

Board imposes hiring freeze as budget concerns surface

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / April 25, 2025

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors has authorized the county executive officer to immediately implement a countywide hiring freeze.

The action was taken at Tuesday's board meeting on a motion by District 5 Supervisor Benjamin Stopper and second by District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli. The vote was unanimous.

County Executive Officer Teresa Hitchcock briefed the board prior to the vote about the county's financial outlook entering the 2025-26 budget year.

"We are beginning to see revenue trends coming in lower than we had originally projected," Hitchcock told the board as work begins to prepare the county's Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget.

"We've also been in a very inflationary period over the last two years so costs are coming in higher," she added. Thus, "in order to meet our budget requirements for the upcoming years it's necessary to implement a countywide hiring freeze."

Stopper was the only member of the board to comment on the agenda item saying he could appreciate the administration being pro-active in this matter. He added it is only the beginning of budget concerns, citing possible declines in revenue along with future federal funding being uncertain.

There was no public comment on the agenda item.

"The recommended freeze would require departments to seek County Administrative Office approval prior to filling vacant positions or hiring extra help positions," according to the recommendation presented to the board. "The County Administrative Office will work closely with Human Resources to ensure that no new employees are added to the payroll unless specifically approved by this office. Under the proposed hiring freeze, departments will be required to make every effort not to fill position vacancies in order to reduce current fiscal year costs in preparation for the fiscal restraints facing the County in FY 2025-26."

The freeze has some latitude under the following criteria.

1. Positions required to meet legal obligations under (a) Federal, State, or grant-funded program guidelines, (b) union agreements, or (c) other binding contracts.
2. Positions which, if left unfilled, would clearly jeopardize public health and safety.
3. Positions where the department head and the County Executive Officer jointly agree that the detrimental impact of holding the position vacant outweigh the fiscal benefit.
4. There is a net zero budget impact.
5. The board will consider lifting the freeze when the county's financial situation has substantially improved.