

## IN RESPONSE TO CRITICISM OF BOS:

For months, going back to at least October of 2022, we have listened to employees come before this board talking about low wages, working conditions and the unresponsiveness of our Board, our administration, Human Resources and more. And because these comments have come primarily during public comment, the board does not get into a back and forth with those who have a right to practice their freedom of speech.

Not only have we seen headlines like this one in the Plumas News on January 17, 2023:

.... Beginning Sunday just one vehicle to patrol the entire county due to staffing crisis

Or the Letter to the Editor April 30, 2023 from a Plumas County employee:

## Where I Stand: Public safety on the verge of collapse in Plumas

There have been more than a dozen articles, letters to the editor and numerous employees including the sheriff - in person - at our meetings to air grievances. As the Board of Supervisors, we are expected to get things right, spend the public's money wisely, and make sure what we say is based in fact, so please listen very carefully because we've been doing our homework.

Our county has a growth rate of about 3% annually or \$600,000 a year, according to our Auditor-Controller consultant Craig Goodman who took a quick look 10 years back to today. We are looking at cost of living increases of 8% or 9% and pay increases that may amount to much, much more than the 3% we have in growth. Having said that, we recognize the need for employees to receive raises and we want to accommodate this as the county's finances allow. We are looking for ways. For instance, earlier this year, for those who have CalPers Health Insurance, the county has picked up 85% to their 15% for CalPers insurance premiums –costing the County and its taxpayers \$740,000 annually.

But, to address why people are leaving, we've been looking at our entire organization and we want to share what we know so far, starting with the Sheriff's Department since that alarm has been sounded.

51 people have left the Sheriff's Department since July of 2022. We actually worked with a third party investigator to interview those who had left because it had been brought up on several occasions by the sheriff that people left due to low wages. It was also stated to the Board that exit interviews had been done and the primary reason employees left was due to low wages. After at least two attempts to get those exit interviews from the Sheriff or Undersheriff with no response, we decided to ask the question through a third-party unbiased investigator: "Why did you leave the Sheriff's Department?"

Any well-run organization knows that it needs to understand why its employees are leaving. We knew that if we want to be successful in recruiting people to work in the Sheriff's Department, we need to understand why people are leaving.

The investigator could not reach all 51 individuals who had left the Sheriff's Department but he did speak to 30. Out of 30 people interviewed, 16 were critical of management, 7 cited pay and/or benefits as the

reason with one of those 7 also criticizing management; 4 retired, 2 moved out of state, one went part-time and one cited changes to OES.

In terms of recruitment, there was a meeting in December of 2022 with Sheriff Johns, Undersheriff Hermann, HR Director Nancy Selvage and CAO Debra Lucero about recruitment and retention. When the Sheriff was asked about the 24 applicants who applied for the various open positions in their department since August of 2022, the response was the applicants had not passed background. When asked for an example of why they are not passing background, the response from the Undersheriff was that one said they smoked marijuana.

Of the 24 applicants since August of 22, there were 6 applicants for dispatch, 9 for correctional officer, and 9 for deputy sheriff positions. If there are 24 qualified applicants and not one hire in this time span from August 2022 to December 2022, this would indicate an issue with background checking and/or investigations. The board would recommend a third party should be conducting the background investigations other than the Sheriff's department to help with this process.

When our Sheriff is quoted in the local newspaper as saying as a result of low staffing "We will be responding to emergency calls first, and anything that's not an emergency — vandalism, petty thefts — people will have to wait." And even emergency situations could be affected as the number of deputies out on patrol are reduced. This frightens people and lessens belief in what the county does for its citizens. We are all in this together.

And ... we need to correct the record. Plumas County isn't the only county facing law enforcement staffing issues — it's a statewide as well as national issue — but the sheriff has repeatedly said that his staff isn't leaving because they don't like the work; it's mainly because of the pay. Now, you know the truth. More than 50% of those interviewed left because they were critical of management while 23% cited pay and benefits. Those are facts.

Now, I want to read some statistics from recruitment efforts by the HR Department on behalf of the Sheriff's Department. I've also attached pay schedules which do not include benefits like the 15 holidays received in addition to vacation and sick pay. Pay schedules are here:

<https://www.plumascounty.us/2729/Pay-Schedules>

If you want to see what each of the 9 employee units has bargained, please go here:

**County Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs):**

- [Confidential Unit \(PDF\)](#)
- [General Unit \(PDF\)](#)
- [Mid-Management & Supervisors Unit \(PDF\)](#)
- [Probation Mid-Management Unit \(PDF\)](#)
- [Probation Unit \(PDF\)](#)
- [Public Works Unit \(PDF\)](#)
- [Public Works Mid-Management & Supervisors Unit \(PDF\)](#)

- [Sheriff's Mid Management Unit \(PDF\)](#)
- [Sheriff's Department Unit \(PDF\)](#)

## SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Recruitment activities since July 1, 2022 to the present (as of April 20, 2023).

