

The month of April was busy with a lot of activity going on related to COVID19. There was a positive case in our dispatch center which caused some different planning when it came to FSO Dispatch. The strain has been with the exposures, dispatchers who were sent home due to that one positive test. Employees have been, and are still quarantined for 14 days. Some people may have symptoms, while some may not. But the precaution, following the recommendation of the County Health Doctor, is to 14-day quarantine in order to stop a complete outbreak. All employees and other agencies should have been told this is putting a strain on the radio and call takers. Any help is appreciated, just until we can get out of this and back to full operations.

This positive test came on the heels of Dispatcher Appreciation Week, so trying to backtrack the exposure was challenging. Nonetheless, we were able to get through this positive test with very little collateral damage. I applaud all the dispatchers who continued to serve the public during this time, and those who took the precautions not to infect their peers facing a possible exposure. Those who could really stepped up to the plate.

Working with Sheriff's Management to deal with the positive test was seamless. Things seem to be back on track now. Lt Gilbert will be continuing to monitor the situation in dispatch until we are back to normal. Weekly deep cleaning and daily disinfecting will be ongoing in the center.

FDSA Elections

The FDSA Board of Directors, voted unanimously on a bylaw change regarding the number of board members serving on the FDSA Board of Directors. Currently, the by-laws state there are 13 board of director positions and four executive board positions. We have been holding some vacant positions since our last election due to promotions and retirement. The board has discussed reducing this number down to a more manageable level.

After much discussion, the board took a position to lower the number down to the recommendation of 9 board of directors and 4 executive board members. The official vote was made on Wednesday May 6th during the regularly scheduled FDSA Board Meeting.

By reducing the numbers, our board of directors will be in groups of three (3) when they are elected to their board seats. During this currently election, the only offices that will go out to the members will be for the two executive board seats, 1st Vice President (Currently held by Isaac Torres) and Secretary/Treasurer (Currently held by Jeff Shipman). This will be voted on soon by the membership.

FCERA Earning Statements

During the month of April is when Fresno County Employees Retirement Association puts out your yearly retirement benefit statement. Many of you called me due to some information that was pretty confusing put on your retirement statement. At first glance, it's quite confusing, and is putting numbers that just don't seem factual.

Some examples I saw were 44 year of service at age 70 pays you about \$3,000 a month. Others were at 25 years of service you would have \$7,000 a month. Obviously, these numbers are all over the board. I contacted our retirement association representative and FDSA Board member John Robinson to advise him of the issue. John looking into the reason why this is continuing to happen.

I have attached the graphs for all of you to be able to cross reference your age (at time of retirement), years of service (at time of retirement) which will give you the percentage on where you will be with those two numbers. Take the salary you make today and use it as a reference of what a scenario would look like (today) if you were to retire based age, years of service and salary. The pay will only get better from here depending where you are at in your career.

I want to clarify some mis information that is being talked about and is simply false. A couple members asked me specifically about PEPRA and why the FDSA voted on that. I was also asked why we got rid of a cost of living adjustment for PEPRA employees. Finally, is there a way to get rid of PEPRA altogether.

PEPRA – Public Employees' Pension Reform Act took effect January 1, 2013. This was a reform act crafted by then California Governor Jerry Brown. This act changed the way retirement benefits are applied to public employees within the State of California. This act was worked on by Gov. Brown in all of 2012 and approved by California Legislators and became law 1/1/2013. The purpose of it was to get in front of a pension overhaul conversation that were intense during this time. Pension reform has always been funded by private billionaires. They persuade the ultra-conservative Republican lawmaker(s) throughout the state. Side-note: We actually saw these go through in San Diego and San Jose, however, after being litigated they were reversed back to a traditional defined benefit pension system.

Here are the employees who would fall under PEPRA:

- Any new hire who joined a public service retirement system in California after January 1, 2013, with no prior membership in another California public retirement system.
- Any employee who joined a public service retirement system in California prior to Jan 1, 2013, who, on or after Jan 1, 2013 is hired by another public service retirement employer following a break in service more than six-months.
- A new hire who joins a public retirement system for the first time on or after Jan 1, 2013, and who was a member of another California public retirement system prior to that date but who is not subject to reciprocity by that public retirement system.

All members who don't fall into the above definitions above are considered classic members. Classic members will retain the existing benefit enrollment levels for future service with the same employer. That is PEPRA in a nutshell.

There were questions asked why the FDSA voted to allow this. The answer to that is NO PUBLIC AGENCY had a choice on this. This was passed through an Executive-Type Order from the Governor's Office and enacted by the California Legislator.

There is one component the FDSA opposed with the FCERA board regarding PEPRA - which was cost of living adjustments. There is a big misunderstanding that COLA increases were banished with PEPRA – that is completely false. CALPERS has Cost of Living adjustments built into their PEPRA plans. The 20 counties in the state who fall under 1937 Act Retirement Systems, had to decide independently if they would keep the COLA.

When this was being voted on by YOUR FCERA Board – FDSA asked our safety board representative and Chairman of FCERA at the time, Eulalio Gomez, to vote in favor of continuing the COLA's for Fresno County Retirees who fall under PEPRA. This vote did not pass and the COLA was discontinued. This was disappointing that our own FCERA Board would not vote in favor of continuing the COLA. Will it ever come back or be reversed? That is never off the table, but accomplishing something like that and reversing it would be very difficult. The current makeup of the retirement board would not be in favor of doing something like this. I am currently discussing the idea with John Robinson and FCERA to see how to go about accomplishing this.

I have attached the table for PERPA pension, taken from the FCERA employee handbook. You can see based on the age, years of service, what the percentage will look like when it is your time to retire.

Again, we as the FDSA are here to represent the needs of our members. This doesn't mean we can move mountains. However, take ideas, suggestions, and input from the members and as a board, we move forward with one clear message.

We look forward to some of the restrictions being lifted to allow us to gather back together as a department.

Truly,

Eric