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**Civil Service Commission
2025 Annual Report**

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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 6,085 positions for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Below is a chart of the total number of regular, budgeted positions over the last five fiscal years.

FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26
5,799	5,868	6,009	6,034	6,085

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 subcommittee 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 2025 Appeals:

In 2025, the Civil Service Commission received eight (8) petitions for hearings (one (1) dismissal, six (6) non-punitive suspensions, and one (1) probationary rejection). The Commission granted hearings for seven (7) of these matters. One (1) matter, a probationary rejection, was not granted a hearing.

Of the seven (7) matters granted a hearing in 2025, three (3) cases were upheld, and four (4) are pending a hearing.

In addition, two (2) appeals that were received in 2023 and 2024 and assigned to hearing officers were heard by the Commission in 2025. One of the dismissals was upheld and the other was not sustained.

2025 Petitions for Hearing*			
Department	Disciplinary	Other	Total
County Health	6	--	6
Human Resources Department	1	--	1
Human Services Agency	1	--	1
Sheriff's Office**	--	--	--
Total	8	--	8

*Only departments that had appeals during 2025 are listed above.

** Sheriff's Office had two appeal hearing requests that were received in 2023 and 2024 and assigned to hearing officers. Upon receiving the recommendations from the hearing officers in 2025, the Commission reviewed these matters and issued their findings.

Five Year Glance (2021-2025):

During the last five calendar years, there were 22 petitions for appeals. Of these, 17 (77% of all petitions filed) were granted a hearing.

The average number of hearings per year during the last five years has been three (3), with 2025 reflecting the highest number of hearings held during the 5-year period. Of the 17 appeals that were granted hearings during the last five years, in eight (8) cases (47%) the discipline imposed by the appointing authority was upheld by the Commission, one (1) case (6%) the discipline was not sustained, four (4) appeals (24%) were withdrawn prior to hearing and four (4) matters (24%) are pending a hearing.

POST-HEARING DECISIONS BY DEPARTMENTS WITH APPEALS, 2021-2025*																						
Department	Department Upheld					Department Modified					Department Not Sustained					Withdrawn					Pending	5 YEAR TOTAL
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025	
County Library				1															1			2
County Health					2																4	6
Human Resources Department					1																	1
Human Services Agency	1																1					2
Public Works			1																			1
Sheriff's Office					1									1	2							4
Technology Services Department			1																			1
Total	1	--	2	1	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	2	1	--	1	--	4	17

*Only departments that had appeals during the last five years are listed above. **Includes withdrawn and pending appeals.

Total Decisions by Year**				
2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
3	1	2	2	9

III. Other Commission Activity

The Commission held 12 regular meetings and one (1) special meeting during 2025.

New Classifications:

The Commission approved nine (9) new classifications in 2025:

New Classifications	Representation Unit	Probation Period (Hours)
Assistant to The Director of BHRS	Unrepresented Management	2080
Forensic Interviewer	AFSCME – Human Services	1040
Human Resources Manager	Unrepresented Management	2080
Milieu Program Supervisor	AFSCME – Human Services	1040
Mobile Clinic Certified Medical Assistant	AFSCME – Health Services	1040
Neurodiagnostic Technician I/II Series	AFSCME – Health Services	1040
Neurodiagnostic Technician III	AFSCME – Health Services	1040
Supervising Forensic Autopsy Technician	Law Enforcement Unit (DSA Non-Safety)	1040
Supervising Healthcare Assistant	AFSCME – Health 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 2025 the Commission approved the extension of 32 eligibility lists as follows:

- Appraiser I/II – 3 months
- Appraiser I/II – 11 months
- Auditor-Appraiser I/II (U087) – 1 year
- Automotive Service Worker II (W040L) – 1 month
- Construction Carpenter/Mason – 6 months
- Cook I/II – 2 months
- Cook I/II – 2 months
- District Attorney’s Inspector (H0350) – 2 months
- Food Service Worker I/II – 2 months
- Food Service Worker I/II – 2 months
- GIS Analyst II/III – (V060B) – 6 months
- Health Services Manager I -Aging and Disability Services – 3 months
- IS Client Systems Specialist I/II -Part-Time (V269H) – 2 months
- Lead Gardener – (L005) – 6 months
- Librarian I/II Bilingual Skills Preferred – 2 months
- Library Assistant I/II – Bilingual Language Skills Preferred – 2 months
- Library Assistant I/II – Bilingual Language Skills Preferred – 2 months
- Library Assistant I/II Bilingual Language Skills Preferred - 2 months
- Management Analyst-Associate MA - ADA Manager – 5 months
- Painter - T026H – 6 months
- Paralegal – 2 months
- Pretrial Specialist (E020C) – 2 months
- Psychiatric Nurse – 6 months
- Road Equipment Operator I – 6 months
- Road Maintenance Supervisor – 5 months
- Road Maintenance Supervisor – 6 months
- Road Maintenance Worker I (T090V) – 6 months
- Road Maintenance Worker II – 6 months
- Senior Auditor-Appraiser – 6 months
- Senior Management Analyst (Clinics Process Improvement Manager) – 3 months
- Sheriff’s Criminal Records Technician I/II -1 month
- Specialty Treatment Court Program Case Manager II/III -Spanish Speaking Preferred - 1 month

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.