

As a member of COBA I am pleased when we win any decision and like many members I have waited too damn long to receive our 2007 and 2008 raises.

President Alonzo West has stated in a statement dated July 6, 2010 that the County has agreed to return to negotiation for 2009, 2010, and possible 2011 and 2012. Are we to truly believe that COBA has transformed itself into such a powerful labor union and can negotiate a total of 6 years in less than 5 months when we waited almost FIVE years for 2007 and 2008 contracts? If you believe this, I have a bridge I can sell you for your retro check called the Tappan Zee!

They constantly point to the "Big Retro Payday" purposely diverting our attention from their constant buffoonery on policy and procedures and lack of negotiation techniques that has allowed our members to be financially handicapped for the past almost FIVE years.

It's unfortunate that President Alonzo West didn't read or comprehend the award from Arbitrator John Sands.

Per Arbitrator John Sands, in #10 of the Opinion and Awards entitled Health Benefits, he says, "The parties are strongly encouraged to address this issue (health care) since, as it has been demonstrated on the national level, the current cost of health benefits is not sustainable and seriously erodes the County's ability to pay and provide services on a cost-effective manner."

Yes, President Alonzo West is right in his letter; he will not agree to have any present COBA member pay into health care. COBA will lose it in Binding Arbitration! It is clear by Arbitrator Sands' ruling that he will side with the County that hard working Correction Officers will pay into their health care when COBA comes back before him for binding arbitration on 2009 and 2010 contract. Arbitrator Sands has already predetermined that the county paying for health benefits is a cost that will seriously erode the County's ability to pay and provide services.

They are counting on the membership's lack of understanding as to what the negotiation process entails. This is why they have kept the membership in the dark with everything until the last minute. Again, President Alonzo West states, "COBA and the county agreed immediately to return to negotiations for 2009, 2010 and hopefully 2011 and 2012". Why didn't President West inform the membership that COBA was going straight ahead of County PD at our General Membership meeting? Every sentence in reference to negotiations was that we wait for County PD. President West must explain this change in tactical maneuver. Even SOA and the County Investigators have not begun to negotiate 2007 and 2008. If he immediately agreed, then he had to agree at the beginning of the 2007 and 2008 negotiation process.

President Alonzo West must explain why he would agree proceed with negotiations when all the other labor unions have backed away from the negotiation table because of the bold demands from the county executive on health benefits. President West can call a certain individual COBA member (me) a liar in his letter but it's clear that COBA's noise has been growing for the last 3 years!

Our illustrious Union President will drag out the negotiation process through his re- election period. Then he will campaign on needing to be re-elected so he can finish the job of negotiating on the behalf of COBA membership. He will say, "The contract is looking good" or "We are on the verge of victory" all just to stay in office.

It's about them staying in their cushy air-conditioned office while you work the hot blocks in the summer. It's about them using union time for their benefit in lieu of working for the benefits of hard working COBA members. It's about them eating in nice restaurants while you can't afford to take your family out to dinner. They have all benefited from their elected positions and it taste to good to let go. Those who elected them into office have not benefited at all. At the end of the day, what have they done? You have been SOLD OUT!!!!