



Legislation Text

File #: 17-276, **Version:** 1

Conduct a Public Hearing on the proposed new and revised user fee schedules; Adopt a resolution authorizing a twelve month moratorium and reduction on the assessment and collection of certain Probation Department's Juvenile Administrative Fees effective May 1, 2017; Authorize the Sheriff's Animal Care to annually offer a dog license amnesty program by waiving the late fee for a 30-day period; Authorize the Resource Management's Parks and Recreation to add fee exemption periods to reflect fee waivers; and Adopt fee schedules by separate resolutions amending *the exhibits* to Chapters 2.4 and 11 of the Solano County Code, modifying and establishing various fees, effective July 1, 2017 for various departments

Published Notice Required? Yes X No
Public Hearing Required? Yes X No

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The County Administrator recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

1) Conduct a Public Hearing on the proposed new and revised user fee schedules and consider adoption of fee schedules by separate resolutions amending Chapters 2.4 and 11 of the Solano County Code, modifying and establishing various fees:

- Exhibit I - Agricultural Commissioner / Sealer of Weights and Measures
- Exhibit II - Assessor/Recorder
- Exhibit III-A - Resource Management - Environmental Health Division
- Exhibit III-B - Resource Management - Planning Division
- Exhibit III-C - Resource Management - Building and Safety Division
- Exhibit III-E - Resource Management - Public Works, Engineering, Surveyor
- Exhibit IV - Public Guardian (H&SS - Adult Protective Services section)
- Exhibit V - Tax Collector/County Clerk
- Exhibit VI - Auditor/Controller
- Exhibit VII - Registrar of Voters
- Exhibit VIII - Clerk of the Board
- Exhibit IX - County Counsel
- Exhibit XI - Health and Social Services
- Exhibit XIII - Sheriff/Coroner
- Exhibit XIV - Probation Department
- Exhibit XVI - Parks and Recreation
- Exhibit XVII - Sheriff - Animal Care and Control
- Exhibit XX - Nut Tree Airport

3.) Adopt a resolution authorizing a twelve month moratorium and reduction on the assessment and collection of certain Probation Department's Juvenile Administrative Fees effective May 1, 2017.

4.) Authorize the Sheriff's Animal Care to annually offer a dog license amnesty program by waiving the late fee for a 30-day period.

5.) Authorize the Resource Management's Parks and Recreation to add fee exemption periods to reflect fee waivers.

6.) After closing the noticed/published hearing, adopt the 18 attached fee resolutions amending the Solano County Code, modifying and establishing various fees for the departments listed above and authorizing the enactment of fees by resolution, effective July 1, 2017 for all the listed departments.

SUMMARY:

This is the annual submission of updates and revisions to the countywide user fee schedules. The County Administrator's Office facilitates and supports County departments in the update of their fees on an annual basis. Seventeen established fee exhibits included in Chapter 11 of the Solano County Code are being revised to reflect updated salary/benefit costs and programmatic changes. In addition, the Nut Tree Airport fee exhibit (Exhibit XX) included in Chapter 2.4 of the Solano County Code is also proposed to be revised to reflect fees that are tied to the Consumer Price Index, comparable market rates and new development application fees.

Since 1992, the Board has supported the need to recover 100% of the costs associated with a service provided by the County to members of the public when allowed by law. For FY2017/18, the majority of the fees are recommended to remain unchanged; however, there are a number of fees for which the recommendation is to adjust the fee. Most of the adjustments are due to changes in the respective department's productive hourly rate to provide a service, and depending on the specific department, may have increased or decreased due to staffing levels and operational costs. And in many cases, the public may obtain the service online at no cost.

The fee schedules also contain fee adjustments based on federal and state mandates that are set by statute, which is noted on the fee schedules.

Each department has provided a summary of proposed fee revisions, including new fees, and an explanation for the fee revisions which are included in Attachment A. If all proposed fee charges are approved by the Board, there would be a net increase of approximately \$65,792 in fee revenues collected in FY2017/18. Resolutions for adopting the revised Fee Schedules include the corresponding listing of all provided fee exhibits (Attachment B). Subject to Board adoption of the department fee resolutions, the new and revised fees will be effective July 1, 2017.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The cost of preparing this report is borne in part by the departments who prepare and charge fees for services, and is covered within their existing budgets. This year's annual fee review and update reflects that most departments project only nominal fee adjustments, and therefore, nominal adjustments in revenue should the Board adopt the resolutions.

The following departments anticipate additional FY2017/18 revenue should the Board adopt the fee resolutions: \$36,109 for Resource Management Environmental Health, \$5,335 for Resource Management's Planning Services, \$12,948 for Resource Management Building and Safety, \$9,400 for Public Work's Engineering Surveyor, \$11,000 for the Sheriff's Office and \$78,000 for Animal Care Services. These revenue increases are offset by a projected decrease of \$87,000 for the Probation department. These fee adjustments will be reflected in the FY17/18 recommended budget.

DISCUSSION:

In 1992, the Board directed staff to hire a consultant to develop a user fee model and a countywide

standardized cost methodology, and the establishment of user fees for chargeable services. Using the cost documentation compiled by the consultant, staff began the implementation of fees for provided County services based on 100% cost recovery.

