



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Jennifer Schembri  
Kerrie Romanow  
Jim Shannon

**SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO THE CITY  
PAY PLAN**

**DATE:** December 18, 2023

Approved

Date

12/19/23

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) Adopt a resolution amending the City of San José Pay Plan effective January 9, 2024, to create the Chief Plant Operator (U) (3658) classification with a pensionable salary range of \$141,489.37 - \$228,411.94 annually; and
- (b) Add 1.0 Chief Plant Operator position in the Environmental Services Department.

## **SUMMARY AND OUTCOME**

If the above recommendation is approved, the City of San José Pay Plan will be amended to (1) create the Chief Plant Operator (3658) classification and (2) add 1.0 Chief Plant Operator position, effective immediately, in the Environmental Services Department.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of San José Pay Plan must be amended by City Council resolution when new job classifications are added or deleted, or salaries are revised. The City Pay Plan reflects all job classification and compensation changes made through City Council resolution. The City Pay Plan is on file in the Human Resources Department and published on the City's internet and intranet sites.

The Chief Plant Operator is an industry standard position that provides technical operations knowledge specific to wastewater treatment and is responsible for the overall operation of a wastewater treatment plant, including compliance in waste discharge requirements and ensuring that operators-in-training are supervised directly in accordance with Operator Certification Regulations. The San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility (RWF) Operations Division Manager has been serving as the Chief Plant Operator; however, as the RWF has evolved during Capital Improvement Program upgrades, a higher-level class is necessary to

manage operations and the additional scope of responsibilities. As such, the Chief Plant Operator position will be added immediately to provide RWF operations oversight.

## **ANALYSIS**

The RWF is jointly owned by the cities of San José and Santa Clara and managed by San José's Environmental Services Department (ESD). The Human Resources Department worked with ESD to create the Chief Plant Operator classification (**Attachment** – Chief Plant Operator (U) (3658)) to recruit and hire a candidate with high-level expertise to oversee the RWF operations and work groups. It is essential that a potential candidate have experience managing operations at a large facility with a considerable number of employees, as the RWF is the largest advanced wastewater treatment facility on the West Coast, serving 1.4 million residents in eight cities, a business sector with more than 17,000 main sewer connections, and employs over 260 full-time positions.

This request was made as part of the organizational restructuring of the RWF, including the recent creation and addition of the RWF General Manager classification that will provide oversight to the Chief Plant Operator and the Deputy Director of Capital Improvement Program, among others. The Chief Plant Operator will plan, organize, and direct the Operations Division, Biosolids Management Programs, Air Compliance, and Asset Management/Engineering Support of the RWF and may act on behalf of the RWF General Manager. The creation of this classification is critical to ensure the RWF's compliance with applicable state and federal wastewater discharge regulations and will assume responsibility for the following: the formal hand-off of new capital equipment from the Capital Improvement Program; biosolids transition strategy and implementation; RWF Emergency Response Team acting as Incident Commander during emergency responses; and serve as point person for all RWF tour requests.

The Chief Plant Operator classification is recommended to have an annual pay range of \$141,489.37 - \$228,411.94. This salary range is approximately 15% below the salary range of the recently created Regional Wastewater Facility General Manager classification. This salary range takes into consideration the technical expertise specific to wastewater treatment and Grade V Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator certification required for the position.

In addition to the establishment of the new classification, this memorandum also includes a recommendation to add 1.0 Chief Plant Operator position in the Environmental Services Department.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

No further follow-up with the City Council related to this action is anticipated at this time.

### **COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

The addition of a 1.0 Chief Plant Operator position will result in an additional annual cost of approximately \$375,155, which will be paid out of the San José-Santa Clara Treatment Plant Operating Fund. The additional costs in 2023-2024 will be absorbed within the Environmental Services Department's existing budget and the ongoing costs will be included in the development of the 2024-2025 Base Budget.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the January 9, 2024 City Council meeting.

