

# **SCOPO ROUND TABLE REPORTS**

## **NOV/DEC 2010**

### **CONTRA COSTA**

As of this writing, and on November 18<sup>th</sup>, the PPOACCC Membership, which includes Probation Officers and Probation Counselors, overwhelmingly ratified the Association's initial contract with the County. Pending Board of Supervisor's approval on December 7<sup>th</sup>, the contract will go into effect on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010. A summary of the contract boils down to the Membership having to furlough 96 hours with the closing date June 30, 2011. It appears that a very large percentage of the Membership felt it was a more prudent offer than taking a chance that the County would impose a larger reduction in the monthly salary, which would have no "sunset" and would have to be re-negotiated back with the County. As I have stated in this column in the past, the PPOACCC Membership have given more than the "shared sacrifice", which the County has negotiated and with other bargaining units, continues to negotiate. That spells approximately 25% from the Member's salary that they have to contribute toward their retirement.

The PPOACCC continues to question the procedure with which the Department handles Probation Peace Officer's evaluations. The general feeling is that there is no "Due Process" procedure for an evaluated Member, even if a Step increase is involved.

The Department commemorated "Latino Celebration" with a series of Department get togethers, including a luncheon on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Not only did everyone who attended enjoy a wonderful selection of Latino cuisine from various countries, but also there was live entertainment and guest speakers.

The Chief recently reported that CPOC (Chief Probation Officers of California) supports sustaining the VLF (Vehicle License Fees). Chief Kader has scheduled his initial "Brown Bag" meeting with the Department's employees for November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Probation employees are gearing up the Holiday Spirit to help assist the Contra Costa County Food Bank with various fundraisers, including a Spaghetti Lunch, Coffee & Bagels sale, White Elephant sale and a Soup N' Sandwich sale.

The Probation Department will be celebrating a series of staff holiday get-togethers, including luncheons scheduled for December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

A recent Possession of Child Pornography allegation was made against a Mental Health Worker who works at Juvenile Hall. Unfortunately, the local newspaper headline of the

arrest depicted the Mental Health Worker as a “Counselor”. Since the Probation Counselors, who are sworn Peace Officers, care for the minors at Juvenile Hall, attempts were made to have the newspaper correct their error. But to no avail, they chose not to.

## **Fresno**

Since our last meeting, the County of Fresno decided not to shift additional costs of health insurance onto the employees, which was a major win for all County employees. Communication between line staff and management continues to be good. Recent promotions in management will have a trickle down effect on line staff, and promotions within the ranks are anticipated soon. A change in leadership is coming soon within the DPOA, which would be the first major overhaul since the Association’s inception in 2004.

## **Inyo**

The Inyo County Probation Peace Officer's Association members are still holding steady until June 2011. Negotiations should commence in January and it's been interesting and informational to watch the outcomes of other union's within the county negotiate. Presently, our department awaits the return of two officers from core and is in the recruitment process for a third officer. Any counties that have participated in a Wraparound model and are willing to share their experience please contact Heather Oney at [honey@inyocounty.us](mailto:honey@inyocounty.us). Have a terrific holiday season!

## **Madera**

Madera Probation is still working steadfastly in the trenches. Our budget has yet to be passed and we continue with furloughs. The Chief of Probation has held several meetings with departmental employees on a few new changes that will be taking place within the Probation department. The Chief has been discussing the department’s “roll-out,” of an Evidenced Based department. He stated, “ One of the most important objectives we are looking at right now is Juvenile Detention Reform. We've never had a system in place that objectively looked at our juvenile bookings and determined what level of detention they required.” With all the new programs that are set to take place, we are busy trying to prepare for the future of a new and improved Probation department. We are starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

## **San Bernardino**

Many of you may have heard by now SBCPOA has been without a contract since 2008. Yes we are still negotiating and 3@50 Safety retirement has been our main focus. In 2001 we were given Safety Retirement through arbitration, however since we don't have binding arbitration, the County would not award Probation Officers safety retirement and remained status quo.

