

Negotiations Update

September 1, 2017

We have been getting a few questions about ongoing negotiations. Below is a brief synopsis of where we are in the current round of negotiations and a more detailed one about the negotiation process.

Current Negotiation meetings:

The KCPOA Board has met three different times over the last three months with the Board of Supervisors representative in negotiations, County Administrative Office Labor Relations Officer (CAOLRO). The CAOLRO has laid the groundwork for the County's current fiscal state. They believe and stated during the negotiation meetings that the County is in a fiscal crisis and they are currently trying to reduce their annual cost because they have a structural deficit, meaning their budget is more than the revenue they bring in. The CAOLRO is giving us the message; the County would like the unions to provide ideas and ways for our members to give more concessions to help with their fiscal crisis.

In the three meetings, there were no offers from either sides. The meetings were informational in that we requested more information about their fiscal crisis. The information they provided is the budget documents that the Board of Supervisors just discussed and ultimately approved as their 2017/2018 budget.

We have no further meeting scheduled at this point

Negotiations Background:

The current negotiations started the moment after we signed the last successor Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2012. We have been

meeting with each of the members of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on a regular basis since the last time we signed a contract. They are not negotiations, because the law does not allow us to negotiate with the BOS directly. But the meetings set a foundation for when we (KCPOA) sit down with the County.

The message we have been giving the BOS is KCPOA members should be paid at a level between a Deputy District Attorney and a Deputy Sheriff. We argue the education and the multiplicity and complexity of our jobs justifies that pay. One of the biggest obstacles is the belief first responders have a higher value to the public than we do. We remind the BOS of our education requirements, job requirements, value in reducing future criminal justice costs, and how in the past Probation Officers were paid more than the other public safety groups for these reasons.

During these meetings with the BOS members, we go over important points on a regular basis. Such as:

- The cost of living has gone up
- The cost of benefits has gone up
- The buying power of our members has been reduced
- Members are looking elsewhere for employment and are leaving
- The job requires a level of education:
Bachelor's Degree for Probation Officer and 2 years of College for Juvenile Corrections Officer
- All employees are interchangeable and have the abilities do all the different jobs in the department
- The job has gotten more dangerous since the passage of AB 109
- Probation Officers have a caseload to manage which includes holding all

the offenders accountable for terms and conditions of probation as well as acting as a counselor with the probationers, using motivational interviewing techniques to elicit changing behavior.

- The Juvenile institutions were running evidence based programs prior to AB109

- Juvenile Correction Officers have a case to manage which includes holding all youth accountable for their daily behavior as well as acting as a counselor with the youth, using motivational interviewing techniques to elicit changing behavior.

- Probation has been given more and more responsibility without additional compensation

- The Probation Department is the sentencing matter expert in Court

- We remind the BOS, it was our department who trained the District Attorney and Public Defender on AB109 and its effect on the Court.

- The Probation Department saves the County money by running Div. G in Municipal Court

During these meetings, we also get a sense of where they are. We continue to get a message from each board member that the County is in fiscal crisis and they are not looking at giving anyone a raise. Given this information, we did not start negotiations until they asked recently. We did not want to be in a contract with other groups still negotiating as we have learned from the past the value of patience.

We have been giving for a long time!! We have gone without for a long time. This is a marathon not a sprint. We have long term goals and are laying the groundwork to reach those goals.

There is a belief from members that there is a magic bullet. What I mean by this is if we tell the BOS something specific, that will change their minds. There is NO magic bullet. When they do give us a raise, you will see them espouse one or more of the many points we have been providing for them as justification over the last 9 years. And, it will be because the timing is right for the BOS politically.

There has been criticism from the membership on lack of information about negotiations. I will take full responsibility on this. It has been my experience negotiations is a bit of a poker game. We don't want to show our hand to anyone, because that could be detrimental. For example, if the information about our ultimate goal of being paid much higher than the Sheriff's Deputies gets out to them, then this allows them to counter argue with the BOS before it happens. (Please don't share this goal with your KCSO friends or spouses.)

As painful as this may be to hear, the BOS ultimately does not care about your individual financial circumstance. They have conveyed a message over the years, if the pay and benefits are that bad, then you would leave. Your happiness in your job and morale at your worksite is not their concern. As a bargaining unit we have to be sophisticated and wise, play the long game and strike when the iron is hot. Your Board is trying to do just that. We don't get anxious or expend a ton of energy when no group is getting anything from the County. We are in good standing with all BOS members and our new CAO. We are working on many levels to influence a positive outcome and will continue to do so.

In conclusion, I am more frustrated with the current situation with the County than anyone. I have been fighting this fight for many years now. It was my hope we would be much closer to our goal than we are. I believe patience and diligence will get us there but there are no guarantees; we just do the best we can as it comes. I don't see a raise at all this year and next year is very questionable. The County is still paying high retirement bonds and, with KCERA changing their assumed rate of return, increased retirement costs.

We have Board elections coming up in December and one of those positions is mine, President. I have been doing this a long time and am more frustrated with the County than ever. It is very difficult to endure the politics (which are ugly) year in and year out. I will be deciding before December if I will run again. I have been glad to represent you, but it is taking more of a toll on me than ever and my patience too is worn thin. My commitment to you while I am your President is to put us in the best possible position for securing and increasing our benefits, retirement, and pay. When there is meaningful news on negotiations, I will update you. Until then, keep representing yourselves with distinction. I encourage any of you who are interested in participating on the KCPOA Board to run for a position.

Brian P. Ronan
Former KCPOA President