

MATTHEW KENDALL
Sheriff-Coroner



Undersheriff Darren Brewster
Administrative Services

Captain Gregory L. Van Patten
Field Services

Captain Joyce Spears
Corrections

County of Mendocino
Office Of The Sheriff-Coroner

Memorandum

Date: 02/2/2022

To: Chair Williams and Members of the Board
CC:

From: Sheriff Matt Kendall

Subject: Bonus incentives for Deputy Sheriff's

I ask for your support for the hiring incentives described in the attached Agenda Summary. I understand the sensitivity around employee negotiations but these are one time payments to new hires and will not benefit current employees or increase on-going employee compensation. There is precedent in Mendocino County for one time payments and incentive payments.

Without these incentives the Sheriff's Office will see a continued erosion of staffing levels. Lower staffing may result in salary savings (partially offset by increased overtime and worker's compensation costs) but also results in increased stress and officer safety issues. Workplace issues in turn contribute to Deputies taking early retirement or moving to other agencies at an accelerated pace. Perceived adverse working conditions and substantially lower compensation means that vacancies occur faster than they can be filled.

Instead of staffing up to meet the expectations of the public and the Board, or even maintaining the status quo, we will experience the continued erosion of staffing levels. Despite authorized staffing levels, the number of Deputies available for duty is extremely low. There has been only one other time in my thirty plus year career with the Sheriff's Office that we have seen personnel numbers this low. Salary negotiations may alleviate these conditions in the future but will not conclude in time to stabilize or reverse the current situation.

Following the Great Recession, during at least two rounds of salary negotiations, in addition to modest percentage increases in salary, Mendocino County agreed to make one time payments of a specified amount. These one time payments did not include the usual roll up costs or increase on-going compensation.

On another occasion Mendocino County took the lead in paying incentives to employees in critical and hard to fill positions including social workers and public health nurses. These incentive payments were not merely separate from the salary negotiation process but were actively resisted by the union that represented the affected employees. The Board insisted on making these payments out of concern for the public health and safety. I believe the same conditions apply here.

On at least three occasions during the last year the Board has stated its support for stabilizing or even increasing Sheriff's Office staffing, particularly Deputy Sheriff's. Correctional Deputies are also essential to protecting the public health and safety. Understaffing the jail is more likely to result in injuries to inmates and staff and liability to the County.

The proposed one time payments, limited only to new hires, will not increase compensation for current employees, will not increase on-going compensation costs and will not impact salary negotiations. They can be implemented unilaterally by the Board, subject only to fulfilling meet and confer obligations.

The proposed incentive payments are justified out of concern for the public health and safety. We simply cannot afford to go further backwards in public safety staffing. Doing so will have severe negative impacts on the safety and quality of life of all county residents. Accordingly, I ask for your support for the proposed one time incentive payments.

Respectfully,



Matthew Kendall
SHERIFF-CORONER