

Ventura County Deputy Sheriffs' Association

981 Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93003 | Phone: 805-639-9218

February 10, 2022

Dear Ventura County Deputy Sheriffs' Association Members,

This letter is to inform you that the VCDSA board is in the process of discussing potential dues increases that may take effect later this year.

Why is the VCDSA Board considering increasing membership dues?

Every year the VCDSA Finance and Budget Committee completes an end of year budget review and prepares the budget for the next year. The budget for 2021 was balanced, however the committee noticed an increase in our legal expenses. The VCDSA Board was able to offset the increases by refinancing the mortgage on the VCDSA building. Our legal expenses are largely related to defending our members pension benefits after the Alameda case was decided. This is an ongoing expense and an issue the VCDSA board has committed to seeing through until it is resolved. This, in summary, means we anticipate high legal expenses for 2022.

In addition to general legal expenses, we are going to see a significant increase in our legal defense rate this year. The increase is directly linked to the passage of SB 2 and the new licensing program for all law enforcement officers in California. As most of you know, SB 2 created a California POST advisory board that is now responsible for reviewing cases of serious misconduct by law enforcement officers. The California POST advisory board will look at these qualifying cases and make recommendations to the California POST Commission regarding the suspension or revocation of a law enforcement officer's license to practice law enforcement in the State of California. Our current legal defense coverage does not include representation under this new licensing program. In order to receive this coverage, it is going to cost the VCDSA an additional \$5 per member per month. Annually this is an additional cost of approximately \$45,000 per year (varies based on the number of members we have at any given time). To be clear, this is an issue that all California law enforcement associations are also addressing.

If that was not enough, the issue has been compounded by a reduction in the number of members we have. The VCDSA has seen a steady decrease in our membership numbers since 2018. In 2018, we had membership numbers over 800. Currently, we have membership numbers that fluctuate between approximately 750 members and 730 members. I know this is no secret to any of you as we have seen significant staffing shortages at the various workstations and facilities. The reduction in members means we have less money coming in from dues.



The VCDSA board has been able to absorb the decreased numbers over the past couple of years, but we are now in a position in which the numbers are too low for us to absorb the decrease in revenue needed to pay for services.

What the VCDSA Board of Directors is doing to address these issues:

The VCDSA Budget Committee has started the process of going line by line through the budget to find areas to reduce expenses, while maintaining needed resources and staffing to ensure primary benefits are still provided and that we have resources to address legal issues that may arise. We started this process last year, anticipating inflation increases and additional legal expenses, but we are now taking a deeper dive. Once the VCDSA Budget Committee has finished their review, it will be presented to the VCDSA Board for final review and vote. The VCDSA Board will vote on adopting a new budget and vote on a potential dues increase.

The VCDSA Budget Committee also referred to our adopted bylaws regarding potential dues increases. Currently, Active Represented Members (DA Investigators, Sergeants, Senior Deputies and Deputies) pay 1.40% of top step deputy biweekly salary. Our Management members (both DA Investigator and Sheriff's Office managers) currently pay 1.0% of top step Captain biweekly salary. Our Deputy Sheriff Trainee members (those in the academy) pay 1.15% of top step deputy biweekly salary. The VCDSA bylaws state the dues are to be set at 1.65% of top step deputy biweekly salary for active members, however the VCDSA Board had voted to keep dues at a lower rate because the VCDSA Board was able to keep costs down. Management members and DST members' dues are at the maximum percentage per the bylaws, therefore any increase would not apply to those membership categories, unless the VCDSA Board voted to amend the bylaws.

At this point, the VCDSA Board has not decided on an increase but has directed me to notify the membership of the possibility. The VCDSA Board expects to have a decision by the end of March on potential cost savings and potential dues increases.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns - 805-551-7879 or nodenath@vcdsa.org.

Sincerely,

VENTURA COUNTY DEPUTY
SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION



Nick Odenath, President

