



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Departmental Correspondence**  
County Counsel



**DATE:** June 24, 2014  
**BOARD MEETING DATE:** July 15, 2014  
**SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING:** None  
**VOTE REQUIRED:** Majority

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** John C. Beiers, County Counsel  
**SUBJECT:** Recommended Revision to the Salary Ordinance

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adoption of an ordinance amending the Master Salary Ordinance to reflect the addition of one Deputy County Counsel I position, previously introduced July 1, 2014 and waiver of reading the ordinance in its entirety.

**BACKGROUND:**

Former County Counsel Michael P. Murphy passed away on June 3, 2014. In honor of Mr. Murphy, the County Counsel's Office proposes to start a fellowship program for new attorneys, for the purpose of training them to be skilled government litigators and advisors as they enter the legal profession. This fellowship program aligns with the County's Agile Workforce initiative. The new attorney serving in this fellowship position would be employed for a two-year term with a focus on impact litigation and emerging public law issues.

**DISCUSSION:**

Vacancies in the County Counsel's Office typically attract hundreds of qualified applicants. In light of the Office's efficient staffing approach, it is difficult for graduating law students and new attorneys to compete for open deputy positions. At the same time, the County Counsel's office's summer law clerk program has demonstrated that many law students and new attorneys have a strong interest in dedicating their careers to public service. The proposed fellowship program would help to bridge this gap by providing a position through which a new attorney will receive valuable training and experience in the public sector.

The County has an abundance of opportunities for attorneys to work on cutting edge public law matters, whether through litigation such as the recent lead paint case, or innovative and leading public policy work such as its plastic bag ordinance, school safety issues, or formation of the LGBTQ commission. The creation of a fellowship position would provide the County with additional resources to address such matters while simultaneously providing fertile training ground for new attorneys.

The County's commitment to leading the way on important public law and policy issues is not new. Indeed, as far back as 2003, the County was a leader in the protection of consumers' financial privacy through its passage and subsequent litigation of an ordinance to prevent banks from sharing financial information without a customer's written permission. In honor of former County Counsel Michael P. Murphy, who was one of the lead attorneys in that litigation, the Counsel Counsel's Office plans to title the fellowship the "Michael P. Murphy Impact Litigation/Public Law Fellowship." During his 29 year career with the County, Mr. Murphy worked on a variety of significant litigation/public law matters and mentored dozens of new attorneys.

There will be one fellowship position and each fellow will serve a two-year term. The fellow's compensation and benefits will be at the Deputy County Counsel I level.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Net County Cost for the fellow's salary and benefits will be \$95,790 annually. Funds for the fellowship program will be appropriated in September 2014 in connection with adoption of the County's final 2014-15 budget.