

STATE OF WASHINGTON
BEFORE THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

In the matter of the petition of:

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 252

For clarification of an existing bargaining unit
of employees of:

PACIFIC COUNTY

CASE 143317-C-25

DECISION 14178 - PECB

ORDER CLARIFYING BARGAINING
UNIT

Dane Bonnell, Business Agent, for the Teamsters Local 252.

Paul Plakinger, County Administrative Officer, for Pacific County.

Teamsters Local 252 (union) represents a bargaining unit of corrections employees at Pacific County (employer) that report to the County Sheriff. That bargaining unit is currently described as “All full-time and regular part-time nonsupervisory corrections employees working for the Pacific County Sheriff’s department, excluding supervisors, confidential employees, uniformed employees, and all other employees.” *Pacific County*, Decision 13848 (PECB, 2024). Prior to July 1, 2025, the corrections employees were under the supervision of the Sheriff’s department. The employer’s Board of Commissioners recently voted to create a new Pacific County Jail Services Division that is under the oversight of the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners also decided to reorganize its workforce and move the corrections employees that were previously under the Sheriff’s department to the newly created Pacific County Jail Services Division.

On July 1, 2025, the employer and union jointly filed a unit clarification petition to amend the bargaining unit certification to reflect that the corrections employees are no longer under the supervision of the Sheriff’s department. Other than moving the corrections employees to the Pacific County Jail Services Division, the reorganization did not alter the configuration of the

bargaining unit and no question concerning representation is raised by the petition. The parties' request for clarification is granted.

ANALYSIS

Determination of Appropriate Bargaining Unit

The determination of appropriate bargaining units is a function delegated to this agency by the legislature. *City of Richland*, Decision 279-A (PECB, 1978), *aff'd*, *International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 1052 v. Public Employment Relations Commission*, 29 Wn. App. 599 (1981), review denied, 96 Wn.2d 1004 (1981). The goal in making unit determinations is to ensure there is a community of interest among the employees sufficient to enable them to bargain effectively with their employer and avoid potential work jurisdiction disputes and fragmentation. *Quincy School District*, Decision 3962-A (PECB, 1993); *King County (Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 587)*, Decision 6696 (PECB, 1999).

In making bargaining unit determinations, this agency considers "the duties, skills, and working conditions of the public employees; the history of collective bargaining . . . ; the extent of organization among the public employees; and the desire of the public employees." RCW 41.56.060. Bargaining unit determinations are made on a case-by-case basis, and the criteria are not applied on a strictly mathematical basis. *King County*, Decision 5910-A (PECB, 1997). Not all of the factors will arise in every case, and where they do exist, any one factor could be more important than another, depending on the facts. *Renton School District*, Decision 379-A (EDUC, 1978), *aff'd*, *Renton Education Association v. Public Employment Relations Commission*, 101 Wn.2d 435 (1984).

A unit clarification petition that seeks to add or remove employees to or from an existing bargaining unit requires a recent meaningful change in circumstances that alters the community of interest such that clarification is necessary. WAC 391-35-020; *University of Washington*, Decision 10496-A (PSRA, 2011) (*citing City of Richland*, Decision 279-A). Among the types of changes that can alter the existing community of interest and necessitate clarification are meaningful changes to job duties, reorganization of the workforce, or other significant changes to

the workplace environment. *See Lewis County (Teamsters Local 252)*, Decision 6750 (PECB, 1999). A mere change in job titles is not necessarily a material change in working conditions that would qualify under chapter 391-35 WAC to alter the composition of a bargaining unit through the unit clarification process. *See University of Washington*, Decision 10496-A.

Application of Standards

The employer's decision to reorganize its workforce by moving the corrections that were previously under the Sheriff's department to the newly created Pacific County Jail Services Division is a change in circumstances that warrants review of the bargaining unit. The existing bargaining unit description currently reflects the previous organizational structure with the corrections employees being part of the Sheriff's department. The existing bargaining unit description shall be modified to reflect the recent reorganization and the decision to place the corrections employees under the supervision of the Board of County Commissioners.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Pacific County is a public employer within the meaning of RCW 41.56.030(13).
2. Teamsters Local 252 is a bargaining representative within the meaning of RCW 41.56.030(2).
3. The union represents a bargaining unit of corrections employees that is currently described as "All full-time and regular part-time nonsupervisory corrections employees working for the Pacific County Sheriff's department, excluding supervisors, confidential employees, uniformed employees, and all other employees."
4. Prior to July 1, 2025, the corrections employees were under the supervision of the Sheriff's department. The employer's Board of Commissioners recently voted to create a new Pacific County Jail Services Division that is under the oversight of the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners also decided to reorganize its workforce and move the corrections employees that were previously under the Sheriff's department to the newly created Pacific County Jail Services Division.

5. Other than moving the corrections employees to the Pacific County Jail Services Division, the reorganization did not alter the configuration of the bargaining unit.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Public Employment Relations Commission has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to chapter 41.56 RCW and chapter 391-35 WAC.
2. Based upon findings of fact 3 through 5, the bargaining unit described must be modified to reflect the employer's recent decision to remove the corrections employees from the supervision of the Sheriff's department and place those employees in the newly created Pacific County Jail Services Division.

ORDER

1. The bargaining described in finding of fact 3 shall be modified to be described as "All full-time and regular part-time nonsupervisory corrections employees working for Pacific County, excluding supervisors, confidential employees, uniformed employees, and all other employees."
2. Teamsters Local 252 shall continue to represent the bargaining unit described in paragraph 1 of this order.

ISSUED at Olympia, Washington, this 6th day of August, 2025.

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION


MICHAEL P. SELLARS, Executive Director

This order will be the final order of the agency unless a notice of appeal is filed with the Commission under WAC 391-35-210.



RECORD OF SERVICE

ISSUED ON 8/06/2025

DECISION 14178 - PECB has been served electronically by the Public Employment Relations Commission to the parties and their representatives listed below. If no email address was provided, a paper copy was sent to the mailing address.

BY: DEBBIE BATES

CASE 143317-C-25

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