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Santa Clara County supervisors raise top officials' pay

By Mark Helfen
Knight Ridder

Santa Clara County supervisors, with no discussion, unanimously approved salary increases for three of the county's highest paid executives.

At their Tuesday meeting, the supervisors voted increases between 10.5 and 15 percent for Health and Hospital systems Chief Financial Officer Kim Roberts, Director of the County Medical Center Susan Murphy, and Director of Ambulatory and Community Health Services Robin Roche. In addition, the three will receive a \$500 monthly car allowance, and \$15,000 a year in deferred compensation through the county's retirement savings plan.

The raises were approved just three weeks before the supervisors begin working on next year's budget. The county faces a deficit of \$127 million, with the possibility of layoffs and reduced services.

Roberts is acting executive director of the Health and Hospital System in place of the recently retired Bob Sillen. The county is searching for a permanent replacement. Her current salary is \$238,120.

The objective of the increase was to "assure stability and continuity," in the hospital system, said Deputy County Executive Luke Leung. The board approved a change in the salary range for the three, but the purpose is to increase their salary, said Leung.

"We can't afford to have seasoned professionals leave," said Leung.

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