



California School Employees Association
Chapter 477 – Rio Hondo College
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
July 23, 2019

UNAPPROVED

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Call Meeting to Order: President Sandra Rivera called the meeting to order at **12:10pm** with 59 members present.

Pledge of Allegiance: Steven Gonzalez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of Officers: Sandra Rivera, Lisa Sandoval, Janice Garcia-Lopez, Alberto Bretado Andrea Rivera Ringo, Rowena Mendoza, Angelica Bio, Steven Gonzalez, & Yolanda Ramirez.

Absent: None.

Introduction of Guests: President Rivera introduced Garry Couso-Vasquez, Former Chief of Police, Montebello, CA and Former RHC Board Member and his assistant Brian Chrisp.

Chief Couso-Vasquez gave us his extensive credentials in law enforcement, his military service background and his 2005-2009 experience as a Board of Trustees at Rio Hondo College. He along with his son graduated from the Rio Hondo College Police Academy and he introduced his right-hand Officer and excellent note-taker Brian Chrisp.

He is here because he was made aware that Staff, Students and Faculty do not feel safe. He is here to listen, Brian will take good notes, and they will compile the information received into a report that will be presented to the current Board of Trustees to inform them of the deficiencies and possible solutions to the communication and actions to make everyone feel safe at work.

He believes that the community should be part of the solutions. The Board agreed to do the assessment of the Security and Safety on campus. He joked a bit about the fact that we may be paying a bit too much for food, but that is NOT his purview but Security and Safety are.

He said: We all agree that we are not Safe. “Young, old, tall, short, we will take your words, your truth and we will take it to the 5-body Board of Trustees and to the President’s Taskforce on Active Shooters, Earthquake, Fire and the fact that there is only one way in and one way out. The gun incident was brought up. He said he is saddened by the lack of response, the fear of being found it was a manager carrying a gun. It was illegal to have a cover-up. He stated it that when Administration makes a mistake, it should admit it, and apologize to the college community. Their recommendation will be based on the Staff’s truth. The Chief stated that he and Brian are going to other colleges to speak and ask questions about their safety and security measures. Some colleges, like Rio Hondo, have Security Staff with a 24-hour training every other year and they are here only to observe and report. Others have a Public Safety or POST trained and armed Police Force following both the Vehicle and Penal Code to enforce the laws.

The issues mentioned are listed in order of appearance, not necessarily in the order of importance, with a synopsis of the discussion that ensued about each one.

1. Blue Lights meant as an emergency alarm are NOT working, and they are not connected to the Berbee Alarm Emergency System. The Chief stated that in his experience it is good to know that the Blue Lights are wired rather than wireless, because wireless will not work if the WiFi is not working.
2. Cameras are NOT operational. They are to be manned by the Facilities Manager or as of now, Yulian Ligioso the VP of Finance and Business. Sandra clarified that cameras are NOT there to oversee employee like to see if you are late, but to confirm accidents, incidents such as falls or verify reports of hit-and-runs, vandalism or other crimes. We need to ensure that when they are in operation the video is not viewed by Security personnel. The policies and procedures must be addressed. If Staff see something, we must do something and report it to keep us safe.

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- 45 3. Student Mental Health issues. The Chief stated that he lobbied in Sacramento to bring
46 mental health awareness training to the Police Department. This training helps Officers
47 assess the mentally ill or how to handle people under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- 48 4. The Chief stated: “Vets are NOT coming “home” they are on the streets. They are on the
49 streets, homeless, and we can help, by knowing about PTSD and how to help them.
- 50 5. Response system: There is no campus-wide PA system, we rely on the Berbee system
51 which is inadequate, not everyone can get e-mail, text or phone calls while in class.
52 Students, Faculty and Staff will not know to take cover, evacuate or stay put. We need a
53 list and number of who to notify in different cases.
- 54 6. Classified Safety is not taken seriously. We need training and safety measures to protect
55 us, and that is not included in the budget. Last BEC and BEL Emergency training was
56 too long ago, new staff has not been trained. It all comes down to prioritizing the budget.
- 57 7. Tina Caldera spoke about a threatening incident with a student stalking and emailing her
58 and it was escalating to what she thought was a dangerous situation, and how
59 management said she needed to handle it on her own because he was bothering her
60 directly. And when she did file a police report with Pico Rivera Sheriff’s Department, the
61 Administrators were upset, telling her she did not follow the chain-of-command to report
62 the incidents. Incidents were reported to the Sheriff, and administration and security
63 were alerted to contact the Sheriff and to inform Tina if the student was on campus, but it
64 was another Staff member who informed her the student had returned. It was a difficult
65 situation. This was an unstable student who even sent a copy of his arrest paperwork in
66 an email showing the 5150 Code in place (5150 refers to the California law code for the
67 temporary, involuntary psychiatric commitment of individuals who present a danger to
68 themselves or others due to signs of mental illness). The individual was never arrested
69 because there was no physical assault, nor was the college community alerted of this
70 situation. We should keep everyone informed.
- 71 8. SWEC is located with its entrance to a main thoroughfare on Telegraph and Colima
72 where many homeless and under the influence individuals can come in to disrupt.
- 73 9. PICO and EMEC have the same issues including being disconnected from the
74 emergency system and NOT having Security oversight, at all times.
- 75 10. We need an updated and effective evacuation plan for the different types of threats, not
76 only here on campus, but all the outreach locations, SWEC, EMEC and PICO Centers.
- 77 11. Mary Becerril brought up that unsafe conditions or incidents reported by Classified Staff
78 are not taken seriously. There was an incident with a student being escorted out of the
79 Library and the VP underestimated the situation. Also, Admissions and Records Staff
80 feel insecure handling money at night, especially because there are no panic buttons.
- 81 12. Jim Saas spoke about the gun incident. How the rules specify that we have to inform
82 our immediate supervisor, but it was the immediate supervisor who was the owner of the
83 gun found in the restroom by a Staff member. Sheriff scolded the Staff member for not
84 calling 911, before reporting it to the Management, and still they decided to hide the
85 incident. Why? There are state statues that dictate us to have signage that prohibit guns
86 on campus. Yet, the Program Plans never consider or talk about or include Security
87 Measures, education or training.
- 88 13. We need drills or training on handling Active Shooter, Earthquakes and Fires. Whenever
89 we plan these training such on October 17, a survey is provided to assess effectiveness
90 of the drill. However, Staff are not provided with the results, weaknesses, strengths or
91 solutions. Safety Drills are performed, not so much to safeguard Students, Staff and
92 Faculty, but only to meet the Accreditation standards and show they were conducted.
- 93 14. Library staff member mentioned an incident at the Circulation desk where the
94 management refused to provide the picture of a threatening individual, because it would
95 violate his/her privacy. We never get to know when someone is a known threat.

