

December 14, 2021

Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

**PROPOSED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH SERVICE EMPLOYEES’
INTERNATIONAL UNION, LOCAL 521 FOR WAGES, HOURS, AND TERMS AND
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR BARGAINING UNIT “J” THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024
Fiscal Impact: Unknown; Not Budgeted; Discretionary**

Kern County’s 2021-2026 Strategic Plan includes the key objective “*Be a Model of Excellence in Managing our Business and Workforce.*” Included under that objective are the goals of attracting, developing, and retaining top talent across all business areas of the County. The plan identifies the need to ensure competitive compensation practices and to reform our countywide compensation system to enable regular cost of living adjustments (COLAs). The proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Service Employees’ International Union, Local 521 (SEIU), for permanent County employees in the “Criminal Justice Unit,” bargaining unit “J,” takes a significant step toward achieving these objectives for the employees they represent.

The current MOU with SEIU expired on October 31, 2019. After lengthy negotiations, the parties have reached tentative agreement and SEIU membership have ratified that tentative agreement. The parties jointly propose the attached successor MOU for Board of Supervisors approval.

The key substantive changes provided in this proposed MOU are:

- Contract term through June 30, 2024
- A new 10-Base Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) step salary schedule with 2% incremental growth between each COLA step to be effective January 1, 2022
- A 2.5% additional COLA effective July 2022 with a reopener to discuss if any bargaining unit receives more than 2.5% at that time
- A reopener to discuss an additional COLA for July 2023
- Elimination of Service Awards, Retention Bonus, and “Me-Too” language
- Addition of Winter Recess as a permanent benefit
- An increase in life insurance from \$10,000 to \$20,000
- Incorporation of other previous side letter agreements and tentative agreements

The jointly proposed MOU exemplifies a necessary restructure of our compensation structure affording all employees more regular wage growth throughout the tenure of their employment with the County. The restructured salary schedule increases the entry-level salary for all represented positions to assist with recruitment. It also provides regular and sustainable base wage growth of 2% each year for a total of nine

years. This structure also affords the County the ability to offer additional COLAs at a more regular intervals to ensure that we are keeping pace with the labor market and the rising cost of living, starting on July 2022 with a 2.5% COLA.

County Counsel has approved the proposed Memorandum of Understanding as to form.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that your Board approve the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with Service Employees' International Union, Local 521, for Criminal Justice Unit employees in bargaining unit J, for wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment through June 30, 2024 and direct the Human Resources Division to implement the changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Devin Brown".

Devin Brown
Chief Human Resources Officer

cc: All Department Heads
Service Employees' International Union, Local 521