



Sacramento County Criminal Justice Employees' Union

Special Meeting Minutes: Thursday, March 26, 2026, 1pm

SPOA Office: 500 Bercut Dr., Sacramento, CA 95811

Board Members In Attendance

Arla Graeff
Daniel Ming
Michelle Chao

Joaquin Farinha
Keion Bryant
Dwaynitta Parker

Jonathan Charron
Aaron Wallace

Others In Attendance

Charles Galigher (DCSS)
Desiree Dudley (Crime Lab)
Drew Vandalia (Crime Lab)
Isaac Esquinto (Crime Lab)
Isaac Torres (Crime Lab)
Jane King (Crime Lab)
Jennifer Nguyen (Crime Lab)
Natalie Jones (Crime Lab)
Sara Porter (Crime Lab)
William Scott (DCSS)

Angelynn Shaw (Crime Lab)
Danielle Baute (Crime Lab)
Desiree Gotwalt (Crime Lab)
Jonathen Gervais (Crime Lab)
Lisa D'Augustine (PD Office)
Melissa Reyes (Crime Lab)
Mike Morreira (DCSS)
Paul Brown (DA Office)
Stephanie James (Crime Lab)
Matthew Nodagama (Crime Lab)

Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)
Megan Wood (Crime Lab)
Susan Moody (DCSS)
John Della Santina
(Crime Lab)
Joe Hoffman (Mastagni)
Amber Hoiska (Mastagni)
Kim Gillingham (GRU)

- I. The meeting was officially called to order at 1303 hours by Arla Graeff. The meeting was held at the SPOA Office located at 550 Bercut Dr., Sacramento, CA 95811. The meeting was convened in response to a petition submitted by Megan Wood and signed by 38 members of the Crime Lab and 6 members of the District Attorney's office to address specific concerns. The meeting was attended in person. (Petition attached to minutes)

II. Roll Call

- a. Emily Baker and Trevor Schnitzius excused due to work obligations.

III. The meeting agenda and discussions covered topics related to 2025 stipends, reimbursements and association expenditures as well as union release time.

IV. Fact Finding Process:

SCCJEU Vice President Joaquin Farinha opened the meeting by explaining the discovery of a procedural oversight by the 2025 Executive Board in failing to obtain final approval from the full SCCJEU Board of Directors regarding increased stipends for the Executive Board members, which became effective January 1, 2025. The oversight was identified during a budget review conducted in November 2025.

Joaquin outlined the subsequent fact-finding process. A special meeting was held with SCCJEU Board representatives who did not receive stipends. Following these efforts, a vote and unanimous decision was made to seek repayment of the stipend disbursements. In February 2026, the 2025 Executive Board members received formal notices requesting repayment.

A. SCCJEU Member Q&A Session:

1) Megan Wood (Crime Lab)

- a. What were the specific amounts of stipends approved and amounts that were requested for repayment?
- b. **SCCJEU:** To protect the integrity of the 2026 financial audit these amounts will not be disclosed at this time. Members are reminded that per the Bylaws they can schedule an appointment to view SCCJEU financial records at any time.

2) Charles Galigher (DCSS)

- a. When was the last financial audit completed and why do we need another audit?
- b. **SCCJEU:** Last audit was completed in 2023 and per the Bylaws voted on by the membership an audit is to be completed every two years.
Amber Hoiska (Mastagni): Point of clarification -SCCJEU Bylaws, Article X explains financial audits are completed from an outside accounting firm. Internal Board investigations are separate from these audits. Internal audits are completed annually. Last forensic audit was completed in 2023, and the next audit will be done in 2026.

Amber Hoiska (Mastagni): Stipends and expenditures are separate and have different meanings.

Kim Gillingham (GRU): Stipends are what the Board uses in lieu of County release time. Based on the internal investigation, stipends were suspended and determined to be paid back. It was discovered the term “stipend” is the word referenced in the minutes. Reimbursements for expenditures were approved or included in Board meetings minutes dating back to 2022. As of now no stipends are being paid. Reimbursements are being paid.

