



February 6, 2025

Board of Directors
 Ventura Regional Sanitation District
 Ventura, California

CONSIDER AND APPROVE PROPOSED APPROXIMATELY 16.6 PERCENT INCREASES TO THE SALARY RANGES FOR THREE CRITICAL DISTRICT MANAGEMENT POSITIONS (GENERAL MANAGER, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, AND SOLID WASTE SUPERINTENDENT) PRIOR TO RECRUITMENT TO FILL THEIR CURRENT OR IMPENDING VACANCIES

RECOMMENDATION

Approve proposed new salary ranges as set forth below for the three critical District management positions—General Manager, Director of Operations, and Solid Waste Superintendent—for recruitment efficacy purposes related to their current or impending vacancies.

	<u>Current Salary Ranges</u>		<u>Proposed Salary Ranges</u>	
	Low	High	Low	High
General Manager	\$ 202,426	\$ 247,021	\$ 236,028	\$ 287,994
Director Of Operations	\$ 150,530	\$ 183,685	\$ 175,518	\$ 214,163
Solid Waste Superintendent	\$ 108,805	\$ 132,808	\$ 126,866	\$ 154,817

FISCAL IMPACT

These costs will mostly occur in the next fiscal year, so District staff will incorporate them into the upcoming 2-year budget cycle. The impact in the current fiscal year will be absorbed by salary savings from vacant positions, so there is no budget adjustment necessary.

BACKGROUND

An unexpected convergence of retirements involving three critical District positions necessitates this Board letter.

- A. First, last year, the General Manager announced to the Board his intention to retire in early 2025 after nearly nine years with the District. The current General Manager offered to remain in his current position while the Board recruited his replacement

and to facilitate any transition. Nearly contemporaneously with the issuance of a Class and Compensation RFP (see below), the Executive Committee requested issuance of an RFP for executive recruiting firms to recruit and present qualified candidates for the new District General Manager to the Board. The current projected start date for a new General Manager based on typical recruiting firms' timelines is around mid-June 2025, at the earliest. This assumes that the Board-approved salary is available for use by the executive search firm shortly after their contract is approved by the Board, which is currently anticipated to take place on February 20, 2025.

- B. At the same time, the Director of Operations has been contemplating retirement from the District after nearly 15 years with the District. Preliminary discussions by and between the current General Manager and Director of Operations about the timing or order of their respective retirements indicated that the Director of Operations would stay with the District long enough for the new General Manager to onboard and then hire the new Director of Operations, his direct report. But recently, the incumbent Director of Operations has communicated a strong desire to retire by approximately the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2025.
- C. Finally, the long-time Solid Waste Superintendent retired on January 10, 2025 after a long 39 year career at the District that included the closure of Coastal, Santa Clara and Bailard Landfills; and the opening and operation of the Toland Road Landfill.

Coordination by the two remaining incumbent management employees regarding their respective retirements from District service was done to promote and does promote: (a) the best interests of the District given its current fiscal and operational challenges; (b) continuous knowledgeable management coverage of District facilities; and (c) the passing of important institutional knowledge to the new management team.

And normally, the salary ranges for these three important positions would have been updated in order to keep up with the cost of living and to remain competitive in this market for skilled individuals who can and will manage essential public services like a municipal solid waste landfill. However, that has not been the case here.

Your Board understood that the General Manager's salary would have to be updated prior to the commencement of the recruiting process in order to facilitate a successful recruitment. And it was also understood that the entire District would benefit from a long-delayed class and compensation study since it was included in the Board-approved budget. Subsequently, RFP's were issued for classification and compensation studies with the stipulation that the General Manager and the Solid Waste Superintendent salaries would be produced for Board approval on an accelerated basis to expedite the filling of these important vacancies. It should be noted that a previous attempt to recruit for the Solid Waste Superintendent position in July 2024 did not produce a single qualified external application after several months of open recruitment. This disappointing

outcome strongly indicated that the salary was set too low to generate sufficient interest, and thus the recruitment was closed.

VRSD has had very limited success in generating interest in recent years in many positions. There are a myriad of possible factors that could be contributing to this lack of interest in VRSD employment, some of which might be a general aversion to public employment stemming from the emotional sentiments following the Great Recession, overblown concerns about VRSD's general financial viability, and the simple fact that VRSD salaries have not kept pace with inflation since they were established through the last compensation study completed in early 2016.

Unfortunately, the proposals received from the classification and compensation consultants indicate that it will take several months after contract award to produce accelerated General Manager and Solid Waste Superintendent salary ranges. Without a viable salary range for these two critical positions, replacements for the General Manager and Solid Waste Superintendent would likely linger well beyond the mid-June 2025 estimated date for a new General Manager or the District would be forced to settle for inferior candidates.

So, the prospect of vacancies in three vital management positions in a chain of command (the Superintendent reports to the Director of Operations, and the Director of Operations reports to the General Manager) being filled at the same time in the organization is concerning. The prospect of any of these positions remaining vacant longer than necessary due to unsuccessful recruitments which need to be repeated is nothing less than unnerving. Staff strongly believes this risk needs to be and can be mitigated.

