

# SONOMA COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION AGENDA

Vacant, First District  
Anthony Withington, Second District  
Jerry Dunn, Third District  
Patricia Sabo, Fourth District  
John Hadzess, Fifth District

Janell Crane, HR Director  
Spencer Keywood, Deputy HR Director  
Yuka Kamiishi, Executive Assistant

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**Thursday, February 15, 2024**  
**3:30 PM**

**HR Large Training Room/Virtual**  
575 Administration Drive 117C  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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Members of the public can attend, watch, or listen to the meeting using one of the three following methods:

1. ATTEND IN PERSON:

Human Resources Large Training Room  
575 Administration Drive, Suite 117C, Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Limited seating is available for public participants.

2. WATCH/LISTEN TO MEETING IN ZOOM:

Participate by computer, tablet, or smartphone application. Go to:  
<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/97836979653?pwd=ZG93Qjg0OEEExOGtEQVpDdytETC9MZz09>  
Webinar ID: 978 3697 9653  
Passcode: 176761

3. LISTEN THROUGH ZOOM BY TELEPHONE:

Dial +1 669 900 9128  
Webinar ID: 978 3697 9653  
Passcode: 176761

Please note the meeting may be recorded for transcription purposes.

**ACCOMODATION REQUEST:** If you need an accommodation or an alternative format to assist you in observing and commenting on this meeting, please contact the Commission Secretary at (707) 565-6195 or by email

**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION AGENDA**  
**February 15, 2024**

[yuka.kamiishi@sonoma-county.org](mailto:yuka.kamiishi@sonoma-county.org) prior to 72 hours of the meeting to ensure arrangements for accommodation.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Public Comment may be made live, in person, in the Commission meeting room. Available time for comments is determined by the Commission Chair based on agenda scheduling demands and the total number of speakers. To guarantee that your comment is received and considered by the Commission, you may attend the meeting in person or submit your comment in writing in advance of the meeting to [yuka.kamiishi@sonoma-county.org](mailto:yuka.kamiishi@sonoma-county.org) before 2:00 PM on the day of the meeting. Please provide your name, the agenda items on which you wish to speak, and your comment in the email. These comments will be emailed to all Civil Service Commission members.

**DURING THE MEETING:** Members of the public who wish to comment may do so according to the following procedure. Commenters will be requested to line up by the podium when the Commission Chair announces Public Comment to commence. Upon completion of a comment, the individual should quietly take a seat or exit the meeting room. No standing unless in the queue to speak or exiting the meeting room. To comment on any subsequent items, this process is to be repeated.

**COMMITMENT TO CIVILITY:** The Civil Service Commission has adopted rules of procedures that include a commitment to civility. To assure civility in its public meetings, the public is encouraged to engage in respectful dialog that supports freedom of speech and values diversity of opinion. Commissioners, County staff, and members of the public are expected to establish and maintain a cordial and respectful atmosphere during discussions and foster meaningful dialogue free of personal attacks. Members of the public must also adhere to the speaking time limit if one is indicated by the Chair.

**MATERIALS:**

Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Human Resources office at below location during normal business hours.

County of Sonoma Human Resources  
575 Administration Drive, Suite 116B  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

**3:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER**

- I. **Call to Order**
- II. **Approval of Minutes from January 18, 2024**
- III. **Director's Report**
- IV. **Agenda Items**
  - A. **Discussion about process of placing items on Civil Service Commission meeting agenda**  
Janell Crane, Human Resources Director
  - B. **Presentation from Human Resources about recruitment, examination, and hiring processes, and discussion about Spark Hire interview process at Human Services**  
Spencer Keywood, Deputy Human Resources Director  
SEIU 1021
- V. **Reports**
- VI. **Appeals**
- VII. **Other Scheduling Matters**
- VIII. **Commissioners Closed Session**
- IX. **Reconvene from Closed Session**
- X. **Commissioners Open Session**
- XI. **Public Comment**

Any member of the public may address the Commission on a matter not listed on the agenda but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission. Please state your name and who you represent, if applicable. Comments may be limited to 3 minutes, or as determined at the discretion of the Chair. Under State Law, matters presented during public appearances cannot be discussed or acted upon by the Civil Service Commissioners.

