

I am here to stress the urgency in passing the AFSCME MOU tonight so we can receive the ARPA funds retroactive to June 9. This requires a 2/3 vote determining an immediate emergency exists for that to occur. I know many of you have the opinion that no immediate emergency exists, but I would like to explain our case. You think what is the big deal waiting until September 1, that isn't that far away? Our members have families, and it would help make a difference during these difficult economic times. Families are struggling right now and receiving the ARPA funds retroactively to June would provide some relief.

Granted the immediate emergency was determined to exist for FOP because of the public safety risk with the sudden loss of deputies. But, why was there an immediate emergency for the other staff at the Sheriff's office? All members of FOP, including secretaries, dispatchers and janitors received lucrative ARPA increases. I didn't notice a mass exodus of those employees? Not to mention, the FOP MOU was revised to include four employees leaving employment from the county. Giving certain employees more money to leave than you offer us to stay and work is mind blowing. That alone speaks volumes about how you value our worth and significance. I was at the December board meeting and was appalled at the lack of questions raised before passing their proposal. Not one of you asked about the cost or the effect of the FOP MOU before passing it.

We know you think there is no public safety concern when AFSCME employees leave the county. As I have stated in the past, we currently have members searching for other employment. Very soon, you will have a public safety concern when the county has no animal control warden, no laborers to maintain county roads, no one from the Health Department to inspect restaurants or food vendors. You can expect long lines in the courthouse for tax collection and voting at the November election. As well as backlogs with the Circuit Clerk Office all because offices will be short-staffed.

Earlier this week, I emailed the cost of our lump sum bonuses and \$1.00/hr increases until the end of our contract on August 31, 2024. That amount is less than \$135,000. Compare that to the \$420,000 resolution you approved to transfer funds for the FOP and that was only enough money to support it from February to August 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. I believe \$135,000 is a small price to pay to restore our faith in this board and begin moving forward from this terrible situation.

Since December, we tried to schedule negotiation meetings to reach an agreement with the county. We bargained in good faith with the legislative committee and finally came to an agreement on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Was it the package we hoped to receive...no. But at least it was something for our 6-month struggle of stall tactics, members blaming others and excuses delaying our ARPA funds until September 1. During negotiations you said the FOP MOU was a mistake and the county is now between a rock and hard place, that is on each and everyone of you that irresponsibly voted to approve it. We endure the same toxic work environment as the employees at the Sheriff's Office and we have tried to "tough it out." AFSCME members have paid the price for your negligent decision making. It is finally time for you to take a step in the right direction, show us some respect for our dedication to this county and pass the emergency AFSCME MOU tonight.