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June 03, 2025

County of Ventura Board of Supervisors

Subject: Public Hearing for Consideration and Possible Introduction of an Ordinance Establishing Compensation for the Board of Supervisors and Repealing Ordinance Number 4543.

Recommendations

It is recommended that your Board:

1. Open the public hearing, introduce, read in title only, and waive further reading of the attached proposed Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors establishing compensation for the Board of Supervisors (Exhibit 1) and repealing Ordinance number 4543 (Exhibit 2).
2. Set June 24, 2025, as the second hearing date for adoption of said proposed Ordinance (Exhibit 1).

Fiscal Impact

It is anticipated that the annual fiscal impact will be approximately \$148,700 including benefits. The appropriations required for this action are included in the proposed Fiscal Year 25/26 budget.

Discussion

The Board of Supervisors is required by the California Constitution to establish its own compensation and to do so by ordinance. Ordinance 4191, approved by the Board on June 28, 1999, and effective August 29, 1999, established the annual base salary for members of the Board of Supervisors in accordance with recommendations contained in the 1999 Blue Ribbon Salary Review Committee Report.

The Committee recommended that the base annual salary for Board members be set at a level equal to seventy percent (70%) of the annual salary of a Superior Court Judge, with a five percent (5%) per annum cap on any increases.

On February 8, 2005, Ordinance 4316 was approved by the Board of Supervisors, repealing Ordinance 4191 and allowing members of the Board of Supervisors to continue to receive the annual base salary methodology originally recommended by the 1999 Blue Ribbon Salary Review Committee, equal to 70% of the annual salary of a Superior Court Judge. In 2019, Ordinance 4543 was approved by the Board of Supervisors, repealing Ordinance 4316 and removing language which allowed members of the Board of Supervisors to receive compensation for service on the Ventura County Employees' Retirement Association Board of Retirement and Ventura County Assessment Appeals Board, and continuing the annual base salary methodology.

The County of Ventura is the thirteenth largest county by population in California. The Board of Supervisors is the governing body of the County and several special districts. The Board sets policy for 26 departments, with roughly 10,500 full time employees, and sets a \$3 billion budget to promote health, safety, and quality of life for more than 829,000 residents. Each Board Member represents approximately 165,915 residents.

Recently, a total compensation review for the Board of Supervisors was conducted by Human Resources utilizing our standard method of comparing the total compensation of similarly situated classifications in several of our comparator jurisdictions. Human Resources determined that the compensation for the Board of Supervisors has not kept pace with either the salaries paid to their District staff or to the Board of Supervisors in surrounding counties. As a result, consideration to adopt the proposed ordinance, set forth in Exhibit 1, containing the salary adjustments as set forth below is recommended. The current Board of Supervisors' salary is \$171,308.90. The jurisdictions studied were Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County, San Bernardino County, San Diego County, and Santa Barbara County. The results of this total compensation review revealed that the Ventura County Board of Supervisors' compensation is 31.38% below the market median for base pay and 38.04% below the market median for total compensation to that of the comparator jurisdictions. It should be noted that Supervisors are ineligible for per diem pay, merit increases, or general salary increases, nor do Supervisors receive car allowances although they regularly travel and drive throughout the County and State of California to fulfill their various duties.

While the methodology of tying Board of Supervisors' salaries to that of a Superior Court Judge is beneficial, given the vast changes in economics, inflation, population size and cost of living since the methodology was adopted in 1999, the current percentage of 70% no longer appears to be adequate in comparison to other jurisdictions.

In addition to the total compensation review, staff also examined the ratio of salaries of other elected county supervisors within Southern California in relation to the salaries of Superior Court Judges within the State of California to examine what variability exists. The table below reflects that most counties within proximity pay salaries which are a higher percentage in relation to those of A Superior Court Judge, suggesting that an adjustment in our current methodology is warranted. Specifically, our sample reflects an

approximate average of 88.35% to that of a Superior Court Judge whereas the median of our sample is 91.97% to that of a Superior Court Judge.

#	Jurisdictions	Classification	Annual Top Step Salary	% of Judge Salary
1	County of Los Angeles	County Supervisor	\$244,727	100.00%
2	County of Orange	Member, Board of Supervisors	\$195,782	80.00%
3	County of Riverside	Board of Supervisors Member (74516)	\$235,414	96.19%
4	County of San Bernardino	Board of Supervisors	\$229,880	93.93%
5	County of San Diego	County Supervisor (000100)	\$220,254	90.00%
6	County of Santa Barbara	Member, Board of Supervisors	\$171,309	70.00%
			Average	88.35%
			Median	91.97%
	State of California	Superior Court Judge	\$244,727	

Although the original 1999 Ordinance has been repealed and amended several times, the percentage methodology for adjusting the annual salary for members of the Board of Supervisors has not been revised since its enactment in 1999. We recommend your Board adopt the proposed ordinance, set forth in Exhibit 1, that will increase the annual salary for members of the Board of Supervisors from 70% of that of a Superior Court Judge to 80% of the annual salary of a Superior Court Judge, bringing the Supervisors to an approximate annual salary of \$195,781.60. The County's compensation philosophy is to strive to be within 5% of the market median. While both the market comparison and the relation to a Superior Court Judge, as shown above, would justify a much larger increase, the recommendation for a ten percent increase in the percentage methodology to 80% of the Superior Court Judge salary is conservative and brings us closer to the County's philosophy of being near 95% of the market median.

Under state law, the proposed new ordinance would be effective 60 days after adoption. Upon the effective date of the new proposed ordinance, Ordinance No. 4543 (Exhibit 1) will be repealed.

County Counsel and the Auditor-Controller's Office have reviewed this letter.

If you have questions, please contact me at (805) 654-2681 or Danielle Keys at (805) 654-2561.

Respectfully submitted,

Sevet Johnson, PsyD
County Executive Officer

County of Ventura Board of Supervisors

June 03, 2025

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c: Jeffery S. Burgh, Auditor-Controller
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Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 Proposed Ordinance
- Exhibit 2 Ordinance 4543