**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION AGENDA**  
**February 15, 2024**

**XII. Adjourn**

The next Civil Service Commission meeting will be **Thursday, March 7, 2024** at 3:30 p.m., in the HR Large Training Room at 575 Administration Drive, Suite 117C, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. The Agenda deadline for this meeting is 2:00 p.m., Friday, March 1, 2024.



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# Recruitment, Examination, & Hiring Processes

February 15, 2024

# Agenda

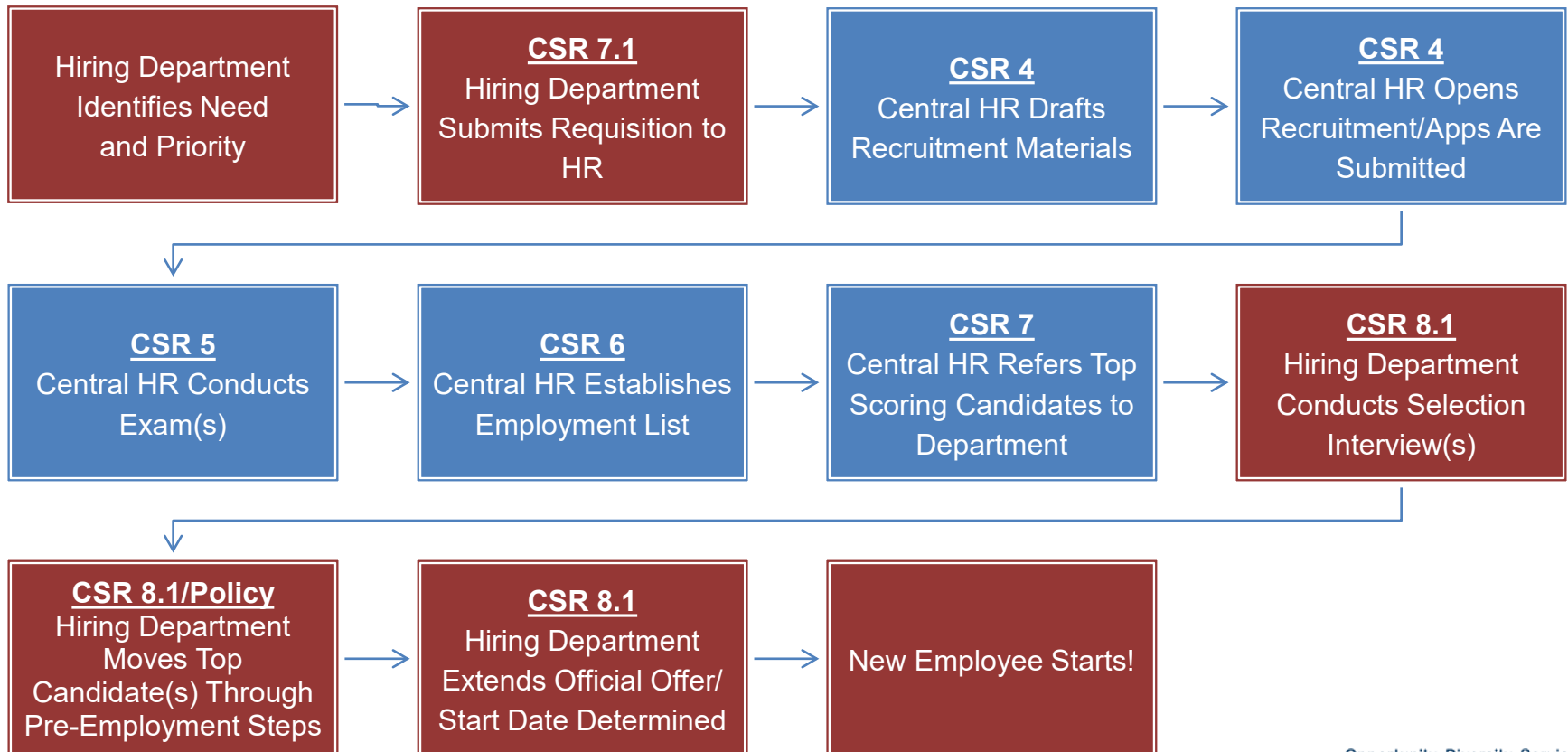
- ▶ “Standard” Recruitment Process
- ▶ Civil Service Rules Pertaining to:
  - Announcements and Applications
  - Examinations
  - Employment Lists
  - Certifications and Waivers
  - Appointment
- ▶ Final Steps