In 2008 the illusive 3@50 returned to the bargaining table, and due to the some of the language in bargaining, retro vs. non-retro, SBCPOA members voted it down. November 2009, we went back to the bargaining table and again 3@50 was offered by the Board of Supervisors. Since then it has been nothing but a series of lies and deception. Finally, in July 2010 SBCPOA was given the red light "No Safety Retirement, raises, benefit increases just "Status Quo."

President John Tackett and Association Attorney John Ramirez began knocking on doors and requesting Meet and Greets with the Board of Supervisors. We also had a brief meeting with the County CAO, which resulted in a big chest-bumping contest and although much was discussed nothing was accomplished. We met with three of the five Board of Supervisor members and received a much warmer reception. Recently, we were contacted by the CAO's office requesting SBCPOA meet with him in conjunction with SEBA (The Sheriff's Association). That meeting will take place on November 15, 2010, and it is doubtful SEBA will join. However it is our understanding safety retirement is back on the table, but that is still left to be seen.

## **San Diego**

A tragedy in San Diego. On Wednesday night October 27, 2010 Officer Chris Wilson of the San Diego Police Department was shot and killed assisting San Diego County Probation Officers (Gang Suppression Unit) and U.S. Marshals on a Probation contact. The Marshals were looking for an acquaintance of the probationer. Once inside the residence assistance was requested for San Diego Police. San Diego Police arrived and took over the incident. As San Diego Police attempted to make contact with the occupants hiding in a room officer Chris Wilson was tragically shot and killed.

This incident and others show the dangerous situations Probation Officers face every day. We found several areas of our Critical Incident Policy lacking and are in the process of making those corrections.

We are in the middle of our Agency Fee vote. Final ballots will be counted on December 6, 2010. Out of approximately 860 officers 700 are SDCPOA members. We hope to get more officers to join and enjoy all the benefits we have to offer.

This is the last year of our contract. We hope to hear from the County soon on any contract negotiations. We did receive a 2% wage increase this last year and a 5% increase

in Healthcare each year. Healthcare went up for all three providers. Kaiser, Anthem HMO and Anthem PPO.

Mandatory overtime is still going strong in our institutions. Supervision and Investigation caseloads are increasing every day. Over the last 3 years we have lost approximately 160 officers and no new hires. We are definitely doing MORE WITH LESS, which is pretty much the same around the State.

## **San Francisco**

San Francisco Adult Probation is expecting to hire 10- 12 new Probation Officers, four Probation Aides, two to three Supervising Probation Officers, and a Chief Deputy Probation Officer. Adult probation is training and will be using the Compass assessment tool. There is a new employee Performance Evaluation that is being discussed. Prop B was defeated which would have forced city employees to contribute far more towards their health benefit costs.

At Juvenile Probation Department, officers are retiring and are not being replaced. There are some issues with administration regarding sick leave restriction and the use of Family Leave.

## **San Joaquin**

Since my last update, we had three probation officers retire; which helped in bringing back another laid off member and re-promoted another. That leaves us with one officer to be brought back, and two to be re-promoted, since layoffs and demotions took place July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Considering the rate at which the county has recovered since the onset of the recession, we hope that we can maintain at least the status quo for funding in the year ahead. Even though our bargaining unit took the lead in making concessions to save jobs this last year, the County should fully realize that our members and the public will stomach only so much of the burden. The County must begin making tough decisions on prioritizing spending and cuts to the budget. At the top of that list, must be public safety!

Locally, our Association did not become actively involved in political races as the two Board of Supervisor seats went unopposed. They were actually voted back in this last June during the Primary. At this point, the players remain unchanged, 2012 should be an interesting election season on all levels.

Unfortunately, we have not heard back from the Feds for most of our 2010 grant applications. And, since the Federal year began October 1<sup>st</sup>, it appears that the Feds have awarded alternate jurisdictions with the grants. We did receive one grant though, which will give us funding from the Violence Against Women Act to pay for one PO position.

This PO will supervise a caseload of 50, focusing on those with felony domestic violence and stalking cases.