PROPOSAL

The purpose of compensation studies is to check an organization's compensation for employees against the market to ensure that the organization remains competitive for purposes of retaining existing employees and recruiting new employees. Public agencies such as VRSD perform these studies every couple of years or so to verify that their salaries are competitive, and they make adjustments as necessary to ensure that they are. In general, salaries will rise over time due to inflation, with all other things being equal.

One quick way to make a reasonable estimate of where the compensation study will ultimately place salaries is by using widely-used and accepted inflation or cost of living numbers to calculate the equivalent rate of pay in today's dollars from the last time the salaries were evaluated and approved by the Board.

Setting the salary ranges higher than the current ranges will undoubtedly contribute to more effective recruitments for all three critical positions at this juncture in VRSD's history. Importantly, the proposed new ranges that are recommended for use to recruit these

employees will ultimately be evaluated in the compensation study so that an objective review is done to validate or modify the new ranges. Your Board will continue to have the discretion to approve salary range adjustments and Y-rating decisions at that time.

With all of this in mind, District staff has calculated the new salary ranges that could be used for the recruitments for these three positions. Using the Consumer Price Index published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics as a surrogate for inflation, these salary ranges would increase by approximately 16.6% from their current amounts. The detailed calculations are shown in Attachment 1.

The increases will not apply to incumbents in these three critical District management positions.

Staff recommends the Board approve the proposed increases to the salary ranges for General Manager, Director of Operations, and Solid Waste Superintendent so that they can be used to recruit qualified candidates for these positions.

This letter has been reviewed by Legal Counsel as to form.

If you should have any questions or need additional information, please contact me by phone at (805) 658-4600 or email at ChrisTheisen@vrsd.com.

Chris Theisen, General Manager

APPROVED FOR FISCAL IMPACT:


Tina Rivera, Director of Finance

APPROVED FOR AGENDA:


Chris Theisen, General Manager

Attachments: 1. Calculations that Indicate the Recommend Approximately 16.6% Salary Range Increases

Calculations that Indicate the Recommended 16.6% Salary Range Increases

Maximum Salary Table

	VRSD Board approved in 2016	35.79% Increase by CPI for 9 Years	Current	CPI Increase vs. Current	
General Manager	\$ 212,088	\$ 287,994	\$ 247,021	\$ 40,973	16.6%
Director Of Operations	\$ 157,716	\$ 214,163	\$ 183,685	\$ 30,478	16.6%
Solid Waste Superintendent	\$ 114,012	\$ 154,817	\$ 132,808	\$ 22,009	16.6%

	Current Salary Ranges		Proposed Salary Ranges	
	Low	High	Low	High
General Manager	\$ 202,445	\$ 247,021	\$ 236,024	\$ 287,994
Director Of Operations	\$ 150,538	\$ 183,685	\$ 175,516	\$ 214,163
Solid Waste Superintendent	\$ 108,842	\$ 132,808	\$ 126,879	\$ 154,817

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)															https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CUURS49ASA0		
Original Data Value																	
Series Id: CUURS49ASA0																	
Not Seasonally Adjusted																	
Series Title: All items in Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA.																	
Area: Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA																	
Item: All items																	
Base Period: 1982-84=100																	
Years: 2014 to 2024																	
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	HALF1	HALF2		
2014	239.857	241.059	242.491	242.437	243.362	243.528	243.727	243.556	243.623	243.341	241.753	240.475	242.434	242.122	242.746		
2015	239.724	241.297	243.738	243.569	246.093	245.459	247.066	246.328	245.431	245.812	245.711	245.357	244.632	243.313	245.951	0.91%	244.632
2016	247.155	247.113	247.873	248.368	249.554	249.789	249.784	249.700	250.145	251.098	250.185	250.189	249.246	248.309	250.184	1.89%	
2017	252.373	253.815	254.525	254.971	255.674	255.275	256.023	256.739	257.890	258.883	259.135	259.220	256.210	254.439	257.982	2.79%	
2018	261.235	263.012	264.158	265.095	266.148	265.522	266.007	266.665	268.032	269.482	268.560	267.631	265.962	264.195	267.730	3.81%	
2019	269.468	269.608	271.311	273.945	274.479	274.380	274.682	274.579	276.054	278.075	277.239	275.553	274.114	272.199	276.030	3.07%	
2020	277.755	278.657	276.589	275.853	276.842	278.121	279.899	280.116	279.366	279.947	280.102	279.560	278.567	277.303	279.832	1.62%	
2021	280.178	281.347	282.648	285.808	287.620	289.218	290.890	291.333	292.209	294.961	296.790	297.925	289.244	284.470	294.018	3.83%	
2022	301.209	302.164	306.679	308.302	310.649	314.072	313.415	313.608	315.033	317.014	314.633	312.601	310.782	307.179	314.384	7.45%	
2023	318.591	317.571	317.873	320.089	320.514	322.055	321.931	324.050	324.984	324.545	323.341	323.456	321.583	319.449	323.718	3.48%	
2024	326.640	328.232	330.671	332.572	332.956	332.357	332.928	333.359	334.123	334.242	333.718	334.531	332.194	330.571	333.817	3.30%	332.194
																35.79%	35.79%

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