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# “Standard” Recruitment Process



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# CSR 4 – Announcements & Applications

- ▶ Job Announcements
  - Include salary, filing deadline, describe the position and selection process, and MQs
  - Must be posted for a minimum of five working days
- ▶ Applicants required to complete County application
  - Must be submitted by the filing deadline
- ▶ Applicants must meet qualifications for employment:
  - Citizenship qualifications specified by law
  - Minimum Qualifications of the job class
  - Possess the KSAs, and other qualifications necessary to perform the duties of the class

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# CSR 4 – Announcements & Applications

- ▶ HR may refuse to examine an applicant, or after examination may disqualify a candidate, remove them from the employment list, or refuse to certify.

Reasons include:

- Not adhering to requirements set forth in announcement
  - Medically unqualified to perform duties of the job class
  - Falsification of application and/or misconduct during the exam process
- ▶ Candidates may appeal the decision in accordance with rule 4.3B

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# CSR 5 – Examinations

- ▶ Competitive exams are scheduled by HR
- ▶ Exam(s) conducted to test for job knowledge, ability, skill, and other qualifications
- ▶ All qualified candidates must have equal opportunity to compete in exams
- ▶ Types of Exams:
  - Written
  - Oral
  - Application Appraisal
  - Performance
  - Background
  - Physical Agility
  - Medical
- ▶ Alcohol and/or drug testing for initial employment may also be conducted

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# CSR 5 – Examinations

- ▶ Minimum passing grades are determined for Written, Oral, and Performance Exams, and listed in the job announcement
- ▶ Eliminated candidates are promptly notified
- ▶ HR notifies candidates of their final score and standing on the employment list
- ▶ Candidates may appeal results in accordance with Rule 5.6

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# CSR 6 – Employment Lists

- ▶ An employment list is established for each recruitment
- ▶ List includes the names of all eligible candidates
- ▶ Eligible candidates are placed on the list in order of final exam score
- ▶ Candidates with the same final score are placed in the same standing

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# CSR 7 – Certification

- ▶ Department notifies HR they want to fill a position and the type of certification, Open or Promotional
  - This is the “Requisition” which initiates the recruitment process
- ▶ HR certifies the names of candidates with the three highest standings
  - Certifications include the names of candidates eligible for referral due to veterans' preference and/or promotional points
  - Number of standings department can receive depends on the type of list and number of vacancies

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# CSR 7 – Certification

- ▶ Each candidate certified will receive a written notice that includes:
  - Fact of the certification
  - Class title, or class title and working title
  - Name, address, and telephone number of the department contact
  - Statement the candidate is to contact department within five County business days after the notification date
  - A waiver of certification form
  - A statement that failure either to report or to waive may result in removal of their name from the employment list

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# CSR 8 – Appointment After Certification

## ▶ CSR 8.1

- Upon receiving the certification of eligible candidates, the appointing authority shall discuss employment with each candidate
- The appointing authority shall be provided with the applications of each candidate certified
- The appointing authority may conduct any job-related inquiries they deem necessary to determine suitability of such candidate
- Upon determination of their selection, the appointing authority notifies each candidate selected
- The department must inform each candidate, other than the individual hired, that they have not been selected to fill the position (CSR 7)

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# Final Steps

- ▶ Pre-Employment/Pre-Placement Screening Policy

As a condition of employment, finalists for full-time, part-time, and extra help positions must successfully pass the pre-employment background, medical, and drug screening requirements that have been identified as appropriate for the position

- ▶ Upon successful completion of the pre-employment steps, the official job offer extended, and start date identified

- ▶ New employee begins work

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# SEIU 1021 Requests Review of Sonoma County's Use of One Way Video Interviews

Sonoma County's Human Services Department (HSD) implemented One Way Video Interviews in July 2023. SEIU 1021 wasn't notified about this change in hiring practices: we became aware when our represented employees who applied for another position or promotion within HSD received a generic email from a 3<sup>rd</sup>-Party company stating they had to participate in this One Way Video Interview process to be considered for the position. Our members immediately raised privacy, equity & legitimacy concerns about this new hiring practice.

SEIU 1021 requests an evaluation of whether the One Way Video Interview system is appropriate and helps get the best candidates further in the process, *a description of this new type of exam in the Civil Service Commission Rules*, and for Human Resources' role to include controlling access to information in a similar manner that is used for oral interview materials and scoring.