3) Isaac Esquinto (Crime Lab)

- a. How was the misstep found and why did it take almost a full year to find it?
- b. **SCCJEU:** The misstep was discovered November 2025 when going over 2025 budget and preparing 2026 budget. The Board completed research into the Bylaws and concluded January 2026 the misstep was obtaining the final approval of the stipend increase from the entire Board of Directors.

4) Isaac Esquinto (Crime Lab)

- a. When did the stipend payments start?
- b. **SCCJEU:** We will not disclose specific details about the 2025 stipends. Members can make an appointment anytime to review the SCCJEU financial records. Financials records are held at the SCCJEU office.

5) John Della Santina (Crime Lab)

- a. What are the specific repayment amounts?
- b. **SCCJEU:** We will not disclose specific details about the 2025 stipends. Members can make an appointment anytime to review the SCCJEU financial records. Members were advised of the repayment letter that was sent out.

IIV. Bylaws:

A. SCCJEU Member Q&A Session:

1) Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)

- a. Is Amber Hoiska representing the Board?
- b. **Amber Hoiska (Mastagni):** I represent the Union as a whole.

2) Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)

- a. I have requested to review the books since January 2026 and have not been able to. When was the last financial audit completed?

- b. **Arla Graeff (SCCJEU):** That is correct, Danielle Frost and Megan Wood requested to review SCCJEU financials records in January 2026 and did so at the SCCJEU office for two hours, reviewing 2023 audit, 2024, and 2025 financial records. Danielle has made a second request to review addition prior years. Due to the union release time and the amount of time that the Board of Directors have already spent on appointments to review financial records it was advised by the unions legal counsel to discuss this as a board before using any more union release time. I responded to Danielle and stated that once discussion with the board is held at the April board meeting, a response will be provided. Since the presence of an executive board member is required per the Bylaws this creates additional costs in release time. The last financial audit was completed in 2023. Previous Treasurer is not present today and we cannot provide specifics regarding the audit.

3) **Natalie Jones (Crime Lab)**

- a. Who gets to approve of the increased stipends? The Board or Membership?
- b. **SCCJEU:** For the last 20 years, release time has been approved via MOU at the equivalent to a half-time employee. The MOU is approved by members. The release time has never been fully exhausted. We are now reconciling it.

4) **Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)**

- a. If time is not exhausted why was there an extreme increase in the release time? Members were not provided with written notice of the increased release time.
- b. **SCCJEU:** Previous SCCJEU President wanted to ensure all Board Representatives were equipped to run a Board and ensure all were educated/trained in the Union processes. We also wanted to ensure there were enough training hours available for new Board Representatives.

Kim Gillingham (GRU): Union release time is necessary to protect Board Representatives in the performance of union duties. Without approved release time, representatives may be subject to workplace discipline; therefore, release time serves as a safeguard for their employment while conducting union business.

5) **Isaac Esquinto (Crime Lab)**

- a. Requesting clarification about what is true regarding ability for members to review the financial records. As we have been told, the books are available for viewing based on availability, discussion with the Board, and the cost associated with viewing the books.
- b. **SCCJEU:** The bylaws require that a Board Representative be available and present without exceeding allocated union release time. The Board

must monitor representatives' availability and monthly release time usage, as all time spent conducting union business results in a financial cost to the union.

6) **Isaac Esquinto (Crime Lab)**

- a. If release time is already a line item, why are there stipends?
- b. **SCCJEU:** Stipends are an alternative form of compensation that is more cost-effective for the union compared to the County's billable rate. Compensation is provided either through stipends or through union release time, but not both.

Joaquin Farinha (SCCJEU): The county asked for more accounting of our release time for reimbursement. We searched for cheaper ways to save money for the Union, and this method was suggested by several unions within Sacramento County.

