

Response to Board of Supervisors September 12, 2023

During last weeks meeting Supervisor McGowan made comments related to the current Sheriff's Office staffing problems. I would like to thank Supervisor McGowan for his comments. It indicates that he is at least listening to what I am saying.

On May 17th 2022 Human Resources Director Nancy Selvage brought an agenda item forward regarding the adoption of a resolution updating the base wages for appointed department heads. To summarize the background / discussion of that item, HR Director Selvage submitted "the department heads job classifications have not been updated across the pay schedule in a very long time in Plumas County. Some updates to department head pay schedules were due to vacant positions and to recruitment replacements, the wage issue needed to be updated in order to be competitive". Additionally stating that "more recently with the shortage in labor market needs, many of our department heads are being recruited to other agencies". Director Selvage also stated "to address the need to bring our department heads up to a comparable pay schedule, Human Resources conducted a wage survey using our past practice ten (10) counties. This survey was used to adjust the base wages for our department head positions. It is important to keep up with the wages for our department heads as well as our employees". Director Selvage also mentions "with decent paying positions for our department heads, employees may see themselves promoting into these positions as the opportunity arises. Pay schedules need to be competitive and relevant to todays employment market".

As a result of this agenda item the board adopted a resolution increasing nearly every department head wage. Some saw a minimal increase while others saw a substantial increase. The average across the board though was a 16% increase in an effort to meet the 10 or as we know now 8 county survey.

In a meeting March 20th of this year Director Selvage again brought a resolution to the BOS regarding an increase for the base wage of the Undersheriff. In her background and discussion, Director Selvage references the appointed department head wage adjustments given on May 17th stating “this realignment of department head pay schedules was necessary to have competitive wages for these positions. The county had lost 14 department head level positions in one year, making this extremely difficult to refill positions as well as attract current department heads to stay on with the county”.

Currently the dispatchers that are employed for the Sheriff’s Office are paid 18% or \$7,200 a year below the ten-county comparison and 23% or \$9,000 below the same eight county comparison that was used for the appointed department heads. Our Correctional Officers are currently paid 26% or \$10,000 below the ten-county comparison and 29% or \$11,500 below the eight-county comparison. Our deputies are currently paid 39% or \$17,389 below the ten-county comparison and 45% or \$20,200 below the eight-county comparison.

So, to answer Supervisor McGowan’s question which I believe was something to the effect of “do you think throwing money at this issue will fix the problem” I have a complex answer. Yes, I absolutely do think that throwing the right amount of money at the problem will fix our issues with recruitment and retention at the Sheriff’s Office. It has worked for the appointed department heads and as I explained last week, it is working for several agencies within the state. However, in my opinion the board’s offers to the Sheriff’s Office employees thus far, are insulting and won’t fix anything. As I have told this board on several occasions, in my opinion a 20% raise would be the minimum to even come close to fixing the recruitment/retention problems at the sheriff’s office as our Correctional officers and deputies are still 26% to 46% below our comparison counties. I will also mention that several of the eight or ten counties continue to negotiate with their Sheriff’s Office employees so our wage disparity will only increase.

In last weeks comments from Supervisor McGowan I also sensed that he might be referring to administrative issues at the Sheriff’s office as

possible reasons for recruitment/retention issues. I can only assume that the CAOs follow-up letter to Plumas Sun was the catalyst for his “Money won’t fix everything “ comment. I would also like to address the CAOs Survey letter briefly.

- Refer Survey Letter:

- 50 employees were contacted. How many of those employees were part time? Our numbers indicate that at least 1/3 of those contacted would have had to been part time employees. It makes a difference. What were the specifics as to why those who were contacted left the department (le were they in good standing or not).
- Of those contacted 16 cited issues with “either” department management or poor morale. Which is it? The county paid over \$4000.00 for this survey and no specific. However there were 7 employees who gave very specific reasons as to why they left as being unrelated to management. Additionally, I have spoken to two former employees who stated they were upset with management indicating that they meant the BOS and your lack of support.
- To date I have made two attempts to get more detailed information regarding this survey and no specific details as to issues with me or my administration have been provided.
- In closing I would like to cover our current staffing shortage and cost to hire train estimated by my Fiscal Officer and Special Operations Sergeant.
 - 1xSgt and 2xDep @\$84,652 = approximately \$254,000.
 - 4xDispatchers @\$23,113 = approximately \$93,000.
 - 12xCorrectional Officers @\$30,344 = \$394,000.
 - Totaling Approximately \$741,000 (No OT travel etc)