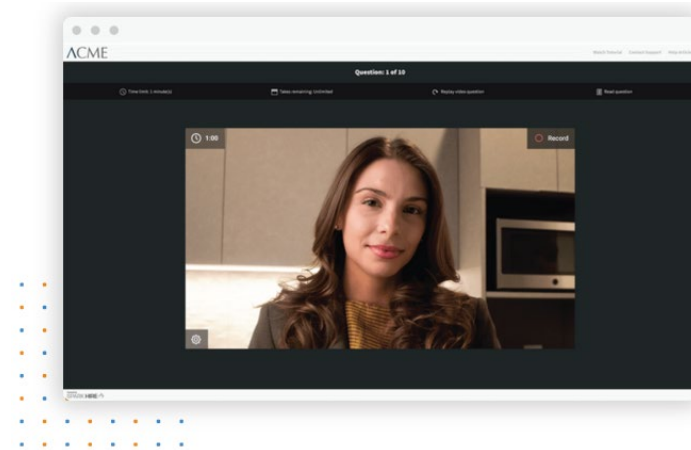
## Background on One Way Video Interviews

HSD contracted with Spark Hire to use their [One Way Video Interview product](#).

[Spark Hire's description of the "Interview" process](#):

"A One-Way video interview is an asynchronous video interview in which job candidates record video responses to interview questions on their own time. One-way video interviews are also referred to as pre-recorded video interviews or on-demand video interviews because they don't require the interviewer to be present."

[Spark Hire's description of their product & options available](#):



## One-Way Video Interview

Gain more insight on candidates in a fraction of the time by having candidates self-record video answers to your interview questions.

- Create text or video based questions
- Limit think time
- Control the number of allotted takes
- Restrict max answer length

As you can see (above), there are many configuration options available for Spark Hire's One Way Video Interview system that greatly impact the candidates' experience while participating in the process. It would be unfair, and possibly grounds for discrimination, if Sonoma County altered these settings between different recruitments, or between applicants within the same recruitment.

Spark Hire routinely adds new features, as well as new integrations with 3<sup>rd</sup>-Party products. They currently partner with a company that offers use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) when:

- Reviewing & scoring application material.
- Reviewing & scoring video interviews.

HSD stated they have no plan to implement these AI features, but there's no policy or procedure preventing them from adopting the use of this technology in the future.

## Is It Really an Interview?

A normal interview involves an HR professional introducing a candidate to a panel & describing the purpose and procedures for the interview; the panel ensures the candidate is comfortable, then asks questions. The candidate then answers those questions. Following the candidate's answer there's usually a chance for follow-up discussion between the candidate and panel to make sure the best information was provided. Occasionally a candidate that doesn't have direct experience with the question will be asked to explain the work they did which is indirectly related.

None of that applies to a One-Way Video Interview process.

HSD management described their One-Way Video Interview process includes:

- A recorded introduction from the hiring manager is played for the candidate.
- The candidate is presented with a series of questions on their screen.
- The candidates record themselves answering each question.
- At completion a recorded thank you message from the hiring manager is played for the candidate.
- Candidate recordings are reviewed by a panel of staff: each candidate's answers are scored & totaled.
- Candidates with the highest total scores move on to an in-person interview.

SEIU 1021 contends this process is not an interview at all.

This process closely matches the existing Civil Service process for a Written Exam with answers recorded by video (instead of on paper).

## Civil Service Rules

Civil Service Rules Section 5 describes procedures for examination of candidates for employment.

Section 5.2 describes types of examinations and section 5.3 describes the conduct of examinations.

A one way video test whereby a candidate reads a question on a screen and provides an in-the-moment video recorded answer is not described as a type of examination in current rules.

A written exam practice normally involves a candidate's interpretation of a question or requirement; a time to consider an appropriate answer; and writing an answer that may or may be edited prior to submission.

Section 5.3. describes the conduct of examinations:

At paragraph D, oral interviews, the HR Director appoints an interview board, and 1 member is to be considered a subject matter expert.

Based in our observation and experience of past practice, there are circumstances in which subject matter experts need to correct exam questions, and/or provide other panel members with the "right answers" so they can adequately conduct interviews. Examples of such circumstances involve changes in industry or employer practices.

We consider a "two-way" interview process, whereby the panel and candidate discuss questions and answers to be much different from a one-way recording.