7) **Isaac Esquinto (Crime Lab)**

- a. Turning a volunteer position into a second job. It is a second form of income.
- b. **SCCJEU:** No, the Union Board Representative position is not a second job or second form of income. The County approved release time. In using release time, Board Representative workload is still not cut. The release time is to make the Board Representative whole. We must perform our jobs and perform our Union roles.

8) **Megan Wood (Crime Lab)**

- a. Expressed appreciation for Union Board roles. MOU says we will reimburse the County, not from member pockets. Where are the stipends in the Bylaws. Stipends are not mentioned.
- b. **SCCJEU:** Stipends and expenditure should not be co-mingled, as they represent distinct financial concepts. Historically, the County did not require accounting for union release time and did not bill the union for all representatives for such time. However, as of July 2025, the County began requiring detailed accounting of release time and has initiated billing for those costs.

Discussion of stipends in late 2024 occurred in anticipation of 2025 negotiations, during which the union expected the County to address release time costs. Stipends were an alternative form of compensation that is more cost-effective for the union

An external financial audit will be conducted to reconcile the union's budget. The previous audit was completed in 2023, with the next audit is scheduled for 2026.

9) **Megan Wood (Crime Lab)**

- a. Expressed, she did not agree that specifics of stipends were not on the agenda. Expressed concerns of total stipends paid out approx. \$50,000. Asked what is the amount to be paid back?
- b. **SCCJEU:** To protect the integrity of the 2026 financial audit these amounts will not be disclosed at this time.

10) **Charles Galigher (DCSS)**

- a. Thank you, expressed for saving money for the release time.

11) **Natalie Jones (Crime Lab)**

- a. Expressed feeling attacked and advised just seeking she is seeking understanding.
- b. **Arla Graeff (SCCJEU):** Expressed understanding and offered apologies if members were feeling that way. Advised the board representatives were legally advised to hold off on sharing specific details regarding the stipends until the audit is completed.
Kim Gillingham (GRU): What is the goal of meeting or requests? The current system is working because of an error. Now we are trying to rectify the error with a goal of being transparent. The information will be shared when it is appropriate, timely, respectfully, and when we are legally advised.
Joe Hoffman (Mastagni): The audit and fact finding are separate.

12) **Megan Wood (Crime Lab)**

- a. Board Representatives are not supposed to get paid more than their hourly rate.

13) **Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)**

- a. Added the stipends were paid via Zelle, which is not claimed in the SCCJEU tax records.
- b. **Kim Gillingham (GRU):** Addressing Megan Wood, you can put specific questions in writing and SCCJEU will give them to the external auditor.
Joe Hoffman (Mastagni): Added for 2026, the union can request an expedited audit.
Arla Graeff (SCCJEU): Confirmed with Linda (SCCJEU Office Manager) the request for an expedited audit appointment was made. Also, addressing Danielle Frost, 2025 stipends were not paid via Zelle. Zelle was used in 2024 for reimbursement payments.

14) **Stephanie James (Crime Lab)**

- a. What is the difference between the internal audit and forensic audit?

b. **SCCJEU:** That is a question for the auditor.

15) **Isaac Esquinto (Crime Lab)**

a. All members should be aggressive about matters concerning the \$50,000. Does not feel as though the Board is being transparent.

16) **Susan Moody (DCSS)**

a. What is the estimate if we go through the County for release time opposed to using the stipends?

b. **SCCJEU:** That will be addressed during the Release Time section on the meeting agenda.

Kim Gillingham (GRU): Usually in the Bylaw release time is excluded. However, it is referred to in the MOU and the budget. Total hours were approved in the MOU. The language in the MOU is a protection. Paid at the highest role in a classification. The contract language is to protect the employer and the employee's job. To allow release from duties, without a reduction in workload. 60% full time release in the MOU previously approved. That is a lot more than \$50,000.

