



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: December 11, 2018
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Maria Elena De Guevara , Interim Human Resources Director,
568-2816

Contact Info: Joseph Pisano, Chief of Employee Relations, 568-2839

SUBJECT: *Proposed Change to Civil Service Rule 908*

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approves a change to Civil Service Rule 908 to enable the appointing authority in the Sheriff's Office to extend the probationary period of employees in the classification of Communications Dispatcher I for a period not to exceed one year and sixty days, similar to extensions permitted for employees in safety classifications, and
- b) Determines pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) that the above action is a government fiscal activity which does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment, and therefore is not a project subject to environmental review.

Summary Text:

Civil Service Rule 908 provides for a probationary period of one year for most County non-safety job classifications. The recommended action would enable the appointing authority in the Sheriff's Office to extend the probationary period of employees in the classification of Communications Dispatcher I for a period not to exceed one year and sixty days, similar to extensions permitted for employees in safety classifications. The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office (SBSO) has requested this revision to Civil Service Rule 908: Duration of Probationary Period to provide additional time to evaluate newly hired dispatchers and potentially make permanent appointments rather than release employees from probation. The Civil Service Commission also voted to recommend this change, and the Deputy Sheriff's Association supports it.

Background:

Like law enforcement agencies across the state, the SBSO has had difficulty recruiting, hiring, and retaining dispatchers. Once they pass initial screening/testing and are certified for hiring consideration, candidates are required to successfully complete and pass an extensive background investigation, which includes polygraph and medical examinations, financial and character investigations, and psychological and medical examinations before they are appointed. This process takes at least three months to complete, and many candidates fail to pass the background investigation.

Once hired, Communications Dispatchers undergo on the job training and are evaluated throughout the existing one year probationary period. However, it can take up to a year to fully train a new Communications Dispatcher, and the SBSO would like to be able to extend the probationary period of employees in this job classification to be able to evaluate employees' performance on the job once fully trained. In addition to the aforementioned difficulties filling positions, Communications Dispatcher work is a high stress occupation, and in the past the County has seen a higher level of turnover in this area than in others Countywide, even after employees pass probation. The flexibility to extend the probationary period to potentially retain staff in this hard to fill/hard to retain job classification would be beneficial to SBSO operations.

Absent the ability to extend the probationary period, the SBSO typically fails new Communications Dispatchers on probation if there is any question about their ability to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position. This is prudent; however, if the probationary period could be extended for up to 60 days, similar to the rule for employees in safety classifications, the SBSO could offer additional training and remedial efforts to help employees be successful in this difficult role. The ability to extend the probationary period for Communications Dispatcher I could be to the mutual advantage of employees, who would have the opportunity to improve performance and keep their jobs, and for the SBSO, which by the end of the one year existing probationary period, will have invested considerable time and effort in hiring and training staff for positions that are perennially difficult to fill.

The proposed changes would revise Rule 908 as follows and are **tracked below:**

908. Duration of Probationary Period.

Each appointment, promotion, demotion, or transfer to a permanent position shall be subject to a probationary period of one year, except as otherwise provided in these Rules. An employee who promotes within a flexibly staffed, safety classification series shall be subject to a probationary period of one year. However, an employee who promotes within a flexibly staffed, non-safety classification series shall be subject to a probationary period of six months.

The probationary period shall date from the time of appointment to a permanent position after certification from an eligible list, and shall not include time served as a provisional, emergency, or limited term appointee, nor any period of continuous leave of absence exceeding fifteen days.

During the probationary period of each employee, it shall be the duty of the appointing authority to evaluate the employee on a quarterly basis. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the employee's ability to perform the job and to provide feedback to the employee about his/her performance. The appointing authority shall inform the employee of any progress that is less than satisfactory. If the probationary employee's conduct warrants disciplinary measures, the appointing authority may take appropriate action at any time as provided by these Rules.

The appointing authority may extend the probationary period for employees **who are in the classification of Communications Dispatcher I or** who are in, or promote within, safety classifications for a total probationary period not to exceed one year and sixty days. The appointing authority may extend the probationary period for employees who promote within flexibly-staffed, non-safety classifications for a total probationary period not to exceed one year. For all such extensions, the appointing authority shall submit a statement of reasons that shall be provided to the employee and the Personnel Director prior to the expiration of the probationary period.

If an employee is laid off during the probationary period and is later reemployed in the same class, the employee need only complete the balance of the required probationary period.

If the name of an employee released during the probationary period is restored to the eligible list from which originally certified, the employee shall be required to serve a completely new probationary period.

Fiscal Analysis:

Budgeted: Yes

There is no fiscal impact associated with the proposed change to Civil Service Rule 908.

- cc: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
- Michael C. Ghizzoni, County Counsel
- Bill Brown, Sheriff – Coroner
- Neil Gowing, President, Deputy Sheriff's Association