

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION – COUNTY OF KERN
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, California 93301

Regular Meeting
Monday, June 8, 2020
5:30 p.m.

THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED TELEPHONICALLY

PRESENT: Commissioners Agbalog, Holt, Oliver, Price, and Rose

ABSENT: None

OTHERS: Devin Brown, Maria Murbach, Mary Stewart, Brian Van Wyk, and others.

NOTE: Ag, Ho, Ol, Pri, and Ro are abbreviations for Commissioners Agbalog, Holt, Oliver, Price, and Rose. For example, Ho/Pri denotes Commissioner Holt made the motion and Commissioner Price seconded the motion. The abbreviations “ab” means absent and “abd” abstained.

COMMISSIONER ACTION IS SHOWN IN CAPS AFTER EACH ITEM

President Agbalog called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and announced about Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-29-20 issued on March 18, 2020.

PUBLIC SESSION

1. **Public Presentations**
None

*CONSENT AGENDA

- *2. **Approval of Minutes**
Regular Meeting on May 11, 2020; NO PUBLIC COMMENT; **APPROVED**; Ro/Ol – all ayes
3. **Request to Reinstate Rule 700 Probationary Period for Non-essential and Remote Workers: APPROVE**; Ro/Pri – all ayes

Devin Brown, Chief Human Resources Officer, provided a brief update. Mr. Brown reported that the County no longer has an essential staffing model in effect and all County workers returned to their regular duties on June 1, 2020. Some employees are still working remotely from home however, the vast majority are working onsite. At this point, he stated they are requesting the Commission reinstate Civil Service (CS) Rule 700 effective June 9, 2020. Upon reinstatement of CS Rule 700, all probationary employees will have had their probationary periods extended for a total of 56 days, the letter to the Commission states 46 days, which was a typo. Mr. Brown clarified it is 56 calendar days. The recommendation is that the Commission reinstate the probationary period in CS rule 700 for non-essential probationary and remote workers who have had their probationary periods extended, effective tomorrow, June 9, 2020. No public comment. Commissioner Rose motioned to approve, Commissioner Price seconded the motion.

4. Civil Service Rule 1800 Update

Brian Van Wyk, Deputy County Counsel, reported that with the current Covid-19 situation, Commission staff has been unable to meet with the HR team. However, he has communicated with Mr. Brown and all investigations are up to date. President Agbalog thanked Mr. Van Wyk. No public Comment. Commissioner Rose stated this monthly update information was helpful and thanked Mr. Van Wyk.

5. Commission Secretary Monthly Report

Commission Secretary, Maria Murbach, stated that due to the current Covid-19 situation she has been unable to schedule any department visits but is hopeful to schedule some in the near future.

6. Human Resources Division Items/Report:

Devin Brown, Chief Human Resources Officer, reported on the following:

County employees return to work June 1, 2020 – each County department completed a worksite specific plan, including plans as to how each department will continue remote work possibilities, as they are available, to ensure the County is reducing its footprint. Their plans are pretty comprehensive. The employees' part it is to make sure that they are taking the proper precautions. Whether that means that they are wearing proper face coverings or washing their hands, sanitizing their workspace, and remaining the physical distancing of 6' feet or more from their co-workers. It was a pretty big undertaking to get done within a couple of weeks' span but each department has completed their plan and has implemented it as of June 1, 2020. Not every department has completely fully opened to the public. There are some departments that are phasing-in their reopening plans and making sure that they can provide a safe workspace for their employees while receiving customers.

County Hiring Freeze – On May 19, 2020, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) ordered a freeze on all hiring, all flexible promotions, and special step increments. The County is facing a significant revenue shortfall in FY 20-2021. The state of California is anticipating a \$54 billion shortfall. The County is anticipating between a \$30 million and \$72 million shortfall. The difference between this and the deficit just closed this last fiscal year, is that this is a shortfall that touches not just the general fund departments, but also some funded departments that are receiving some realignment funds, which include departments such as Behavioral Health and Department of Human Services. Every approach is being taken to ensure that budgets can be balanced. The goal is to take every measure to reduce the likelihood that reductions in force will occur. Each department has been asked to take a 7.5% reduction in net general fund costs. The original guideline back in February was that each department was going to submit a budget at status-quo. That has completely changed and each department is having to reduce their budget by 7.5% and that is having a big impact on each department's ability to keep funding for their staffing. Mr. Brown stated they are encouraging and asking employees to consider taking voluntary furloughs and that information has been presented to all of the workforce from each of their departments. It is a voluntary program, but employees can alter their schedules, reduce their pay, and certainly impact each of their department's budget. In addition, they are considering an early retirement incentive program so that employees who are closer to retirement age, and maybe on the cusp of retirement, could leave early and receive an additional benefit in healthcare costs being reduced. He stated they are working with the employees'

associations on a proposal and hope to bring that to the BOS on June 30, 2020 for adoption, with their concurrence. So that employees can consider that as well and maybe elect to retire early. In addition, he stated they will be moving through the budget preparation. June 30, 2020 is the date that the preliminary recommended budget goes to the BOS for approval. Each department will be expected to cut their 7.5% so departments will begin to see the impacts of that as the budget moves through and gets finally adopted by the BOS in August. Mr. Brown stated these are some tough times the County is going through due to Covid-19, changing the way departments look at things, this budget impact is certainly adding on to the pressures each department and the County as a whole is facing in making sure it can provide services to its residents and maintain the staffing departments have worked so hard to bolster up over the last few years.

Commissioner Rose asked when it was that the County went through a 5% reduction and Mr. Brown stated it was FY 2015-16. It was a 3% and then a 2% reduction. Commissioner Rose asked what the total was and Mr. Brown stated it was \$20 million in General Fund reduction. Commissioner Rose asked if the current total reduction amount was \$30 million. Mr. Brown stated this is a multi-year budget problem that is being faced. He stated that after 4 or 5 years of reducing budgets and keeping budgets at status quo for the last year, most departments have reduced as much as they can, so this will be even tougher at the 7.5% reduction.

President Agbalog thanked Mr. Brown. No public comment.

Mr. Van Wyk reminded President Agbalog that Commission Member Presentations or Announcements was an item on the agenda prior to adjourning to Closed Session. President Agbalog thanked Mr. Van Wyk.

7. Commission Member Presentations or Announcements:

Commissioner Rose stated she wanted to thank Public Health Director Matt Constantine and the entire Public Health Department team for all of their incredible job during this Covid-19 pandemic. She was very impressed with their all of their work under difficult circumstances.

- 8. Adjourn to Closed Session:** at 5:56 p.m., the Commission adjourned to closed session to consider the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, discipline, or dismissal of employees or to hear complaints or charges brought against employees by another person or employee.

CLOSED SESSION (Government Code § 54957)

9. PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT – Discipline/Dismissal/Release

Deputy Sheriff (Sheriff's Office) – Case No. 2020-0105; **HEARING DATES SET TO AUGUST 17, 20, 24, AND 27, 2020.**

- 10. Reconvened from Closed Session.** President Agbalog adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m. to the next Regular Meeting to be held on Monday, July 13, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.