IIIV. Union Release Time:

SCCJEU Arla Graeff advised that the County bills the Union for the release time used for each Board Member. That amount varies depending on the classification of the Board Member. It is the Board Members hourly rate plus benefit rollup. The cost for our monthly Union meetings when all board members are present is \$1,030 per hour.

A. SCCJEU Member Q&A Session:

1) **Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)**

a. Expressed appreciation for Board's role. Expressed having a personal issue with amount paid in stipends and how they were paid via Zelle, which was not taxed and can be considered as additional income. She stated Zelle has no tax affiliations. Suggested amounts paid out and stipends should be previewed for the members. Stipends vs release time-even with stipends, release time is still being used. Suggest we use allotted release time of 80 hours. Other unions generally get 10 hours per year.

b. **Kim Gillingham (GRU):** Advised that total commitment is \$200k+ approved in the MOU. We can have further discussion amongst the Board regarding an increase of release time from 16 hours to 80 hours annually.

2) **Megan Wood (Crime Lab)**

- a. Requested to make a motion to suspend all stipends until the Board creates a policy.
- b. **Arla Graeff (SCCJEU):** All stipends were suspended January 2026. Reimbursements of expenditure have continued.
Kim Gillingham (GRU): Reimbursement of expenditure will not stop that would be in violation of the most current Bylaws.

3) **Megan Wood (Crime Lab)**

- a. Requested to make a motion for all union release time suspended until membership can come to an agreement and change the Bylaws.
- b. **Amber Hoiska (Mastagni):** Motion is out of order, and the motion is a violation of the most current MOU that was ratified.

4) **Megan Wood (Crime Lab)**

- a. Requested that February 2026 meeting minutes be changed to reflect reimbursements from stipends and what years will be included in the 2026 audit.
- b. **Arla Graeff (SCCJEU):** Agreed to review January 2026 through March 2026 minutes and make sure the language is amended. Clarified the external audits will be for 2024 and 2025.

5) **Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)**

- a. Confirmed there is a stipend 2024 policy and suggested the wording in the policy should reference reimbursements, not stipends.
- b. **Arla Graeff (SCCJEU):** Agreed, and we will review January 2026 through March 2026 minutes and make sure the language is amended.

6) **Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)**

- a. What are they being reimbursed for?
- b. **SCCJEU:** Currently the Executive Board is being reimbursed at a flat rate of \$200 for President, and \$100 each for Vice President, Secretary, and Treasure as of Jan 2024 for incidental reimbursements in lieu of mileage reimbursement.

7) **Michelle Chao (SCCJEU)**

- a. Asked to clarify Megan Wood's motion to use stipends in lieu of reimbursement and to have membership approval.
- b. **Arla Graeff (SCCJEU):** All stipends were suspended January 2026.

Kim Gillingham (GRU): To make a change in the method to change powers will require a Bylaw amendment.

8) **Michelle Chao (SCCJEU)**

- a. Can Board members approve a stipend policy.
- b. **Kim Gillingham (GRU):** Yes, as long as it is in the parameters of the contract.

9) **Aaron Wallace (SCCJEU)**

- a. Asked member Paul Brown (District Attorney's Office) in the audience to share union experience to include stipends, reimbursements, release time.

10) **Paul Brown (District Attorney's Office)**

- a. Paul Brown shared his personal experience as being the treasurer of SPOA for many year prior.
- b. **Kim Gillingham (GRU):** added if we only charge the hourly rate, we can reduce costs to the Union to ensure we do not use all release time. The goal is to try to ensure we do not exceed the approved release/reimbursement amounts.

Arla Graeff (SCCJEU): Keion Bryant was asked to track his release time for union duties and report out. Other Board Representatives shared the amount of time to conduct research, to set up meetings, webinars, and meet with other County Officials. This is all being done during their work day and it is taking time away for the job they were hired to complete.

