



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 3/10/2026

File #: 26-135

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Human Resources

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Approval of the Side Letter of Agreement Between the Humboldt Deputy Sheriff's Organization (HDSO) and the County of Humboldt

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve, and authorize the Chair of the Board to sign a Side Letter of Agreement, (Attachment 1) between HDSO and the County of Humboldt, clarifying the payment of pensionable special compensation to members in the unit; and
2. Approve the Humboldt County Salary Range Schedule as an extension of Attachment 1.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Workforce & Operational Excellence

Strategic Plan Category: 3001 - Support a well-trained workforce

DISCUSSION:

The County of Humboldt and the Humboldt Sheriff's Deputy Organization (HDSO) Unit have reached agreement on a Side Letter of Agreement amending previous versions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the dates of July 1, 2017 and Feb. 14, 2026. This Side Letter adds Section 73 to the MOU and amends Sections 10 through 13 and 21.

The purpose of this agreement is to clarify provisions related to Field Training Officer Pay, Criminal Investigation Division Rotational Assignments, Longevity Incentive Pay, Bomb Squad Incentive Pay and Educational Certificate Pay (POST Certificate Pay), ensuring compliance with CalPERS regulations and consistency with the county's and HDSO's long-standing intent and past practice.

CalPERS identified concerns during a recent compensation review regarding the interpretation of California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 571 and determined that existing MOU language did not fully align with their current interpretation. The Side Letter of Agreement addresses these concerns by clarifying the order in which incentive payments are applied, detailing the cumulative nature of the compensation schedule and providing additional clarifying details regarding eligibility.

The amendments are applied retroactively to July 1, 2017, and through and inclusive of Feb. 14, 2026.

A summary of the changes are as follows:

- A new Section 73 establishes the order of operations for incentive pay and provides examples of compounding calculations.
- Section 10 is amended to clarify eligibility criteria for the Field Training Officer incentive pay.

- Section 11 is amended to clarify eligibility criteria for the Criminal Investigation Division Rotational Assignments incentive pay.
- Section 12 is amended to clarify eligibility criteria for Longevity Incentive Pay and delineate eligibility between sworn and non-sworn classifications.
- Section 13 is amended to clarify eligibility criteria for the Bomb Squad incentive pay.
- Section 21 is amended to clarify eligibility criteria for Educational Incentive Pay.

This Side Letter of Agreement provides the necessary clarification to confirm that the identified forms of special compensation are pensionable under CalPERS rules and ensures that the county and HDSO remain in compliance while upholding the parties' mutual intent.

Approval of this Side Letter of Agreement will support accurate pension reporting, reinforce transparency in employee compensation and maintain compliance with CalPERS requirements.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

General Fund (1100)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

There is no direct financial impact that results from approving this Side Letter of Agreement. The side letter formalizes the county's current practice in a way that complies with CalPERS' interpretation of retirement law.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impact:

There is no direct staffing impact that results from approving this Side Letter of Agreement.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Humboldt Deputy Sheriff's Organization (HDSO)
California Public Employees Retirement (CalPERS)

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board may choose not to approve the Side Letter of Agreement. This is not recommended as compliance concerns would impact the agreed upon pensionable status of employee compensation.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: The Side Letter of Agreement between the County of Humboldt and the Humboldt Deputy Sheriff's Organization (HDSO) Unit 6, and the Humboldt County Salary Range Schedule as an extension of the Side Letter.

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: N/A
File No.: N/A