

**Commissioners**

*Ann Marie Silvestri, Chair  
Monica Colondres, Vice Chair  
Karen Cunningham  
Charles Hansen  
Tricia Tomlinson*

**County Attorney to the  
Commission**

*Ramaah Sadasivam,  
Deputy County Attorney*

**Human Resources Department**

*Rocio Kiryczun,  
Director of Human Resources*

500 County Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
650-363-4333  
[www.smcgov.org](http://www.smcgov.org)



**Civil Service Commission  
2024 Annual Report**

*This page intentionally left blank*

## I. Introduction

The Civil Service Commission (“Commission”), mandated by the County Charter, oversees the County’s Merit System to ensure the selection and retention of employees in the classified service based on merit and fitness. The Commission Rules provide for:

- Standardization and classification of all positions
- Examination of candidates
- Establishment of eligible lists
- Certification of eligible candidates
- Length of probationary periods
- Temporary appointments in the absence of an eligible list
- Criteria and procedures for demotion, reduction in force, and reemployment
- Criteria and procedures for suspension, dismissal, and other disciplinary action
- The hiring of unemployed persons under programs designed to relieve unemployment and their suspension, disciplining or removal
- The manner in which employees of an agency absorbed by the County may become County employees and the rights, if any, which shall accrue to them for their service with the agency
- Hearing appeals. Employees in the classified service may appeal any action pursuant to Commission Rule XIV *et seq.*

The Commission hears matters pertaining to dismissals, demotions, suspensions, below standard performance evaluations, applicant recruitment process, and examination process; reviews requests for extension of eligible lists; and allocates new or revised job classifications to an appropriate bargaining unit for employee/employer relation purposes.

The Commission is comprised of five Commissioners, appointed by the Board of Supervisors, to serve four-year terms. The Commission is supported by the County’s Human Resources Department. The Director of Human Resources serves as the executive officer for the Commission.

The purpose of the Civil Service Commission Annual Report is to provide an overview of the San Mateo County Civil Service Commission’s activities throughout the calendar year, and to comply with San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 069276, section 20. The report contains a summary of the Civil Service Commission appeals process, statistics on Commission hearings and outcomes, and observations and recommendations of the Commission.

The County currently has approximately 6,036 positions for the 2024-25 fiscal year. Below is a chart of the total number of regular, budgeted positions over the last five fiscal years.

FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
5,782	5,799	5,871	5,959	6036

## **II. Appeal Process**

The appeal process commences with the filing of a petition for hearing. When a matter is granted a hearing, the Commission determines whether the matter will be heard by the Commission, by a board composed of one or more members of the Commission, or by a hearing officer appointed by the Commission for that purpose.

Parties to the hearing are entitled to be represented by counsel or a representative of their choice, subpoena and cross-examine witnesses, and present other evidence to the Commission, hearing board, or hearing officer as deemed pertinent to the matter at hand.

In any hearing on an appeal from a dismissal, demotion, or suspension, the burden of proof is on the appointing authority (usually the Department), and in all other types of hearings, the burden of proof is on the petitioner. In a hearing before the Commission, the Commission will make written findings of fact and render its final decision.

### **Revisions and Additions to the Appeals Process:**

In 2013 the Commission adopted a guideline on a trial basis of establishing time limits on presentation of hearing evidence and arguments. The purpose of this pilot project guideline was to determine whether it might reduce the length, and evidentiary and argument redundancy, of appeal hearings. Commissioners had raised concerns that they are provided materials in advance for some hearings, but not by all parties, and that often the parties then spend a great deal of time at the hearing presenting the same materials as had been provided in advance. Another concern raised was that of multiple witnesses being called to make the same point repeatedly, causing redundancy in the evidence presented.

Since that time, time limits (to be managed by the Chair) are discussed and proposed for each side when the hearing is set. In addition, all parties are strongly encouraged to provide materials, including proposed findings of fact and decision in advance of the hearing to best utilize the hearing for the opportunity for the Commission/Hearing Officer(s) to ask questions that will enable them to make informed decisions.

### **Summary of 2024 Appeals:**

In 2024, the Civil Service Commission received five (5) petitions for hearings (one (1) dismissal, one (1) suspension, one (1) non-punitive suspension, and two (2) probationary rejections). The Commission granted hearings for three (3) of these matters, one of which is assigned to a hearing officer. Two of the matters, a suspension and probationary rejection, were not granted hearings.

Of three (3) matters granted a hearing in 2024, one (1) case was upheld, one (1) was withdrawn, and one (1) is pending a hearing.

2024 Petitions for Hearing*			
Department	Disciplinary	Other	Total
Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder	--	1	1
County Library	1	1	2
Sheriff's Office	2	--	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

\*Only departments that had appeals during 2024 are listed above.

**Five Year Glance (2020-2024):**

During the last five calendar years, there were 22 petitions for appeals. Of these, 18 (82% of all petitions filed) were granted a hearing.