11) **Danielle Baute (Crime Lab)**

- a. Expressed appreciation for the work we do and reminded us that this is a volunteer position.

12) **Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)**

- a. Does not believe the stipends will save money. Enacting \$50,000 annually puts the responsibility on the members to make up the amounts. It feels like we should use the approved release time. Talks about increasing member dues are concerning. Board overbudgets \$26,000 from training. We should keep track of the release time is a better option.
- b. **Kim Gillingham (GRU):** Advised it would be true if the Board included true annual cost in the budget. Commitment of release time should be included in the budget. The full commitment amount is recorded as \$228,799.76. If we budgeted the full amount, union dues would increase.

13) **Danielle Frost (Crime Lab)**

- a. Expressed was not provided with a copy of contract prior to ratification and would not have approved/voted for this release time cost.
- b. **Arla Graeff (SCCJEU):** Reminded everyone that everyone has their own choice when voting for ratification of a contract. Reminded everyone that the contract was not provided to the union prior due to the rush to have the contract ratified by a certain date so that we could all get back pay as of 07/01/2025. It was still your individual choice to vote, and we only had one member that rejected the contract as presented.

14) Brian Williams (DCSS)

- a. Shared DCSS shares union work and the amount of time spent to provide support to union members. Advised the contract is available for viewing on the Sac County Labor website.

15) Megan Wood (Crime Lab)

- a. Deeper dive into Board representatives travel expenses and debit card transactions. How would an auditor know what the expenses were used for? There is no travel policy, so anything goes is what she was previously told. Requesting for 2024 and 2025 debit card use and travel expenses to be thoroughly reviewed for all Board Representatives and shared with members.
- b. **Amber Hoiska (Mastagni):** The CPA/Auditor will go through all of 2024 & 2025 very detailed and make sure spending matches the minutes and Bylaws. They interview board members that have debit cards for expenses they may have a question about.
Kim Gillingham (GRU): The Bylaws allow the Board to have expenses up to \$1,000. If this is something that no longer works for the membership it may require a Bylaw amendment for member involvement.

16) Megan Wood (Crime Lab)

- a. Expressed does not want inappropriate expenditure caused by Board Representatives to continue.
- b. **Kim Gillingham (GRU)** A comprehensive audit and development of policies and procedures will have been happened. For members to have a more active role, that requires a Bylaw amendment.

17) Megan Wood (Crime Lab)

- a. When does spending rise to the level of embezzlement?
- b. **Kim Gillingham (GRU)** When the spending exceeds what is contracted and when the motives are to get more money. No one is getting rich and as long as we are within the budget the board is acting within the Bylaws.

18) Natalie Jones (Crime Lab)

- a. How do we make it, so membership is allowed to vote and have more participation in voting for the policies?
- b. **Kim Gillingham (GRU):** Members should go to their assigned Board Representatives to advocate for more membership participation/involvement in union changes.

Motion to Adjourn 1500

- Motion: Keion Bryant
- Second: Joaquin Farinha
- Motion Passes: Unanimous

Sacramento County Criminal Justice Employees' Union

I, Megan Wood, do hereby formally request SCCJEU President Arla Graeff to hold a special general membership meeting on March 25, 2026, to go over the following:

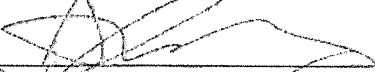
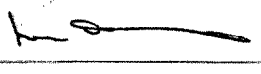
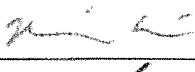
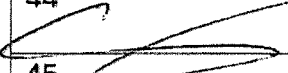
- The specific steps taken to investigate the non-approved stipend payments, including who was involved in conducting the investigation
- The amount of the approved and non-approved stipends paid to board members (amount to each member, date paid (2022-2026), and how the payment was made)
- A vote for stipends to continue at the currently approved amount or be suspended until the membership adopts and approves an official policy on stipend payments to board members
- Discussion on whether stipend pay goes against the bylaws
- Asking for a formal investigation into board member debit card spending and travel expenses in 2024 and 2025

