

MEET & CONFER MEETING

January 27, 2011

Our last meeting was held on October 1, 2010. Since that time, a separation between AZCOPS and AZCPOA has occurred. As a result, I've chosen to meet with a smaller group, as opposed to all representatives. Minutes will be posted on the Intranet.

4 CORNERS OF REFORM

Director Ryan distributed a policy agenda handout issued by Governor Brewer and discussed recommended changes to the Personnel System, Retirement systems and Right-to-Work protections.

Right-to-Work Protections

I will still meet and confer regardless of an Executive Order. My position is unchanged; I'm here for everyone in the Department. I will continue to meet with employees and provide open, straight-forward information.

Retirement System Reform

Division Director Krause provided an overview of Pension Reform discussions. The Legislature is reviewing all of three funds, CORP, ASRS, EORP and PSPRS as none of them are currently funded well. Several Bills are being drafted which include various options such as increasing the contribution rates and/or retirement eligibility age. In most cases the changes would relate to new employees not incumbents. Such increases could potentially have a negative impact on both recruitment and retention of Correctional Officers. To the extent possible, try to alleviate concerns expressed by current employees. Updates will be provided as appropriate on the Intranet.

STAFFING ISSUES

Call-In's

I recently toured the ASPC-Florence and Eyman complexes during two regular weekend shifts. The number of absent officers was startling. Posts were collapsed and cross-leveling was in use due to the high number of call-in's as well as hospital coverage requirements. As you are aware, this has been an ongoing issue at Florence, Eyman, Lewis, Perryville and to a slightly lesser degree, Tucson for the past two-years. I'm not sure if this is a cultural issue related to these facilities or if it pertains to fatigue and aggravation with the higher level inmates and increased security requirements. In years past, these facilities were located in rural areas, but that is no longer the case.

Discussion ensued regarding the Chronic Absence Classification (CAC) vs employee discipline, the criteria to earn overtime, and security/safety issues.

Staff Rotation

We are now into the 5th quarter of the unit rotations. 100% of those who required rotation will soon be complete. I think we've worked out most of the kinks, although I want to reiterate there is no "1st in, 1st out" requirement, as supervisors need flexibility to ensure appropriate staffing is maintained. The new tracking instrument is being used and will be posted by the end of the week.

EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE

Mistake vs Misconduct

Revisions to Department Order 601 continue, specifically changes to the discipline chart. Cases should be reviewed to ascertain if the infraction was the result of a mistake or intentional misconduct. Supervisors and managers should review the discipline chart taking into account the full range of disciplinary options and also consider mitigating and aggravating circumstances of the case.

Employee Arrests

The corrections profession is challenging and stressful. Unfortunately, this sometimes leads to alcohol abuse. We have an obligation as a Department to recognize and attempt to assist our employees. Most employee arrests are related to Driving Under the Influence (DUI) and most involve Correctional Officers.

In the past, a first offense resulted in a 40-hour suspension without pay and the agency left it to the court to impose program attendance or not. This is changing. Future infractions will result in the employee receiving two letters, one for the suspension and a second requiring enrollment/completion of an appropriate program.

Additionally, second DUI offenses generally result in dismissal, however each case must be reviewed individually, especially pertaining to the length of time between the first and second DUI.

BUDGET

The Legislative session is underway. The state continues to experience financial difficulties and shortfalls. I have requested 306 CO positions, as well as 100% funding for CO positions. Overtime will continue to be authorized and funded through vacancy savings in order to enhance safety/security within the units until appropriate staffing levels are achieved. If the Legislature supports it, the furlough program may be discontinued beginning June 2011.

Q – Have you heard anything about the RASL (Retiree Accumulated Sick Leave) program being discontinued?

A – No

EQUIPMENT

State Vehicles

Division Director Patton provided statistics regarding recently purchased replacement vehicles for perimeters, transportation, staff shuttles, inmate busses, K-9 units and sedans for Community Corrections and Contract Beds. Unfortunately, employees do not always take care of state property. Please encourage employees to stress the need to care for our equipment. At least two of the new vehicles have been totaled and several others have been seriously defaced.

Discussion ensued regarding the ability to cannibalize equipment for parts. This would require a Department of Administration rule change. Director Ryan will research this option.

Communications Equipment

As of 2013, the FCC will require ADC to use digital, narrow-band radio systems. All replacement radios must meet this requirement; however, we can purchase replacement batteries for older radios as needed.

EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS

I am not fully aware of the entire legal process involved in the AZCOPS / AZCPOA disbanding and the incorporation of the new CPOA group. The Bi-Laws and Articles of Incorporation will be reviewed.

I am requesting that both AZCOPS and CPOA meet with legal counsel and then contact my office to schedule a meeting within the next two weeks. Both organizations should provide appropriate documentation to prove the legitimacy of their group, as well as accurate membership numbers.

I am concerned with recent reports of disruptions during shift briefings. This is not an appropriate time for recruitment activities. All recruitment activities will be performed in accordance with policy, including submission and approval of the Solicitation Request.

Until these issues are resolved, FOP, ACA and AZCPOA have standing and can present information at COTA, as well as continue with approved and appropriate recruitment activities at the institutions.