Additionally, no information was provided about the process for evaluation and scoring of recorded results. Do departments have to use a panel for this process? Are the results & the recordings forwarded to the next steps in the candidate evaluation processes, such as the "final" interview panel based on the list of eligible candidates certified to departments?

## Legal Liabilities for the County

[Spark Hire addressed the risks of discrimination with using their system:](#)

“Video Interviews Don’t Discriminate, People Do!

You need to put rules in place for your team in order to avoid discrimination in the hiring process. These rules should be standard and should prize job-related skills and qualifications.

The most important thing to remember when it comes to video interviews is that technology is only a tool. It can be used for good or for ill, depending on how a human being wields it.”

We agree with the vendor: Sonoma County should adopt policies and procedures to ensure the technology is used appropriately & ethically by County staff.

In-person Interviews include risks of discrimination based on Age, Gender, Race, Height, Weight, Religious Affiliation or Beliefs, Marital Status & Disability.

In addition, Video interviews add the following risks of discrimination based on Financial Status, Employment Status, Housing Status, Sexual Orientation, whether they have Children or a Medical Condition.

Below are additional risks & considerations with the County's use of One Way Video Interviews.

### **Unfamiliar Equal Employment Opportunity Protections**

Candidates who participate in a video interview may be located outside Sonoma County or outside California. The laws of different jurisdictions may provide unique equal employment opportunity protections. If the County rejects a candidate for employment, a question may arise regarding whether you made the decision based on a protected category established by the candidate's local or state law.

Has the County considered reviewing and incorporating the protected categories established by the jurisdictions where candidates reside to avoid claims of unlawful bias in decisions about whether to make job offers?

### **Disparate Impact Claims Related to Technology Access Concerns**

Disparate impact claims allege that an employer's neutral policy has a disproportionate impact on a particular class or classes of individuals protected by equal employment opportunity laws. By requiring a candidate to participate in a job interview by video, there's an assumption that they have access to the necessary technology.

However, we know this isn't always true.

Pew Research Center conducted a survey in 2019 that found older individuals have less access to broadband internet at home, which is where most job candidates will conduct video interviews.

Another survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2019 reported that white respondents were more likely to own desktop or laptop computer than African-American or Hispanic respondents.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported in 2019, 2018 & 2017 that age & race were the 2 protected categories most identified with discrimination charges filed related to hiring issues.

We appreciate HSD stated they're willing to provide technology to job candidates who report they're unable to participate in a video interview due to technological limitations. However, that's only practical for candidates who live locally. The practice also creates a barrier to entry that will cause qualified elderly and minority applicants to move on to another job.

## **Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities**

Individuals with disabilities experience similar access-to-technology issues that interfere with their ability to participate in a video interview. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires the County to consider granting a reasonable accommodation that allows an individual to participate in a video interview or an alternative means of evaluation.

Does HSD or the County have assistive technology available for every type of disability an applicant would need to conduct this One Way Video Interview? If the candidate does not live locally, how will the County accommodate the candidate?

## **The Unexpected Visitor to an Interview**

You've probably seen a viral video or news story of a video news interview in which an interviewee's child entered the camera's view.

Video interviews give the County insights into a candidate's home circumstances to a greater degree than you could get from a discussion that takes place in person. An adverse employment decision based on concerns related to the individuals in the family's home may give rise to claims of discrimination due to caregiver responsibilities under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the ADA.

Other information can be inferred from the background of the candidate's video frame may convey information about protected category status.

## **In Conclusion**

Based on the questions we have about the new One Way Video Interview system's current "fit" with the civil services rules, the lack of noticing to employer representatives prior to changing long-standing practices for candidate selection; and the lack of knowledge and agreed upon standards for the processes within the system, and those used by departments and HR, we request that Sonoma County halt the use of One Way Video Interviews until the Civil Service Rules have been updated to address this hiring and promotion process prior to its further implementation.

SEIU 1021 requests that this matter be added to the agenda of a future Civil Service Commission meeting by the appropriate department, Human Resources, for full consideration by the Commission.

We also propose Human Resources role should include controlling access to information in a similar manner that is used for oral interview materials and scoring. Human Resources, not the department, should control access to the candidate videos & define the process for others to have the information.