"Special meetings may be called by the Association President, the Board of Directors or by petition filed with the President and signed by ten (10) percent of the membership of the Association and shall be called for specifically identified purposes. Business conducted at such special meetings shall be limited to those specific purposes only. (Amended 12/07)"

Per the bylaws, the following membership signatures were obtained:

Signature and Date	Print Name and Department
1 Megan Wood 3/12/26	Megan C. Wood Crime Lab
2 Danielle Frost 3/12/26	Danielle Frost Crime Lab
3 T. Baute 3/12/24	Danielle Baute crimelab
4 Allyson Avina 3/12/26	Allyson Avina Crime Lab
5 Devin Dawson 3-12-26	Devin Dawson Criminalist, Crime Lab
6 Desiree Gotwalt 3/12/26	Desiree Gotwalt Crime Lab
7 Ryan Nickel 3/12/26	Ryan Nickel Crime Lab
8 Angelynn Shaw 3/12/26	Angelynn Shaw Crime Lab
9 John Della-Santina 3/12/26	John Della-Santina Crime Lab
10 Christine Hothi 03/12/26	Christine Hothi Crime Lab
11 Patrick Jacobs 03/12/26	Patrick Jacobs Crime Lab

Signature and Date	Print Name and Department
12 Ashley Fricker 3/12/26	Ashley Fricker, Crime Lab
13 Catherine Currier 3/12/26	Catherine Currier, Crime Lab
14 Desiree Dudley 3.12.26	Desiree Dudley, Crime Lab
15 Matthew Nefayeen 03/12/26	Matthew Nefayeen, Crime Lab
16 K. Eggleston 3-12-26	Katharina Suarez - Eggleston
17 Nikki Sewell 3/12/26	Nikki Sewell, Crime Lab
18 Sarah Husa 3-12-26	Sarah Husa - Crime Lab
19 Isaac Torres 3-12-26	Isaac Torres - Crime Lab
20 Jonathan Gervais 3/12/26	Jonathan Gervais - Crime Lab
21 Stephanie Jones 3/12/26	Stephanie Jones, Crime Lab
22 Chris Fogelberg 03/12/26	Chris Fogelberg, Crime Lab
23 Carmen Joy Viray 3/12/26	Carmen Joy Viray, Crime Lab
24 PHIL HESS 3/12/26	PHILIP HESS, CRIME LAB
25 Natalie Jones 3/12/26	Natalie Jones, Crime Lab
26 Justin Hubbard 3/13/26	Justin Hubbard, Crime Lab
27 Jennifer Nguyen 3/13/26	Jennifer Nguyen, Crime Lab
28 Danielle Vongay 03/13/2026	Danielle Vongay, Crime Lab
29 Sara Porter 3/13/26	Sara Porter, Crime Lab
30 Danielle Pires 3-13-26	Danielle Pires, CRIME LAB
31 Melissa Suarez 3/13/26	Melissa Suarez, Crime LAB
32 Kristine Myhre 3/13/26	Kristine Myhre, Crime Lab

Signature and Date	Print Name and Department
33  3-13-26	Cara Storer Crime Lab
34  3/13/26	Karen Buckman Crime Lab
35  3/16/26	Isaac Baguim Crime Lab
36  3/16/26	An Truong Crime Lab
37  3/16/26	Drew Vandalia Crime Lab
38  3/17/26	Alex Borsov Crime Lab
39  3/17/26	LEE DERRICK SAC DA OFFICE
40  3/17/2026	MICHAEL PORCHI SAC DA
41  3/17/2026	George Singewald SAC DA
42  3/17/2026	WILL COBBIN SAC DA
43  3/17/26	Nick O'Connor SAC DA
44  3/17/26	CYANNA ISTEAD SAC DA
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