### **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT**

Revisions to the Pay Plan for classified positions are reported to the Civil Service Commission for filing at the first regularly scheduled meeting following City Council action. The Chief Plant Operator is an at will position and therefore will not be reported to the Civil Service Commission.

### **CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-008, General Procedure and Policy Making resulting in no changes to the physical environment.

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**PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING**

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.



Jennifer Schembri

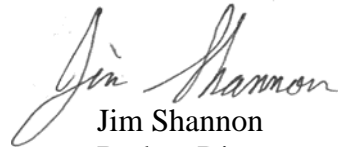
Director of Employee Relations

Director of Human Resources

/s/

Kerrie Romanow

Director, Environmental Services



Jim Shannon

Budget Director

The principal author of this memorandum is Marcela Bolanos, Program Manager, Human Resources Department. For questions regarding Classification and Salary analysis, please contact Linh Le, Employment Division Manager, Human Resources Department, at (408) 535-5652. For questions regarding budget impact, please contact Kerrie Romanow, Environmental Services Department Director at 408-535-8552.

**ATTACHMENT**

Class Specification - Chief Plant Operator (U) (3658)

**City of San José**  
**CLASS SPECIFICATION**

**Title: Chief Plant Operator (3658)**

DEPARTMENT	ACCOUNTABLE TO	FLSA STATUS
Environmental Services	Regional Wastewater Facility General Manager	Exempt

**CLASS SUMMARY**

Under administrative direction, performs work of considerable difficulty planning, organizing, and directing the Operations Division, Biosolids Management Programs, Air Compliance, and Asset Management/Engineering Support of the San José/Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility (Facility). The Chief Plant Operator is responsible for recommending budgets, standards, technical systems, and assisting executive management in the formulation and implementation of department policies and procedures to ensure continuous and proper operation of the Facility while achieving the system-wide state permit treatment performance and regulatory requirements. This position is responsible to ensure compliance with applicable State and Federal wastewater discharge regulations. Performs related work as required.

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

This single position class is assigned to the Environmental Services Department with demonstrated job expertise by level of certification, knowledge, and experience in the supervision or management of wastewater operations (i.e. primary, secondary, sludge control, nitrification, filtration, disinfection, Residual Solids Management, and computerized process control). This position reports directly to the Regional Wastewater Facility General Manager and is a member of the Facility's management team. The incumbent is expected to perform the full scope of assigned duties in conjunction with the principal responsibility of serving as the Operator-in-Charge. The Chief Plant Operator is distinguished from the next higher class of Regional Wastewater Facility General Manager in that the latter is responsible for the overall Facility and its divisions.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

**Minimum Qualifications**

**Education and Experience**

Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, AND six (6) years of supervisory or management experience at a wastewater facility, including at least three (3) years of experience supervising more than 20 full-time employees.

**Acceptable Substitution**

Additional years of related experience may be substituted for the bachelor's degree requirement on a year for year basis.

**Required Licensing (such as driver's license, certifications, etc.)**

- Certification as a Grade V Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator in the State of California.
- Possession of a valid State of California's driver license.

**Other Qualifications**

**(Incumbents may be required to have different combinations of the listed qualifications, or more specific job-related qualifications depending on the position.)**

