



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Personnel

Subject: Board of Supervisors 2025-26 Compensation

Meeting Date: June 10, 2025

Formal Title: Consider approving in concept an "Ordinance Amending Subdivision (A) of Section 2.02.060 of the Santa Cruz County Code Relating to the Compensation of the Board of Supervisors", and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Approve in concept the attached "Ordinance Amending Subdivision (A) of Section 2.02.060 of the Santa Cruz County Code Relating to the Compensation of the Board of Supervisors";
2. Schedule a second reading and final adoption of the ordinance on June 24, 2025; and
3. Authorize the Director of Personnel, the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector, and the County Executive Officer to take all necessary administrative actions to effectuate the changes as described in this ordinance.

Executive Summary

In accordance with Subdivision (A) Section 2.02.060 of the Santa Cruz County Code, annually each June, the Board of Supervisors may adopt an ordinance to adjust the salaries of Board members. The annual salary for consideration shall be no greater than 62 percent of the salary for Superior Court Judges which is set by the Judicial Council of California based on Government Code 68203.

Discussion

Historically, the Board of Supervisors' salary increases were linked to the salary of judges based on Government Code 68203 which in turn ties judicial increases to the average percentage salary increase for California state employees. While this linkage was eliminated in December 1997 due to deep budget constraints, additional language to permit board members to waive salary increases and divert funds back to the County or a charitable organization was added. Although the Board's actions were well intended, the ordinance struck out language that provided an objective external standard and replaced it with what can be perceived as the power to decide one's own salary. Since that time, Board salaries were predicated on salary recommendations based on consumer price index, comparisons with other public agencies, or internal alignment based off of negotiations with bargaining units. Some Counties throughout the state link their Board compensation to that of Superior Court Judges.

To reestablish an external objective standard, on May 11, 2021, an ordinance to amend the Board of Supervisors' compensation was adopted to maintain the Board of Supervisors' salary at 62% of the salary for Superior Court Judges. The 62% factor was derived by comparing the Board's salary to the Judge's salary at the time of consideration; and implemented as the ongoing baseline for future compensation increases. This change became effective January 1, 2022. Because Board actions adopting salary increases are subject to referendum under the State Constitution,

linkage to judicial salaries will require adoption of an ordinance annually each June based on the available pay information of the Judicial Council. The yearly ordinance will require two readings in open session, with salary increases to take effect 61 days after final Board approval.

Currently, the Superior Court Judge salary is \$244,727 annually compared to the Board of Supervisors' salary of \$147,857 annually. To maintain a 62% alignment with Superior Court Judges, the Board of Supervisors' salary requires adjustment to \$151,731 annually or \$5,835.80 biweekly resulting in a 2.62% increase.

Financial Impact

The total increase in annual compensation of \$3,874 per supervisor is included in the Proposed 2025-26 Budget.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - Workplace & Workforce, Leadership, Operations & Services
Operational Plan - Operational Excellence

Submitted By:

Ajita Patel, Personnel Director

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.