# SONOMA COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Sonoma County Human Resources Department  
**January 18, 2024**

## **PRESENT**

Commissioners: John Hadzess (Vice Chair), Anthony Withington,  
Jerry Dunn

Human Resources Staff: Janell Crane, Spencer Keyword, Jennifer  
Lelouarn, Amy Kraus, Yuka Kamiishi

Commission Counsel:

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The virtual meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m.

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM December 21, 2023**

Motion: Commissioner Dunn

Second: Commissioner Withington

**Ayes – Roll Call Vote: 3 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1**

### **III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Human Resources Director Janell Crane reported that HR is working to address the questions that came up during the annual report provided at the last meeting on December 21, 2023. A similar report will be presented to the Board of Supervisors as part of the budget workshops in April. There has been a lot of media interest in vacancies and the County's efforts to fill vacancies. HR has been working closely with labor representatives to identify different ways to increase the pipeline for future employment. HR has provided information on the Commissioner vacancy and application process on the following pages of the County's website: County HR, Civil Service Commission, and Board, Committees and Commissions.

The Commission is concerned about the ongoing mandatory overtime for Correctional Deputies. Director Crane reported HR is working closely with the Sheriff's Office on the matter.

Commissioner Dunn stated that the issues mentioned in the media, such as a long wait list to receive services, seem to be connected to the vacancy/lack of staffing issues. However, even if there are no vacancies, some services, such as those provided by HSD, may always have long wait times due to budgetary restrictions.

IV. **AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. Child Support Services Social Work Supervisor (CPS SWS) – Human Services Department – Position Review Classification Study**

Item presented by Jennifer Lelouarn, Human Resources Recruitment and Classification Manager

**Recommendation:** No change to one position of CPS SWS within the Redwood Children's Center in Initial Services of the Family, Youth & Children (FY&C) Division of the Human Service Department (HSD).

**Motion:** Commissioner Withington

**Second:** Commissioner Dunn

**Ayes - Roll Call Vote:** 3 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

**B. Legal Processor Series – Sheriff's Office – Position Review Classification Study**

Amy Kraus, Principal Human Resources Recruitment Analyst

**Recommendation:** Adopt the new classification series of Law Enforcement Services Specialist I/II, Senior Law Enforcement Services Specialist, and Law Enforcement Services Supervisor, and reclassify the incumbents in accordance with Civil Service Rule 3.3C.

**Motion:** Commissioner Dunn

**Second:** Commissioner Withington

**Ayes - Roll Call Vote:** 3 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

**C. Proposed Rule Amendment to Civil Service Rule 2.2B**

Spencer Keywood, Deputy Human Resources Director

**Recommendation:** Adopt the proposed changes to Civil Service Rule 2.2B.

The Commission confirmed that public comment on a subject not on the agenda may be heard but cannot be discussed by the Commission, nor may any action be taken. However, the Chair may direct HR staff to place the matter on the agenda for future discussion.

**Motion:** Commissioner Withington

**Second:** Commissioner Dunn

**Ayes - Roll Call Vote:** 3 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

V. **REPORTS**

N/A

VI. **APPEALS**

N/A

VII. **OTHER SCHEDULING MATTERS**

N/A

VIII. **COMMISSIONERS CLOSED SESSION**

N/A

IX. **RECONVENE FROM CLOSED SESSION**

N/A

X. **COMMISSIONERS OPEN SESSION**

Commissioner Withington raised his general concern that County Counsel directed HR staff to instruct an employee organization to bring a concern forward as part of public comment, instead of placing the matter on the agenda. Director Crane suggested that this topic be discussed at a future meeting.

XI. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

An emailed public comment from Travis Balzarini, SEIU 1021 Sonoma County President, was received on 1/17/2024 regarding one-way video interview practices at Human Services Department.



The comment was distributed to the Commission in advance of the meeting. Vice Chair Hadzess, who chaired the meeting, confirmed receipt of the emailed public comment and noted that the Commission would place the matter on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

An in-person public comment was provided by David Cameron, SEIU shop steward and Public Infrastructure employee. He appreciated the Commission putting the matter on the agenda as it is a concern and an urgent issue to SEIU that the Human Services Department did not inform SEIU of the new video interview process. SEIU previously brought this issue to the Labor Management Committee. They then decided to bring the matter to the Commission's attention as they felt that this was a much larger policy issue in terms of how the County approaches interviews and the hiring process.

**XII. ADJOURN**

The Civil Service Commission meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.