Correctional Officers: 16 applications, 10 applicants were provided as qualified applicants, and 1 is working and 3 are in the background awaiting results.

Deputy Sheriff: 12 applications, 12 applicants were provided as qualified applicants, and I was hired and attending the academy.

Dispatchers: 13 applications, 8 applicants were provided as qualified applicants, and 2 were hired and of the 2, one has quit after 2 months of employment.

To summarize the recruitment from July 1, 2022, 44 applications, 32 qualified applicants provided to the Sheriff's department and a total of 8 hired, with 2 of the 8 pending completion of background investigations and one of the new hires has quit.

We have reports also on Public Works, Public Health, Social Services, Behavioral Health, and Probation for those who would like to learn more. We also have links to all the pay schedules.

### **Public Works:**

Public Works has decided to only recruit for Maintenance Worker II's due to the DMV Class A license requirement. They may want to decide to open their recruitment to Maintenance Worker I in order to create promotional opportunities and future Class A training opportunities.

Exhibit B is a breakdown of the recruitment activities from July 1, 2022 to the present (as of April 20, 2023).

Mechanic Shop Technician: 5 applications, 4 qualified applicants, no hires.

Maintenance Workers II: 23 applications, 13 applicants were provided as qualified applicants, 5 hired.

Equipment Service Worker or Power Equipment Mechanic: 6 applications, 1 qualified and hired.

### **Public Health Department:**

Public Health has been recruiting for limited term positions related to COVID contact tracers. They were allocated 4 additional positions for a Community Outreach Coordinator, Health Education Specialist, or Health Education Coordinator I/II. These positions are no longer needed so are removed from the position allocation and from current recruitment.

Exhibit C is a breakdown of the recruitment activities from July 1, 2022 to the present (as of April 20, 2023).

Department Fiscal Officer I/II or Management Analyst I/II: 7 applications, 3, qualified applicants, no hires

Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant: zero

**Senior Services (Nutrition/Transportation):**

Driver – Senior Nutrition/transportation Portola: 2 applications, no hires (.625 FTE vacant position)

**Senior Services Extra Help Recruitments:**

Extra Help Driver – Portola

Extra Help Driver – Chester

Extra Help Assistant Cook - Chester

**Social Services Department:**

All allocated positions are recruited through the State of California's Merits Systems and through Human Resources. It is reported Merit's recruitment process has changed and

Exhibit D

The County's current position allocation indicates the following positions are unfilled:

- 1.0 FTE Welfare Fraud Investigator
- 1.0 FTE Social Services Supervisor I/II
- 1.0 FTE Senior Social Worker A/B
- 2.0 FTE Employment and Training Worker I/II/III
- 4.0 FTE Eligibility Specialist
- 2.0 Social Services Aide
- 2.0 FTE Office Assistant I/II/III

**Behavioral Health Department:**

Exhibit E is a breakdown of the recruitment activities from July 1, 2022 to the present (as of April 20, 2023).

Vacant Positions:

BH Director

4.0 FTE BH Therapist I/II or Senior: No applicants

2.0 FTE BH Case Management Specialist I/II/ Senior: Not recruiting.

3.0 Site Coordinator: 7 applications, 2 hired (both no longer working)

1.0 Support Services Technician: 7 applications, 7 qualified applications, 1 hired and 1 vacant

1.0 BH Administrative Assistant: 1 applicant, 1 qualified, no hires

**Probation Department**

Exhibit F is a breakdown of the recruitment activities from July 1, 2022 to the present (as of April 20, 2023).

1.0 Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (DPO): 2 applications, 1 qualified applicant, no hires

2.0 FTE Deputy Probation Officer (DPO): 6 applicants, 4 qualified applicants, (2 from Corrections), 2 hired.

1.0 FTE Pretrial DPO: not recruiting for this position

3.0 FTE Probation Assistant: 1 application, 1 qualified applicant, 1 hired and has resigned since hire.

Administrative Assistant: 2 applications, 2 qualified applicants, no hires at this time