The average number of petitions for hearings per year during the last five years has been four (4). Of the 18 appeals that were granted hearings during the last five years, in seven (7) cases (39%) the discipline imposed by the appointing authority was upheld by the Commission and in two (2) cases (11%) the discipline imposed was modified by the Commission. In addition, seven (7) appeals (39%) were withdrawn prior to hearing and two (2) matters (11%) are pending a hearing.

POST-HEARING DECISIONS BY DEPARTMENTS WITH APPEALS, 2020-2024*																							
Department	Department Upheld					Department Modified					Department Not Sustained					Withdrawn					Pending		5 YEAR TOTAL
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2023	2024	
County Library					1															1			2
County Health	2															1		1					4
Human Services		1														1							2
Information Services Department				1																			1
Probation	1					1																	2
Public Works				1		1											2						4
Sheriff's Office																1					1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>

\*Only departments that had appeals during the last five years are listed above. \*\*Includes withdrawn and pending appeals. \*\*\* An appeal received in late 2022 was heard in early 2023.

Total Decisions by Year**				
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
8	3	1	3	3

### III. Other Commission Activity

The Commission held eight 10 regular meetings and one (1) special meeting during 2024.

#### Modification of Representation Units:

Pursuant to the Employer-Employee Relations Policy a registered employee organization may request the modification of an established representation unit by submitting to the Human Resources Director a petition accompanied by proof of employee approval of the proposed modification signed by not less than 60% of those employees who, if the proposed modification should be granted, would be moved from one representation unit to another.

All petitions for modification of units are then set for hearing before the Commission, which makes the final determination on the appropriateness of all units.

In 2024, the Commission received five (5) petitions for modification of representation units. Hearings were granted for of these matters and assigned new representation units as follows:

Petition	Current Representation Unit	New Representation Unit – Approved by Civil Service Commission
Supervising Communications Dispatchers	Unrepresented Management	AFSCME
Institution Services Managers	Unrepresented Management	PDA
Sheriff’s Lieutenants	Unrepresented Management	OSS – Lieutenants Unit
Forensic Autopsy Technicians	AFSCME	DSA – Law Enforcement Unit
Community Services Officers	AFSCME	DSA – Law Enforcement Unit

## New Classifications:

The Commission approved nine (9) new classifications in 2024:

New Classifications	Representation Unit	Probation Period (Hours)
Assistant Director of Procurement	Unrepresented Management	2080
Chief of Community Affairs and Programming	Unrepresented Management	2080
Deputy Sheriff Bailiff	Deputy Sheriff's Association	3120
Director of Equity and Labor Standards	Unrepresented Management	2080
Director of Strategic Communications and Community Partnerships	Unrepresented Management	2080
Park Ranger II	AFSCME – Parks	Increase to 2080
Sheriff's Criminal Records Technician III	SEIU - Office and Technical Services	1040
Supervising Human Services Care Counselor	AFSCME – Human Services	1040
Value Analysis Analyst	SEIU – Accounting & Admin Services	1040

The Commission reviews and approves all new classification descriptions, their bargaining unit assignments and probationary hour requirements to ensure the selection and retention of employees in the classified service on the basis of merit and fitness. As defined in the County Charter, the Commission shall prescribe rules that provide for the standardization and classification of all positions in the classified service. It is uncommon for Human Resources to submit new classifications that have not been vetted through the process and through the labor organizations (if represented) and therefore it is rare that the Commission would disapprove a new classification; however, it is possible for the Commission to instruct the Human Resources Department to conduct more research or provide more information.



## **Extension of Eligible Lists:**

In 2024 the Commission approved the extension of 19 eligibility lists as follows:

- Assistant Deputy Chief of Probation- Probations Services Manager II – 3 months
- Auditor-Appraiser I/II – 5 months
- Automotive Mechanic – 6 months
- Clinical Nurse-Infection Preventionist – 6 months
- Creative Arts Therapist – 6 months
- Criminalist I/II - Forensic Biology/DNA – 6 months
- Dentist – 5 months
- Deputy Coroner – 5 months
- Deputy Public Administrator I/II – 5 months
- Estate Property Officer /Exam Plan - 6 months
- Food Service Supervisor - Exempt – 3 months
- GIS Analyst III (IS Data Specialist III) – 5 months
- Library Assistant I/II – 3 months
- Management Analyst - Probation Department – 1 month
- Medical Office Assistant II – 5 months
- Pretrial Specialist – 2 months
- Sheriff's Sergeant – 4 months
- Sheriff's Captain – 5 months
- Supervising Mental Health Clinician – 5 months

Extension of eligible lists is crucial in expediting the hiring and selection process. By extending the eligible list, a need for new recruitment when a viable list of candidates is available is eliminated, thereby saving both time and resources. It also ensures that qualified candidates who have successfully participated in the examination process are provided an extended opportunity to be considered for County employment.

## **IV. 2025 Workplan/Priorities**

- A. Schedule and hold appeal hearings as soon as practicable.
- B. Remain alert to opportunities to improve the Commission's procedures and Rules.
- C. Update Civil Service Rules.