LOCAL NEWS

# Sonoma County appoints new interim director for IOLERO, shelves plans to update Measure P at ballot



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“I think we made a great selection,” said Board of Supervisors Chair Rebecca Hermosillo, noting Chavez’s tenure at IOLERO, his focus on audits, a core part of the watchdog’s work, and ties to Sonoma County.



At IOLERO, Chavez, a longtime attorney and certified oversight practitioner, has worked on audits of Sheriff’s Office internal affairs investigations, including use-of-force incidents, canine deployment and in-custody deaths in the jail.

“I am honored to have been appointed interim director of IOLERO. My goal as interim director will be to ensure that IOLERO continues to conduct its core auditing and other day-to-day oversight duties and administrative functions,” Chavez said in a statement. “I am confident that during the transition period IOLERO will be able to work collaboratively with all stakeholders as the permanent director selection process progresses.”

The announcement Thursday also came with news that the Board of Supervisors will not be pursuing amendments on the November 2026 ballot to Measure P, Sonoma County’s 2020 Measure P ballot initiative that expanded IOLERO’s powers.

The extent of those powers has been at the center of ongoing legal dispute

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“The Board believes IOLERO’s work to fully implement Measure P as written can be accomplished through stronger collaboration, and operational improvements among IOLERO, the Sheriff’s Office and County leadership,” County Executive David Guhin told IOLERO staff in a written message, noting that the interim director and permanent replacement will be integral in that work.

“The Board’s decision reflects a deliberate consideration about what this moment calls for and their interest in IOLERO operations at this specific point in time,” Guhin wrote.

Leaders of IOLERO and the Sheriff’s Office have butted heads recently as the watchdog sought to wield its new and expanded authority, especially subpoena power.

Yearslong litigation over the oversight agency’s ability to investigate whistleblower claims has been elevated to a recent request for review by California Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the stalemate over IOLERO’s use of subpoenas for its independent investigations led to a controversial effort spearheaded by Hermosillo to consider a ballot initiative to make changes to Measure P.

“The Board’s priority for the interim period is strengthening IOLERO’s core internal operations,” Guhin wrote. “Matthew’s internal audit focus and background make him well suited to lead this work during this period.”

In a statement, Sonoma County Sheriff Eddie Engram thanked Alden, the former IOLERO director, and congratulated Chavez on his appointment. “I look forward to working with him,” he said.

The board effort to craft changes to Measure P would have required a rush to the ballot box in November and confidential labor negotiations with law enforcement unions. The move had alarmed Measure P champions and drawn criticism from Alden, among other oversight advocates.

“Part of being an elected official is to start tough conversations. We knew if

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Michael Soto, who has been acting director of IOLERO since Alden left in May, will remain in his role as IOLERO's chief deputy.

Chavez's annual salary as interim director will be $224,240.

Hermosillo said a nationwide search for the full appointment will start immediately.

In the past, hiring for the IOLERO director position has included expert and community panels. Hermosillo confirmed that, while the details are still being finalized, IOLERO's Community Advisory Council will be involved in the process.

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