

County Law Enforcement Compensation and Staffing Levels 2002-2003 Grand Jury Report

I. Reason for Investigation

The Solano County Sheriff's Office expressed concern that disparity of pay levels and benefits compared to area police departments was causing high attrition rates and difficulty in recruiting qualified law enforcement personnel.

II. Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Conducted a survey of eight law enforcement agencies within Solano County
- Interviewed County and City law enforcement personnel
- Reviewed labor agreements

III. Background

1. The Grand Jury conducted a survey of law enforcement agencies in the seven cities of the County and the Solano County Sheriff's Office for pay ranges, salary steps, retirement benefits, personnel attrition rates, overtime expenses, staffing levels, length of labor contracts and average/median ages. The data provided is current as of November 1, 2002. For a complete summary of the survey see attachments. The data for Solano County Correctional Officers, who are not sworn officers and do not carry firearms, is shown for information purposes only as there were no comparable positions within the scope of the survey.

2. Solano County law enforcement agency staffing levels are shown below:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Authorized Staffing</u>	<u>Staffing 11-1-2002</u>
Solano County Sheriff's Office		
Deputy Sheriffs	115	104 + 7 Temporary
Correction Officers	233	221
Vallejo Police Department	158	154
Fairfield Police Department	107	104
Vacaville Police Department	107	106
Benicia Police Department	37	33
Suisun City Police Department	28	29
Dixon Police Department	23	22
Rio Vista Police Department	13	13

3. Most pay and benefit contracts are negotiated between the law enforcement agencies and groups representing the officers such as the Police Officers Association. Surveys of pay and benefits in comparable sized agencies are used in the negotiation of contracts. A formula such as percentage of the average pay of the compared agencies is commonly used to set pay levels.

4. Comments were solicited from individuals at each agency regarding pay, recruiting and suggested improvements. Selected responses are listed below:

- A. “Regarding the difficulty in recruiting personnel, I do not feel that we are experiencing any difficulties beyond those experienced by other law enforcement agencies. Recruitment, in my opinion, ebbs and flows based on several societal factors. Some of these include the image of law enforcement in general economic conditions, availability of more lucrative opportunities/professions, etc. Also included in this is the size of the police agency, number of specialty assignments, shift rotations and promotional opportunities.”
- B. “Our concern is the quality of those applicants. We are not experiencing a higher percentage of candidates that are not suitable to be a police officer. Our challenge is to attract those people that meet our standards. This challenge requires a “quality not quantity” approach in our recruitment strategy.”
- C. “The City ... is a desirable place to work, live and raise a family. Employees are treated as our most valuable asset; they are empowered, constantly trained and seen as partners in the success of the Police Department.”
- D. “The ability to talk to other Solano County agencies and share radio frequencies would be a huge benefit to law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies of Solano County should consider using POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) recruitment symposium information and PSA’s (Public Service Announcements) to increase the overall interest in the law enforcement profession.” (See the 2002-2003 Grand Jury report on Public Safety Radio Interoperability)
- E. “The ... Department has recently implemented a police intern position. This approach is a developmental recruitment strategy intended to provide future police officer candidates with the opportunity to work in a law enforcement environment while encouraging their ongoing college studies. This will improve the overall quality of our applicant pool.”
- F. “Funding is the most critical issue facing law enforcement agencies over the next several years. With the projected multi billion dollar State budget deficit, we are all going to feel some pain. Further budget cuts for local government will seriously impact law enforcement efforts in the City...”
- G. Suggested improvements from one Department were:
- Interoperable regional radio
 - Hazmat team administered in Solano County
 - JPA (Joint Powers Authority) funding for regional safety needs
 - Assistance in fending off potential budget cuts to law enforcement money, VLF (Vehicle License Fee) and booking fee reimbursement funds

