



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

PIMA COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
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C.H. HUCKELBERRY
County Administrator

July 16, 2018

Valerie Cavazos, Anchor, Investigative News Reporter
Leeza Starks, News Director,
Leon Clark, Station Manager,
KGUN 9-TV
7820 East Rosewood Street
Tucson, Arizona 85710

Re: **Your Story - PCSD: Council says "Deputies are grossly underpaid"**

Dear Ms. Cavazos, Ms. Starks and Mr. Clark:

I listened to and read your recent news article on this subject with some concern, as it grossly misrepresents the facts. Facts that could have been easily obtained if you had bothered to check with County Administration or Finance.

The chart in your article shows a Pima County Deputy Sheriff only making \$20.85 per hour. Today, not a single Deputy Sheriff receives anything less than \$23.50 per hour. Conversely, this same chart shows the maximum hourly rate of \$29.84. Today, 185 Deputy Sheriffs make more than this maximum hourly amount and up to \$31.51 per hour.

If these facts are introduced to your chart the results are dramatically different. During the budget this year, an academy trainee program was established at the request of the Sheriff. This program is for Deputy Sheriff Recruits to learn and satisfy all academic training requirements and complete probation. A retention incentive was also contained in the budget at the request of the Sheriff. The retention incentive plan provides for a five percent additional compensation adjustment. Therefore, 230 of the 380 Deputy Sheriffs received a pay increase of between 7.5 percent and 12.7 percent.

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Common compensation analysis generally uses the minimum average pay as comparators. Using the minimum pay of \$23.50 per hour, Pima County ranks near the top for compensating new Deputy Sheriffs. With the pay plan approved by the Board of Supervisors this fiscal year, the midpoint pay for Deputy Sheriffs will be \$27.51 per hour. In addition, using weighted averages, which is all Deputy Sheriffs with all compensation paid at regular pay rates, the average pay is \$28.11. It is important to note that 112 of the 380 Deputy Sheriffs, or a third, exceed the maximum pay rate (\$29.84) at \$31.51 per hour. Clearly and factually, Deputy Sheriffs are not "grossly" underpaid. To state otherwise is simply false.

It is also very important to note the base hourly pay rates does not include over 40 different special pay categories that are added to individual base compensation. County W-2 income reports for federal tax purposes are instructive. For calendar year 2017 this amounted to \$4,010,275.

These special pay category adds to a Deputy Sheriff's compensation an average of another \$5.17 per hour in hourly compensation.

Another area of Deputy Sheriff compensation is off-duty work. Because of their extensive taxpayer paid training, Deputy Sheriffs are hired to provide law enforcement related security services for private employers. The compensation paid for this type of off-duty work is \$39.00 per hour. The taxpayer or County receives only \$1 per hour to compensate for the cost of their law enforcement training, which the Deputy Sheriff's pay proposals claim is valued at over \$100,000 paid by taxpayers.

I have no information why or how the Council would come to the conclusion you have attributed to them. They have not asked for pay studies or any other information on this particular matter. Had they asked, they would have been provided information that would lead to a factual conclusion that our Deputy Sheriffs are well compensated. In fact, nearly the best in Arizona and only slightly behind Maricopa County which competes with talent in the Phoenix market.

Finally I understand from discussions with the Sheriff that he was contacted on his personal phone at 6:38 PM, and responded within a few minutes then again several minutes later, Ms. Cavazos asked a detailed follow up question by text, the complexity of the questions required more than a text page exchange and Sheriff called Ms. Cavazos but did not pick up the call or attempt to return the phone message left prior to running the story at 10:00 PM the same day. Clearly the Sheriff had no reasonable ability to respond to your request because of the short notice.

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Your news cast on this matter was far from balanced or investigative. It was based on sensational claims that are easily proven false. I am sure you will try and be more objective in the future.

Sincerely,



C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/mp

c: Honorable Chairman and Members Pima County Board of Supervisors
The Honorable Mark Napier, Pima County Sheriff
Law Enforcement Merit System Council
Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Tom Burke, Deputy County Administrator for Administration
Cathy Bohland, Director, Human Resources Department