

SHERIFF
KING COUNTY

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David G. Reichert
Sheriff

October 24, 2003

The Honorable Larry Phillips
King County Council
12th Floor, King County Council
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Chair Phillips:

I am submitting this letter to correct inaccurate information that was submitted during the committee meeting on October 15, 2003 as well as inaccurate information contained in the staff report submitted by Council Staff member Peggy Dorothy.

The inaccurate information involves statements made about the role of PeopleSoft in the Covey lawsuit. On October 15, 2003, Bob Cowan gave testimony to your committee that failure to implement PeopleSoft in the Sheriff's Office had no impact on the issues raised in the Covey lawsuit. We strongly disagree with his opinion. While PeopleSoft alone would not have streamlined the entire business processes for managing wage payments, it certainly would have improved the ability of the Sheriff's payroll unit to more quickly to calculate and verify wage payments. It is quite possible this level of improvement would have averted the Covey lawsuit.

I consulted with the staff of my former Financial Director, Jon McCracken, about the role of the failed implementation of PeopleSoft in the timeliness of overtime payments. I have confidence in their perspective on this issue because, unlike Mr. Cowan, Mr. McCracken's staff was involved in the attempted implementation of PeopleSoft.

According to Mr. McCracken's staff the implementation of PeopleSoft could have:

- Created an automated attendance system, eliminating the need for paper transmittals and significantly reducing submittal delays, and
- Eliminated duplicative manual coding and keystroke entries significantly reducing the time necessary to enter data.

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The assertion has also been made that we should have implemented our own, internal automated payroll processing solution prior to the implementation of PeopleSoft. (We were asked to accomplish this with no additional resources or support from county government.) It was our assessment that it would have been an unwise waste of resources to create an automated front-end system that may or may not have been capable of interfacing with PeopleSoft. On numerous occasions we made written requests of the FSRP steering group for direction on what business practice changes would be needed in order to comport with the PeopleSoft system. They were never able to provide us with any direction so that we could comply with the proposed new system.

The FRSP steering group never took the time to assess the complex and unique payroll needs of the Sheriff's Office. I think it has become clear in retrospect that this lack of foresight relative to county departments was one of the causes of the project's failure.

As the Dupuis lawsuit makes clear, there are systemic, countywide payroll issues that are at the heart of these FLSA complaints. There were many complex factors that contributed to alleged delays in processing overtime wage payments for my employees. I am quite willing to accept responsibility for those factors that were under my control and have taken significant steps to improve those internal processes. However, I ask that you ensure the record contains accurate information and doesn't miss the fact that the Sheriff's Office, like other county departments, must operate as part of a larger system that is dependent on the Executive's Office and County Council for adequate resources to meet our obligations under the law.

Sincerely,


David G. Reichert
King County Sheriff

cc: BRM Committee members