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**Basic Competencies**

**(Needed at entry into the job in order to perform the essential duties.)**

- Job Expertise – Demonstrates knowledge of and experience with applicable professional/technical principles and practices, Citywide and departmental procedures/policies and federal and state rules and regulations.
  - Knowledge of:
    - Operations of a wastewater facility;
    - Environmental health and safety regulations related to wastewater operations;
    - Day-to-day operational requirements in an active industrial environment; and
    - Unique management protocols for a variety of trades personnel.
  - Ability to:
    - Serve as Incident Commander during emergency responses.
- Collaboration - Develops networks and builds alliances; engages in cross-functional activities.
- Communication Skills - Effectively conveys information and expresses thoughts and facts clearly, orally and in writing; demonstrates effective use of listening skills and displays openness to other people's ideas and thoughts.
- Creativity - Addresses objectives and problems while questioning traditional assumptions/solutions in order to generate creative ideas and new ways of doing business; exhibits creativity and innovation when contributing to organizational and individual objectives; seeks out opportunities to improve, streamline, reinvent work processes.
- Management - Evaluates priorities to ensure the 'true' top priorities are handled satisfactorily; sets clear goals for the employees and the work unit.
- Leadership - Leads by example; demonstrates high ethical standards; remains visible and approachable and interacts with others on a regular basis; promotes a cooperative work environment, allowing others to learn from mistakes; provides motivational supports and direction.
- Vision/Strategic Thinking - Supports, promotes, and ensures alignment with the organization's vision and values; understands how an organization must change in light of internal and external trends and influences; builds a shared vision with others and influences others to translate vision to action.

**Additional Competencies and/or Desirable Qualifications**

**(Competencies, knowledge, skills and abilities that are more position specific and/or likely to contribute to more successful job performance.)**

Supervisory experience as a certified wastewater operator in a variety of treatment processes ranging from primary, secondary, recycled water production, biosolids, up to advanced water treatment is preferred.

Ability to:

- display an entrepreneurial spirit and positive demeanor;
- remain flexible and adaptable;

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- have the demonstrated ability to learn and run new systems;
- be proactive in addressing challenges and priorities;
- maintain the highest level of ethical standards.

<b>DUTY NO.</b>	<b>TYPICAL CLASS ESSENTIAL DUTIES: (These duties and estimated frequency are a representative sample; position assignments may vary depending on the business needs of the department.) Duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b>
1.	Participates in and advises the Regional Wastewater Facility (Facility) General Manager in the planning and organizing of the Facility's operations.	Daily
2.	Provides direct and indirect supervision over staff in the Facility's Operations Division and Biosolids Management Program.	Daily
3.	Directs and performs special projects and strategic planning programs as defined by the Facility General Manager.	Daily
4.	Plans, directs, counsels, provides guidelines, and reviews accomplishments of the Facility Operations and Biosolids Management Program staff as steps towards achievement of departmental goals and objectives.	Daily
5.	Manages the strategy and implementation for biosolids transition, including short-term hauling contracts and long-term fertilizer plant.	Daily
6.	Directs personnel who monitor, report, manage renewal of, and handle corrective action related to air emissions permits.	Daily
7.	Directs Asset Management/Engineering Support personnel responsible for electronically storing, organizing, and managing all wastewater related documents that are critical for the successful operation and maintenance of the Facility, as well as management of professional service contracts for design oversight of various O&M construction projects.	Daily
9.	Manages and oversees Wastewater Operations Superintendents in the areas of: Secondary/Nitrification, Training and Scheduling, Facility Computer Room, Primary/Sludge Control, and Residential Solids Management.	Daily
10.	Coordinates with the CIP Deputy Director for the hand-off of new capital equipment.	As Required
11.	Serves as Incident Commander for the Facility's Emergency Response Team.	As Required
12.	Manages coordination of tours at the Facility.	As Required
13.	Performs other related work as required.	As Required

\*Frequency defined as Daily/Several Times, Daily, Weekly, Intermittent, or As Required

**PHYSICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS**

At this large industrial facility, must be able to routinely travel and maneuver throughout the complex 2,600 acre site.

In the office environment, possess ability to:

- Operate, access, enter, and retrieve data using standard office equipment, including but not limited to a computer or tablet;

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- Read printed materials and a computer screen;
- Communicate in person and over the telephone;
- Lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 25 pounds, or heavier weights, in all cases with the use of proper equipment;
- Move between/within work areas, including but not limited to sitting, walking, and standing on various surfaces, turning, bending, grasping, and making repetitive hand movements;
- Be exposed to moderate noise levels and controlled temperature conditions;
- Maintain professional demeanor during interactions with staff, customers and the public.

**CLASSIFICATION HISTORY** *Created 12/23*