5. The Solano County Sheriff’s Office had eleven positions (ten percent) of their authorized Deputy Sheriff positions vacant as of November 1, 2002. Seven of the eleven vacant positions were filled with temporary personnel leaving a net of four vacancies. The maximum of the Deputy Sheriff’s pay range was fifth from the top out of the eight agencies surveyed. Deputies can receive increased pay with bilingual skills, training, career incentives and longevity. Increasing the retirement formula to the same level as other law enforcement agencies in the area is under study. The Sheriff has added 38 Deputies over the last two years and lost 14 to attrition over the same period. It should be noted that four of the 14 left to go to another law enforcement agency. Based on demographics provided by seven of the eight agencies surveyed, the Deputy Sheriffs’ average age is 3.7 years higher than the weighted average of six

agencies (41.5 versus 37.8) and their average service is 1.0 year higher than the weighted average (11.2 versus 10.2). This indicates a more mature workforce at the Sheriff's Office.

IV. Finding and Recommendation

Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph number

Finding #1 – The number of unfilled Deputy positions in the Solano County Sheriff's Office is not disproportional with unfilled positions in the other agencies surveyed when adjusted for agency size. (1, 2, 5)

Recommendation #1 - The Sheriff's Office continue their aggressive recruiting programs to fill the vacancies.

V. Comments

Law enforcement agencies should consider reviewing the cost effectiveness of adding personnel versus current high overtime expenditures. (See attachments)

Five of the eight agencies surveyed had or are scheduled to have a retirement formula that, after attaining age 50, five years service and retirement, provides retirees three percent of pay times years of service. Increasing the formula from the current two percent for Deputies and Correction Officers to three percent is under study by the Sheriff's Office.

All agencies were cooperative in providing data for this survey.

Affected Agency

- Solano County Sheriff's Office
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Solano County Grand Jury Law Enforcement Survey

Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer - Data as of 11-1-2002																	
Agency	(Reference Information)	Solano County Sheriff's Office		Vallejo Police Department		Fairfield Police Department		Vacaville Police Department		Benicia Police Department		Suisun City Police Department		Dixon Police Department		Rio Vista Police Department	
	Correctional Officers	Deputy Sheriffs															
Authorized Number	233	115	158	107	107	107	107	107	107	37	37	28	23	13			
Vacancies	12	4	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	0	1	0			
Current Active total (includes those on disability, temporary or military duty)	221	104+ 7 temp	154	104	106	106	106	106	106	33	33	29	22	13			
Average Age	41.3	41.5	na	37.0	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	41.5	41.5	36.0	39.5	38.0			
Median Age	40.7	40.5	na	36.0	36.0	36.0	36.0	36.0	36.0	42.0	42.0	38.0	38.0	39.0			
Average Service	9.9	11.2	na	9.8	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.6	11.6	9.0	10.2	5.0			
Median Service	11.7	8.7	na	7.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	13.0	13.0	12.0	9.0	3.0			
Total on Disability	18	3	7	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0			
Total on Military leave	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0			
Temporary/Relief personnel	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0			
Total OT \$ FY 2001-2002	\$ 1,491,971	\$ 589,423	\$ 2,021,000*	\$ 530,703	\$ 604,000	\$ 604,000	\$ 604,000	\$ 604,000	\$ 604,000	\$ 165,000	\$ 165,000	\$ 163,499	\$ 117,615	\$ 48,133			
Avg yearly OT \$ per employee	\$ 7,038	\$ 5,613	\$ 8,942	\$ 5,307	\$ 5,980	\$ 5,980	\$ 5,980	\$ 5,980	\$ 5,980	\$ 3,750	\$ 3,750	\$ 5,839	\$ 5,114	\$ 3,703			
Total OT \$ (to date) FY 2002-2003	\$ 913,779	\$ 409,896	\$ 840,958*	\$ 261,712	\$ 241,000	\$ 241,000	\$ 241,000	\$ 241,000	\$ 241,000	\$ 174,000	\$ 174,000	\$ 150,272	\$ 43,858	\$ 25,379			
Avg OT (to date) per employee	\$ 4,393	\$ 4,058	\$ 5,322	\$ 2,617	\$ 2,020	\$ 2,020	\$ 2,020	\$ 2,020	\$ 2,020	\$ 3,955	\$ 3,955	\$ 5,366	\$ 1,907	\$ 1,952			