In our Labor Management meetings, we recently resolved the issue of compensation for our ART facilitators. Those that facilitated groups during a defined period over the summer will be given overtime compensation; while any members designated as “trainers” in the future, will be compensated just as our other in-house trainers.

Lastly, the Department recently presented us with a revised Discipline policy, something which we have requested a Meet & Confer over. Our first meeting is planned for the end of November. Based on the previous version that the Department circulated, this is an improvement, but there are still concerns that need to be addressed for the benefit of the entire membership.

## **Solano**

We are moving along here in Solano County. The Civil Service Commission approved our moving forward to arrange for an election although SEIU has filed an unfair practice charge against the County, which might stall things.

## **Ventura**

On 7-29-10, the VCPPOA membership ratified a new three-year contract with the County. The contract calls for the membership to contribute 2.37% more to their own retirement account, which had previously been picked up by the County. Additionally, the hourly rate for CSOs and DPOs will be reduced by .63% for a result in a total 3% reduction in take home pay. All bargaining units are being asked to make similar concessions as part of the County’s commitment to “Pension Reform.” However, in January, the Auditor will change all County employees’ post-tax dollar contribution to retirement accounts to a pre-tax dollar contribution which will, to some extent mitigate the reduction in take home pay.

The Board and membership overwhelming believed that locking into a three year contract was a good thing in these uncertain times so that further takeaways would be eliminated for a while, giving the economy a period to recover. As an Agency, we have fared much better than other similar departments in the state, having suffered no layoffs, and a minimal reduction in compensation. This fact is not lost on the membership, who continues to remain professional while offering a high level of service to the community.

The Agency has not hired any new DPOs or CSOs since October 2008. As programs have contracted, and through the attrition of the work force and retirements, personnel and resources have been re-allocated in order to continue providing public services beyond those simply mandated. In mid-September, the Agency opened up recruitment

for CSO's. There are currently many applicants in the background process for five possible positions. The Agency will also soon be hiring student workers again. Student workers, along with the part time retirees, became the first casualties in the workforce at the beginning of fiscal year 2009-2010.

## **Yolo**

On July 2, 2010, the Yolo County Probation Association began the arduous process of Petitioning the County of Yolo for Unit Modification, Exclusive Recognition, and De-certification from the General Bargaining Unit, currently represented by IUOE, Stationary Engineers, Local 39. The Petition was denied, and the appeals process began in earnest in July of this year. During the appeals process the YCPA President, Vice President, and Secretary met with board members from the three existing law enforcement bargaining units to discuss the potential for merging YCPA members from the other existing units. Each of those units and YCPA Board members agreed that a merger of the associations was not in the best interests of each employee group.

The various levels of appeals consisted of meeting with the Director of Human Resources, followed by a meeting with a state Mediator after HR denied the first level appeal. Finally, an appeal was filed with the Board of Supervisors requesting a hearing by a neutral third party to rule on the matter.

The latest appeal was heard before the Yolo County Board of Supervisors on November 9, 2010. At this hearing, the Board allowed statements from Human Resources, YCPA's legal counsel, YCPA President, and Local 39's business agent, as well as receiving information from County Counsel and the CAO. After hearing the evidence presented, the Board voted 4 to 1 in favor of allowing the Yolo County Probation Association Unit Modification Petition to proceed, overturning HR's denial of the Petition.

To address the concerns relative to the proliferation of bargaining units in the County, the Board further merged the Probation Peace Officer classifications into a previously existing law enforcement bargaining unit consisting of District Attorney Investigators. While this is not an ideal situation, as it created a forced merger between two different peace officer groups who had previously met and agreed that a merger was not in either group's best interests, it is favorable in terms of probation peace officers no longer being represented by a bargaining unit consisting of miscellaneous employee classifications within the County.

YCPA would like to thank SCOPO, it's Executive Board, and member Associations for their guidance, thoughtful advice, and moral and financial support thus far. We anticipate further updates on the progress of the Unit Modification in the near future.

Please stay safe out there. Best wishes to each and every one of you for a bountiful Thanksgiving, and a Happy Holiday Season.

