



City of Oceanside

300 North Coast Highway,
Oceanside, California 92054

Staff Report

File #: 26-1377

Agenda Date: 5/6/2026

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DATE: May 6, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Water Utilities Department

TITLE: UPDATE TO THE CITY OF OCEANSIDE SALARY SCHEDULE FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT SUPERINTENDENT POSITION

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council approve and adopt the revised City of Oceanside Salary Schedule updating the pay range for Water and Wastewater Treatment Superintendent positions effective the pay period following ratification and adoption of this recommendation.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The salary schedule presented for adoption reflects a change to the salary schedule increasing the pay range for the Water and Wastewater Treatment Superintendent positions (WTS & WWTS) in an amount of \$10,000 per year.

The WTS position in the Water Utilities Department leads and manages the City's two drinking water treatment plants. These two plants produce and supply all treated water to the City, saving the City about 10 million dollars (\$10,000,000) a year when compared to the cost of purchasing already treated water. This position requires a T5 Water Treatment Operator certification issued by the State Water Resources Control Board ("the Board"), and serves as the Board mandated Chief Plant Operator (CPO) for our City's T5 treatment system. A T5 Water Treatment Operator certificate is the highest certification available for this position, and is needed due to the complicated nature of the City's water filtration plant operations. The role also involves serving as liaison between the City and the Board. The position communicates regularly with the Board regarding permit related changes and issues, is responsible for reviewing and signing monthly compliance reports and, is ultimately responsible for delivery of safe drinking water to the City.

The WTS position was created and approved by Council on June 4, 2025, due to the City's inability to hire a Chief Plant Operator - a position that the Board also requires to possess a T5 certification. For the past 14 years, the City has contracted with multiple T5 Certified Water Treatment Operators to meet the Board's requirement for our system to be overseen by a T5 CPO. The Board has strongly recommended that the City have a T5 CPO on staff. The City's last staffed T5 CPO left in 2012. In July 2025, a salary range for this position was established that was 15% less than the Water Utilities Division Manager to avoid compaction.

Two full-scale recruitments were conducted after the position was approved. In the first recruitment

attempt, staff interviewed three candidates. Offers were made in succession to two candidates and both offers were turned down. The second recruitment attempt yielded two candidates, and an offer was made to one of those candidates. The third offer was also declined. In discussing their decision to decline the position, two of the three candidates cited the salary was not high enough to get them to relocate to Oceanside. The third candidate gave no reason for turning the offer down.

The WTS serves as the system’s designated T5 Certificated Chief Plant Operator. T5 certification is difficult to obtain and the number of T5 certified operators with management experience is relatively low in the local area, the County, and even the State. The total number of certified water treatment operators in California is 13,562 with only 521 of those being T5s. Therefore, staff believes in order to yield positive recruitment results, the salary must be extremely competitive in this scarce market. The salary schedule presented for adoption reflects a compensation adjustment for the position of WTS effective the first pay period following ratification and adoption of this recommendation.

The most recent update to the City of Oceanside Salary Schedule was approved by the City Council during the meeting of March 11, 2026 and effective March 15, 2026.

Updates to the salary schedules may require a separate approval from the Memorandum of Understanding and/or Compensation Plan actions taken by the City Council. In addition to complying

FISCAL IMPACT

Staff proposes a 5% increase in salary for all steps for the Water and Wastewater Treatment Superintendent positions. The Water Treatment Superintendent position is currently budgeted at G step in FY 2025-26 at \$267,973. With this change, the approximate fully loaded cost at G step is \$280,709, which results in an approximate annual increase of \$12,736, split evenly between the Weese Plant Operating Budget (750754711) and the Mission Basin Groundwater Purification Facility Operating Budget (750755711). There is a comparable position of Wastewater Treatment Superintendent in the Sewer Fund. The annual increase will be an annual increase of \$12,543, with 97% of the cost absorbed by the San Luis Rey WRF Operating Budget (800805721) and the remaining 3% absorbed by the Recycled Water Treatment Operating Budget (750704711). The increase will be absorbed within the existing budgets, as the Water Treatment Supervisor position has remained unfilled and the resulting salary savings are sufficient to offset the additional cost.

Table 1

Water and Wastewater Treatment Superintendent								
		Step A	Step B	Step C	Step D	Step E	Step F	Step G
Current	Monthly	\$ 11,253	\$ 11,814	\$ 12,405	\$ 13,028	\$ 13,679	\$ 14,362	\$ 15,080
	Hourly	64.92	68.16	71.57	75.16	78.92	82.86	87.00
	Annually	135,034	141,773	148,866	156,333	164,154	172,349	180,960

Proposed	5% monthly	11,815	12,405	13,026	13,679	14,363	15,081	15,834
	5% hourly	68.17	71.57	75.15	78.92	82.87	87.00	91.35
	5% Annually	141,785	148,861	156,309	164,149	172,361	180,966	190,008

COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE REPORT

Does not apply.

CITY ATTORNEY'S ANALYSIS

Does not apply.

Prepared by: Rudy Guzman, Water Utilities Division Manager

Reviewed by: Frederick Mayo, Water Utilities Director

Reviewed by: Chelsea D. Phebus, Director of Human Resources & Risk Management

Submitted by: Jonathan Borrego, City Manager