* Dept wide

Solano County Grand Jury Law Enforcement Survey											
Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer - Data as of 11-1-2002											
Agency	(Reference Information) Solano County Sheriff's Office		Solano County Sheriff's Office		Vallejo Police Department	Fairfield Police Department	Vacaville Police Department	Benicia Police Department	Suisun City Police Department	Dixon Police Department	Rio Vista Police Department
	Correction Officers	Deputy Sheriffs	Deputy Sheriffs	Deputy Sheriffs							
Hiring											
Number Hired											
FY 2000-2001								3			
FY 2001-2002	16		26	18	5		4		2	1	0
FY 2002-2003	14		12	9	3				5	3	0
Attrition											
Number Normal Retirement											
FY 2000-2001							1				
FY 2001-2002	5		3	7	0		1		1	0	0
FY 2002-2003	4		0	1	0				0	0	0
Number moving to another law enforcement agency											
FY 2000-2001								8			
FY 2001-2002	2		3	0	0		2		2	1	0
FY 2002-2003	0		1	2	0				3	2	0
Number Leaving Law Enforcement Profession											
FY 2000-2001								0			
FY 2001-2002	2		4	0	1		1		1	0	0
FY 2002-2003	1		0	0	1				0	0	0
Number leaving for other reasons											
FY 2000-2001								2			
FY 2001-2002	5		1	1	0		0		0	0	0
FY 2002-2003	0		2	0	0				0	2	0

Solano County Grand Jury Law Enforcement Survey																
Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer - Data as of 11-1-2002																
Agency	Solano County Sheriff's Dept		Solano County Sheriff's Office		Fairfield Police Department		Vacaville Police Department		Benicia Police Department		Suisun City Police Department		Dixon Police Department		Rio Vista Police Department	
Police Officer/Deputy Sheriff	Officers		Deputy Sheriffs													
Number of Salary Steps	5		5		10		5		5		5		6		5	
Salary Range (\$/month)	\$ 3,428	\$ 4,167	\$ 3,846	\$ 4,675	\$ 3,433	\$ 4,700	\$ 4,518	\$ 3,576	\$ 3,454	\$ 3,016	\$ 4,167	\$ 4,991	\$ 4,408	\$ 3,666		
Entry minimum	\$ 2,744	\$ 3,335	\$ 3,458	\$ 4,203												
Entry maximum	Incentives paid for bilingual, training, career incentive and longevity		Incentives paid for bilingual, training, career incentive and longevity			Incentives paid for Sr. Officer and other programs			With Sr. & Master classifications salary max =\$5283							
Surveys	3 years (exp 10/2002)		7 comparable counties: 97% of average		13 agencies , +5.5% of survey mean salary		Median of compared comparable cities		20 agencies listed: average of survey		Budget and negotiations set pay levels		13 agencies; no formula		Negotiations with POA	
Labor Contract	3 years (exp 10/2002)		3 years (exp 10/2002)		8 years (exp 12/31/08)		4 years (exp 6/30/06)		5 years (exp 6/30/2005)		3 years (exp 6/30/04)		2 years (exp 7/7/2004)		1 year (exp 6/30/02)	
Retirement Formula	Safety: 2% after age 50 and 5 years PERS service (3% after 50 under study)		Safety: 2% after age 50 and 5 years PERS service (3% after 50 under study)		3% after age 50 and 5 years PERS service		2% after age 50 and 5 years PERS service. Effective 7/1/06 rate is 3%.		3% after age 50 and 5 years PERS service		2% after age 50 and 5 years service. Effective 1/1/04 rate is 3%.		2% after age 50 and 5 years PERS service		2% after age 50 and 5 years PERS service	
	Misc: 2.7% after age 55 and 5 years PERS service		Misc: 2.7% after age 55 and 5 years PERS service													