: Adjust Wages and New Hire Incentive for Job Classification of Veterinarian**

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt the resolution in Attachment A adjusting the salary range for the existing Veterinarian job classification to \$71.610 to \$86.240 per hour effective June 10, 2024; and
- b) Approve recommendation authorizing the County Human Resources Director to add the classification of Veterinarian to the critical, hard to fill medical professional positions that may be offered up to \$90,000 new hire incentive under the provisions of the New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy, and
- c) Determine that the above actions are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review per CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) since the recommended actions are government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

**Summary Text:**

The recommended actions would increase the salary range for the existing Veterinarian classification by 20%, from \$59.122 - \$71.863 to \$71.610 - \$86.240 per hour. It would also provide authority for the County Human Resources Director to provide a new hire incentive of up to \$90,000 to Veterinarians as a critical, hard to fill medical professional position.

The Veterinarian classification was established in January of 2022 for the Shelter Medicine Program within Animal Services in the Public Health Department to provide veterinary medical services and meet state shelter medical requirements within County-operated animal shelters.

The County met and conferred with SEIU Local 620 and the parties agreed on the recommended salary, which salary is consistent with other comparable California public agencies performing these functions within the classified service. Designation of the Veterinarian as a critical, hard to fill medical professional position under the County's policy, and thus providing a new hire incentive of up to \$90,000 is not subject to meet & confer. The recommended salary increase would position the County slightly above the comparable market average, as well as our nearest competitor public agency. The new hire incentive of up to \$90,000 would further bolster the County's ability to be competitive in hiring a qualified candidate.

**Background:**

This job classification was created in January 2022 to elevate the level of veterinary care provided by the County, enhance Animal Services' image and reputation within our community, and allow Animal Services to expand lifesaving programs. In addition, this job classification will provide continuity of program supervision and veterinary care for the animals in the shelter, and reduce Animal Services' reliance on the use of part-time, independent contractor veterinarians.

The Public Health Department first recruited for this position for a one-month period in November/December 2022, but this resulted in no qualified candidates for consideration. The Department then recruited for this position for a 10-month period between December 2022 and October 2023. This again resulted in no qualified candidates for consideration.

Revisions to the job classification were made in December 2023 with the hope of garnering increased interest in the position, and new recruitment was opened in February of 2024. To date this has only resulted in one qualified candidate for consideration, but no successful job-offer.

Most recently, County Human Resources completed a compensation study to determine whether the County of Santa Barbara was at market value. It was found that two of our usual SEIU Local 620 comparable counties (Santa Cruz & Ventura) had increased their wages considerably in the last 6 months.

Additionally, given the limited number of public agencies utilizing this classification within our usual SEIU Local 620 comparable agencies, it was necessary to expand the study scope to include some additional coastal counties. Aside from Mendocino County, the smaller, non-metropolitan coastal counties more similar to Santa Barbara County do not utilize this classification. Thus, the study was further expanded to include larger, more metropolitan counties. To balance these out, two inland California public agencies were also included.

The results of this study show Santa Barbara County to be 13.6% below this particular comparable market average, and 18.66% behind our closest competitor, Ventura County. Given the extent of time this position has been vacant (2 ½ years), and the dismal recruiting outcomes experienced, it is recommended the salary for this classification be increased by 20%. Doing so would increase the hourly rate to \$71.61 – \$86.24, or \$148,949 – \$179,379 annually, and will position Santa Barbara County above the comparable market average, as well as our closest competitor public agency.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes

**Narrative:**

The Veterinarian position and costs are included in the FY 2024-2025 Recommended budget at the current salary range classification. The 20% increased annual cost at the highest step is estimated at \$47,000. This amount is budgeted in the FY 2024-2025 Recommended budget under contract veterinarians. It is the intention of Public Health Department Animal Services to reduce the contract veterinarian budget and move to salary and benefits once a staff veterinarian is hired. As a reminder, the Board of Supervisors set aside \$188,200 in one-time funds in FY 2020-2021 to assist with funding the position. To date, those funds have not been utilized as the position has not yet been hired. Animal Services has budgeted the full \$188,200 for use in FY 2024-25. Pending the timing of a successful Veterinarian hire, the one-time funds will allow Animal Services to balance costs in the interim. The staff Veterinarian will ultimately reduce services and supplies costs at the shelters including food, pharmaceuticals and cleaning supplies, while Animal Services continues to work towards increasing animal licensing and other revenues to ensure the program's future sustainability. Additionally, the department anticipates that the cost savings generated by the staff Veterinarian will be sufficient to cover the ongoing costs of the position.

**Special Instructions:**

Please email one (1) copy of the minute order and one (1) copy of the fully executed Salary Resolution to Tracy Rogers, Workforce Planning Analyst, Human Resources Department at [trogers@countyofsb.org](mailto:trogers@countyofsb.org).

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Salary Resolution

**Authored by:**

Carlos Silvas, Employee Relations Division Chief, Human Resources Department

**cc:**

Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Nancy Anderson, Assistant County Executive Officer  
Mouhanad Hammami, Director, Public Health Department