

NEWS RELEASE

Limited Progress in Latest Negotiations; Sheriff's Office Remains Hopeful

Pueblo, CO: The Pueblo County Sheriff's Office labor contract negotiation team met with representatives of the International Brotherhood of Police Officers (IBPO) on Friday November 8, 2024.

Although positive movement has been slow, accomplishments at this meeting include:

1. A term was "tentatively approved" ("TA'ed"). This is the third term to be tentatively approved with the expectation that such terms will be part of the final labor contract.
2. Management submitted its fourth proposal. The proposal was explained and questions from IBPO negotiators were answered.
3. A discussion initiated by IBPO regarding discipline process and procedures took place and details unknown to the IBPO lead negotiator were explained. PCSO negotiators encouraged IBPO to submit its ideas for improving disciplinary procedures as well as promotion procedures in the form of a proposed CBA term.
4. The PCSO negotiation team attempted to clarify the legal context surrounding these CBA negotiations, especially in the language of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment order calling for negotiations that makes clear neither side must agree to or accept any particular term proposed by the other party.
5. The parties also agreed that there is no legal obligation for the Pueblo County Sheriff himself to be a member of the PCSO negotiation team. PCSO negotiators pointed out that it would be highly unusual for any organization CEO or any Elected Official to directly participate in negotiations.
6. The parties also discussed the need to eliminate discussions of personal complaints and grievances during the negotiation process and to address such concerns through separate disciplinary or employment law processes so that matters not directly related to potential labor contract terms do not continue to be distractions to the negotiation process.
7. A discussion also took place regarding the status of consolidating several management proposals creating committees through which the union could have direct input into policy development and review, safety issues, and general communication with PCSO management. The PCSO team reported that drafting of such consolidated proposals would be completed by the next negotiation meeting on November 22, 2024.

Despite this incremental progress, PCSO management is concerned that progress has been unnecessarily slow. Following the September 13, 2024, meeting in which IBPO union president decided to tear up negotiation ground rules that included timelines for submission of written proposals, the union has submitted little or no new language for PCSO consideration.

The PCSO negotiation team has submitted four original management offers and six counteroffers (sometimes multiple counteroffers to a single union proposal). All management offers and counteroffers have included original language that attempts to fit terms into the reality that Pueblo County is not a home rule City, and the Sheriff must honor his statutory responsibilities.

The PCSO is hopeful that the IBPO negotiating team will put more of its ideas into written proposals in the very near future so that management can work with the union to give the bargaining unit employees more of a voice in how policy and procedures are created and implemented. However, such proposals must come from the union rather than from management. Management cannot respond to media reports or incomplete ideas expressed that only partially address union concerns. Until such proposals are received, progress in negotiations will be disappointing.

The Pueblo County Sheriff expects a labor contract to be achieved that gives employees mechanisms for more formalized input and more efficient communications with Command Staff and other supervisors. The Sheriff will continue to support efforts toward those goals and he fully expects the office of Pueblo County Sheriff to maintain the statutory authority to make final decisions regarding matters that affect the safety and security of the community, PCSO staff, and the citizens under the care of the Sheriff.