Since 1992, Solano County departments have used this standardized cost methodology for calculating countywide user fees. Annually, fees are reviewed and charges recommended which adhere to the Board of Supervisors' policy to recover 100% of the costs associated with the services provided by the County to members of the public when allowed by law. The basic fee methodology is as follows:

Direct Costs + Indirect Costs = Total Cost of Services

While there are exceptions to the above policy each department's goal is to have 100% cost recovery whenever possible. Between 2009 and 2014, during the economic downturn, departmental review of the fees focused on minimizing the impact to the community in an effort to encourage economic recovery and to minimize cost burdens to the public. Departments remain aware of the need to balance between recovering costs through fees versus minimizing cost burdens to the public from fees and the associated suppression of economic activity. Recognizing that need for balance, some of the fees do not reflect an increase or decrease, but reflect a narrower gap between actual cost to provide service and fee amount.

Departments also review market factors which would show a decline in demand if the costs of the fees were increased beyond what the market would allow, i.e. park reservations, health and social services, library, animal adoptions.

The Auditor-Controller's Office has reviewed the application of the standard fee methodology used by each department in the calculation of their productive hourly rates and indirect overhead rates, and concurred that the methodology used was sound for calculating their fees. The Auditor-Controller's staff did not review any of the statutory fees as they are federal or state mandated and set by the statute or law. However, the County Counsel reviewed the fee authority as noted on the fee schedules under the Fee Authority column.

Other departments refined their calculations to more accurately reflect the cost of providing the service. Several fees have been recommended to be eliminated and new fees are proposed to be established. Most of the adjustments are due to changes in the respective department's productive hourly rate and largely attributed to wage and benefit increases and retirement cost increases. Depending on the specific department, fees may have increased or decreased due to staffing levels and operational costs. Check marks in the New Fee or Revised Fee columns of each department's Fee Exhibit (Attachment B), reflects changes to current approved fees (addition of new fees, increases/decreases, deletions, consolidations, etc.).

The majority of the departmental fees remain unchanged with the exception of the Department of Health and Social Services (H&SS). The majority of H&SS fees are based on the 2016 Medicare Economic Index and the State Department of Healthcare Services' contract rates and Schedule of Maximum Allowance.

A summary of the proposed FY2017/18 fee changes, including new fees, are listed by department in Attachment A.

The Probation Department is asking the Board for a twelve-month moratorium and reduction on the assessment and collection of certain Probation Department's juvenile administration fees effective May 1, 2017. This request is based on the recommendation made by the Board ad hoc committee, Supervisors Vasquez and Hannigan, which was tasked to study whether the department should continue to assess juvenile administration fees in light of the financial hardship and social impact of such fees on the families of the minors in detention. The committee will further study the current juvenile probation fee receivables in order to develop a recommendation to the Board by June 20, 2017, allowing the current State Franchise Tax Board intercept program for juvenile fees to remain in effect. Resolution for this request is attached. (Attachment D)

The Resource Management Parks and Recreation is requesting the Board to authorize the department to add two fee exemption periods to the fee schedule to reflect the fee waivers consistently approved by the Board in the previous years. The first exemption waives Day Use and Boat Launch fees for veterans and active military from the Sunday prior to Veterans Day throughout the Saturday following Veterans Day. The second exemption waives group pad rental fees at Lake Solano Park for the Annual Alvin Bonifacio Memorial Children's Fishing Derby conducted by the Vacaville Sunrise Rotary that typically occurs the last weekend in September or the first weekend in October.

The Sheriff's Animal Care is requesting that the Board authorize the department to annually offer a dog license amnesty program to encourage dog owners who have failed to obtain or renew dog license timely to have their dog licensed without penalty. Per County Code Sec 4-144:, A penalty is assessed if owner is more than 30 days delinquent. The amnesty program would be for a 30 day amnesty period each year. The Sheriff's Animal Care believes that the amnesty program will provide an incentive for dog owners to become compliant and in turn reduce the number of unlicensed dogs.

ALTERNATIVES:

- a) The Board may choose to not approve any of the new fees or proposed fee increases. This alternative is not recommended. While it may result in the nominal loss of revenues for most departments; if the Assessor/Recorder, Resource Management, Tax Collector/County Clerk, Auditor-Controller, Registrar of Voters, Clerk of the Board, County Counsel, Sheriff's Office and Animal Care proposed fees are not adopted, there may be an increased cost to the General Fund.
- b) The Board may choose to not approve any proposed fee decreases. This alternative is not recommended as it would result in the collection of fees in excess of cost.
- c) The Board may choose to approve fee schedules and resolutions by individual departments and directing or specifying modifications to the proposed adjustments to fees. If the Board chooses not to approve proposed fee revisions and additions, there may be an impact to revenue for any affected department and staff has provided initial estimates for projected revenues.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The County Administrator Office, in developing the proposed revisions and new fees as detailed in each of the respective fee exhibits included in this report, worked with the following departments: Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures, Assessor/Recorder, Resource Management (including Environmental Health, Planning, Building and Safety, Public Works and Parks and Recreation), Tax Collector/County Clerk, Auditor-Controller, Registrar of Voters, Clerk of the Board, County Counsel, Health and Human Services (including the Public Guardian), Sheriff (including Animal Care Services), Probation, General Services - Nut Tree Airport and Board Adhoc Committee (including Supervisors Vasquez and Hannigan). The Public Notice of the proposed fee schedule revisions, including proposed fee increases, decreases and new fees was published in the Daily Republic on April 13th and April 19th.