



Monterey County

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: 21-842

October 12, 2021

Introduced: 10/4/2021

Current Status: Agenda Ready

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Matter Type: General Agenda Item

- a. Approve and authorize step advancement for Susan Blitch and Wendy Strimling to Step 6 of the Assistant County Counsel salary range effective October 9, 2021, in accordance with Personnel Policies and Practices Resolution (PPPR) No. 98-394, Section A.1.11.5;
- b. Approve and authorize step advancement for Christopher Knight and Marisol Jones to Step 5 of the Assistant District Attorney salary range effective October 9, 2021, in accordance with Personnel Policies and Practices Resolution (PPPR) No. 98-394, Section A.1.11.5;
- c. Approve and authorize step advancement for Jeremy Dzubay to Step 7 of the Assistant Public Defender salary range effective October 9, 2021, in accordance with Personnel Policies and Practices Resolution (PPPR) No. 98-394, Section and A.1.11.5.

RECOMMENDATION:

- a. Approve and authorize step advancement for Susan Blitch and Wendy Strimling to Step 6 of the Assistant County Counsel salary range effective October 9, 2021, in accordance with Personnel Policies and Practices Resolution (PPPR) No. 98-394, Section A.1.11.5;
- b. Approve and authorize step advancement for Christopher Knight and Marisol Jones to Step 5 of the Assistant District Attorney salary range effective October 9, 2021, in accordance with Personnel Policies and Practices Resolution (PPPR) No. 98-394, Section A.1.11.5;
- c. Approve and authorize step advancement for Jeremy Dzubay to Step 7 of the Assistant Public Defender salary range effective October 9, 2021, in accordance with Personnel Policies and Practices Resolution (PPPR) No. 98-394, Section and A.1.11.5.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Human Resources Department conducted a base wage compensation study of the Deputy County Counsel classification series and found the benchmark classification was 12.26% below the average of the County's comparable agencies. Historically, the Deputy County Counsel, Deputy District Attorney and Deputy Public Defender classification series have been tied in base wages. The Board of Supervisors approved the implementation of the 12.26% base wage adjustment for the three attorney groups Units D, E and G through labor negotiations effective July 31, 2021. On September 21, 2021, the Board approved base wage increases for the Chief Deputy County Counsel and Chief Deputy Public Defender classifications due to compaction that occurred.

The County Counsel reports that, after being promoted to the Assistant County Counsel positions in early 2020, Ms. Blitch and Ms. Strimling assumed new duties in assisting in the overall management of the County Counsel's Office. These include participating in the budget process, assisting in managing the Risk Division, and sitting with and advising the Board of Supervisors. In addition to these new duties, Ms. Blitch and Ms. Strimling have continued to perform the duties they discharged as Senior Deputies in managing the office's three units - Litigation, General Government, and Land Use. All of these duties

require them to work very long hours in the very difficult circumstances presented by the COVID pandemic. The County Counsel reports that they have performed at a high level, undertaking tasks without direction and performing them exceptionally well. In the County Counsel's opinion, the recommended step advances for Ms. Blitch and Ms. Strimling are very well deserved and will ensure the appropriate salary differential between his two (2) assistants and those they supervise.

The District Attorney Office reported that the Assistant District Attorney positions are essential and serve as part of the executive management team. The Assistant District Attorney positions are assigned to one or more of the units with the District Attorney's office to assist with the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures and to direct the activities of designated prosecutorial units. The Assistant District Attorneys have the responsibility of selecting, training, supervising, evaluating and administering corrective action to subordinate staff and may act for the District Attorney in her absence and in the absence of the Chief Assistant District Attorney. The Assistant District Attorneys Christopher Knight and Marisol Mendez currently earn 5.3% less than the attorneys they supervise. Each Assistant District Attorney directly supervises fifteen (15) attorneys, and multiple complicated criminal specialty units. Mr. Knight and Ms. Mendez are extremely knowledgeable and have demonstrated exceptional leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and have worked primarily onsite handling necessary filing and court appearances while ensuring the Deputy District Attorneys working remotely remained engaged and productive. The District Attorney is requesting the recommended step advance placements for Mr. Knight and Ms. Mendez.

The Office of the Public Defender reported that the Assistant Public Defender position has evolved since Mr. Dzubay appointment. This position is responsible for planning, organizing and directing the operations of the department including the supervision of four (4) Chief Deputy Public Defenders, the Investigation's Unit, the Administration Unit, and legal support staff as well as managing personnel matters. In addition, new legislative mandates have expanded the role of the Office of the Public Defender significantly increasing the cases coming into the Public Defender. The Assistant Public Defender is responsible for reviewing and evaluating these cases and determining the appropriate action. Lastly, the Assistant Public Defender has been instrumental in securing grant funding for the department and working closely with the Finance Manager to ensure the rigorous State reporting requirements are adhered. The Public Defender indicated that Mr. Dzubay has been instrumental in the development of policies, procedures and protocols for the department. Mr. Dzubay leadership and collaboration skills have been key in the transformation of the Office of the Public Defender. The Public Defender recommends that Mr. Dzubay be advance to step 7 to provide the appropriate salary differential with the positions he supervises.

In determining the appropriate step, recommendations have been made in accordance with the County's Personnel Policies and Practices Resolution (PPPR) section A.1.11.5. This section provides for waiver of advanced step advancement due to unusual circumstances.

In conclusion, approval is requested to approve and authorize the advanced step placements for the above referenced employees.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The County Administrative office concurs with the recommendations.

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FINANCING:

The annualized salary and benefits increase for County Counsel Budget Unit 8057 - Fund 001 - Appropriation Unit COU001 is approximately \$27,758. It is the intent to absorb the increase within existing appropriations and, if necessary, will bring forward a budget augmentation for consideration in the latter part of the fiscal year.

The annualized salary and benefits increase for District Attorney Unit 8063 - Fund 001 - Appropriation Unit DIS001 is approximately \$56,372. It is the intent to absorb the increase within existing appropriations and, if necessary, will bring forward a budget augmentation for consideration in the latter part of the fiscal year.

The annualized salary and benefits increase for Public Defender 2270 Unit 8169 - Fund 001 - Appropriation Unit PUB001 is approximately \$28,457. It is the intent to absorb the increase within existing appropriations and, if necessary, will bring forward a budget augmentation for consideration in the latter part of the fiscal year.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

The recommended action addresses the Board of Supervisors' Administration Strategic Initiative and demonstrates the County's commitment to meeting the Board's initiatives by attracting, recruiting, and retaining a diverse, talented work force that supports the mission of Monterey County.

- ☐ Economic Development
- ☒ Administration
- ☐ Health and Human Services
- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☐ Public Safety

Prepared By: Wendell Sells, Management Analyst III, 796-6066

Approved By: Irma Ramirez-Bough, Director of Human Resources, 755-5043

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Wendell Sells

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Irma Ramirez-Bough

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