



Orange County Attorneys Association

representing the attorneys employed by the County of Orange

We wish we had better news for you, but after 9 months of negotiations with the county the one thing that is crystal clear is that the County of Orange has no interest in treating us fairly. The members of the Board of Supervisors, CEO Frank Kim, and County Negotiator James Harman have refused to make any reasonable offers. Although they acknowledge that we are paid far less than the local marketplace averages, they are refusing to work with us on making our salaries more competitive.

The County of Orange has almost \$1 billion in reserves, which is far more than the best practices call for. The county has been growing its revenues by at least 6% year over year. They have the money to fix the problem – they just do not care. They do not care that our offices are having difficulty recruiting good candidates. They do not care that younger attorneys are leaving the county at exponentially higher rates. They do not care about the work we do and they believe we are easily replaced with less talented and inexperienced attorneys.

Those of us with the old 2.7% @55 retirement scheme are in many ways stuck here because of that pension. PEPRA employees, however, have no reason to stick around when they could do the same good work in a neighboring jurisdiction, pay less into their retirement, have a lower cost of living, and get paid more. It really is a no-brainer for PEPRA members. For that reason, and because we are looking out for your interests, we will begin to post and e-mail you job openings in other counties and municipalities where your salaries will be more competitive. Our offers to the county have been fair and reasonable. When you see where we are in the marketplace and what our proposals have been you will likely think we should be asking for more. Nevertheless, the county refused to work with us in a reasonable and fair manner.

They have not made changes to their offer since October. We have reached a point where they refuse to move on their offer. **Their offer is one that your OCAA Bargaining Team unanimously and strongly rejects.**

However, because the county has not moved on what they are offering we want to present that offer to you and have you vote on it. After seeing all of the facts and their offer we are confident you will join us in rejecting the county's offer.

Please join us on January 23rd for this informational meeting. The details are below.

Date: Thursday, January 23rd, 2020

Time: 5:30 P.M.

Where: Plumbers Union Hall, 1916 W. Chapman Ave, Orange, CA 92868 (free parking)

Who: OCAA Members Only

There are justified concern about the voting process and the desire for sufficient time to digest the offer before voting. Although we will not be sharing details of the offers until the meeting on the 23rd, you will have plenty of time after the meeting to discuss and deliberate before you have to vote.

- Voting will be online and will commence after the January 23rd meeting (at 8:00 pm). You will receive a voting key via your personal e-mail and your opportunity to vote will continue until 3:00 pm on January 27th.
- For those members who cannot attend the meeting or who have additional questions after the meeting, bargaining team members will be available during lunch breaks on

Friday the 24th and Monday the 27th to answer questions. We will be at or near each of the courthouses so everyone will have equal opportunities to be informed. Please keep an eye out for future e-mails that will inform you of the locations for these question & answer sessions.

In yesterday's e-mail I forgot to mention that our efforts to obtain a fair and reasonable contract were strongly supported by District Attorney Todd Spitzer. In November, he spoke on our behalf to the board members and expressed his concern over the recruitment and retention problems he is experiencing. In December, District Attorney Spitzer was briefed on the status of the negotiations and the specifics of the competing offers. He then wrote a letter to the supervisors and CEO urging them to accept our offer and outlining for them why our offer is the reasonable and cost-effective way to address the issues of recruitment, retention, and morale. But just like they ignored our efforts to be fair and reasonable, they disregarded whatever the District Attorney had to share because they do not value the work we do for this county.

Finally, throughout bargaining we have continued to be actively involved in the political process and have met with most of the members of the board of supervisors multiple times. There is, however, one particular supervisor that has refused to meet with us and has displayed a disregard for our association – Andrew Do. He is up for re-election this year but has ignored our calls and messages inviting him to be interviewed by our PAC for possible endorsement. We remain open to working with Supervisor Do on our issues and considering him for endorsement. However, if he, or any other supervisor, refuses to at the very least engage with our association then we will have no other course of action to take but to do everything we can to make sure someone else is elected in their place.

Thank you for your continued patience. We look forward to sharing more information with you on the 23rd and in the days to follow.

Sincerely,

Mena Guirguis
OCAA President