

Sheriff Mark Hunter



COLUMBIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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September 22, 2023

Dear CCSO Employees,

Last night the Board of County Commission (BCC) approved the CCSO Budget for the ensuing 2023-2024 fiscal year in the amount of \$20,624,550. My initial request, as submitted to the BCC on June 1st, was for \$20,934,000. My initial request was denied by the BCC and we were forced to reduce the amount we were requesting. The following shows what we initially requested and what the BCC agreed to fund:

Initially Requested Funding (per category):	Final Amount Funded:	Variance/Deficit:
Personal Services (PS): \$ 17,281,925	\$ 16,978,985	\$ 302,940
Operating Exp. (OE): 3,111,575	3,105,065	6,510
Capital Outlay (CA): 510,000	510,000	-0-
Debt Service (DS): <u>30,500</u>	<u>30,500</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Total Requested: \$ 20,934,000	\$ 20,624,550	\$ 309,450

The following illustrates the **additional** portion we requested for Personal Services specifically and what we actually received from the Board:

Increase Requested for Personal Services:	Final Amount Funded:	Variance/Deficit:
\$ 1,505,451	\$ 1,202,511	\$ 302,940
Less State Portion (331,374)	(331,374)	-0-
Less SRD Contract Incr. (175,342)	(175,342)	175,342
Less Reclassifications <u>(103,184)</u>	<u>(109,694)</u>	<u>6,510</u>
BCC Funded Portion \$ 1,070,893	\$ 586,101	\$ 484,792

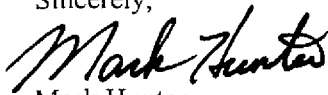
As many of you know, last year we received funding from the State to increase the base pay of our incoming Deputy/Detention Officers. Increasing the base pays resulted in compression up through all the other ranks through the Command Staff. We had requested funding for part of the monies required to correct some of the resulting compression issues in our initial request to the BCC for our 22/23 Budget. This request was denied by the Board at the amount we had requested. We then had to decreased the base pay of entry level Deputy and Detention personnel from our initially requested \$45,000 to \$43,000 in order to correct as much of the resulting compression that we could. This included correcting all compression up to the rank of Lieutenant. Lieutenants and Command Staff personnel received half of the required compression adjustments with the intent that the remaining compression would be corrected this year. Due to the lack of funding by the BCC this year as well, those compression adjustments cannot be made as planned. However, with the additional State funding toward Law Enforcement Salaries provided to us, we were able to attain the \$45,000 base as of July 1st of this year.

Because we were not funded at the amount we initially requested, we can only provide for the following adjustments in the upcoming 23/24 year. Deputies and Detention Officers/Deputies and Corporals received an additional \$2,000 on July 1st; there will be no additional adjustments made to these salaries at this time. Sergeants will likewise receive an additional \$2,000 on October 1st. Every other sworn and non-sworn position will receive a flat 5% increase effective October 1st. These adjustments deplete all the monies provided by the State and BCC funds. Regrettably, this means that the Step Pay increases cannot occur as there is no additional funding available.

When we started the Step Pay Plan, it was understood that without funding, it would be “frozen” and it is so written in the policy provided for it. This means that it will resume once funding is provided again. There is no provision for “catch up” as the amounts would become too great to receive the required funding. The BCC has, for two years now, refused to fund us at our initially requested amounts. With that being said, it would appear that we are at the mercy of the BCC who has in years past let their own employees go years without any pay increases other than occasional bonuses. So in light of the BCCs lack of support, we are forced to acquiesce to their inconsistent and undependable system of employee compensation.

We have worked very hard over the years to remain competitive with our compensation plan. I will continue to request what I feel is needed to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Hunter
Sheriff