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- 96 15. A student's Bomb Threat came in by way of Facebook, and there was no email to inform
97 the students, Faculty or Staff. We came to work. Why were we not informed?
98 16. R&D Staff stated that due to the recent school shootings, asked about an Active Shooter
99 training, where we get mixed messages. Run, Hide, Fight, when we are actually fish in a
100 barrel. Chief stated that SWAT teams are deployed, and then they are debriefed, to see,
101 learn, report and work on improvement. Hope to implement that here.
102 17. We have no emergency kits on campus. We can purchase our own. Trauma, 1st Aid Kit.
103 We need a case scenario event to show us all how to maneuver emergencies on the hill.
104 Now, we have EMTs on campus.
105 18. Emergency Buckets are no longer updated. They need flashlight with new batteries,
106 silver blankets, and replace batteries when expired. A& R Staff were proactive in
107 bringing in their own kit. They feel that at night as a Department, they are on their own.
108 19. Ruben Agus brought up the catastrophe containers with 5 years' supplies, but no one
109 knows who has or where we can find a key for them. We need to know or have a key in
110 each Department. An Employee stated that the District is responsible for our safety and
111 they are not doing it for our sake, but only for the check mark on a report for the state
112 20. BEC/BELs need additional training and proper equipment to act on that role for the
113 college. When someone was smoking in the restroom and the fire alarms were triggered,
114 no one's Radio would work. We changed from Ch. 3 to Ch 1 and all we got was dead
115 air. Health Office Staff found that Ch. 4 is the Main channel but no one was informed.
116 Why is the District Management waiting on something wrong to happen before they take
117 the correct and immediate action?
118 21. Custodial Staff on the night shift need to be trained in case of an emergency. They only
119 have a new Custodial Lead without a Manager and Security Guards who are only here
120 to observe and report to help in an emergency or catastrophic situation. Who do they
121 call? Can they leave the Campus in an emergency when there is no one to make the
122 final decision? What if someone is hurt in an earthquake or other catastrophic even and
123 assistance is not forthcoming?
124 22. At night and on weekends coyotes and racoons on campus pose a threat. They are
125 hungry and thirsty. It was reported that they kept coming by a classroom on Saturday
126 and what if they attack a Student, Faculty or Staff?
127 23. Finally, Secretary Ramirez, busy taking notes, informed the Chief and Brian to report
128 about Custodian Employees having to clean blood after someone's mass bleeding in the
129 LRC, which required an evacuation of everyone there, but the event was not reported,
130 and Custodial Staff, who are NOT trained and are ill-equipped to clean hazardous
131 materials, blood being one, were put to clean it up. This also happened years ago when
132 we had a student jump off the Library tower. Our Classified Staff are not trained and they
133 are not equipped with the right tools to clean the remains after the body was collected.
134 Not only that, Staff were never given any grief support to deal with what is now
135 considered PTSD or counseling of any kind.

136 Chief Couso-Vasquez remembered having an Ambassador Program with Students, Faculty and
137 Staff volunteers who cut back weed and brush that can become a fire hazard, patrolled the
138 college at night to report where lighting was needed, and since we cannot use radios to report,
139 now we can make a phone call to Security to report immediately as needed. However, since
140 Security is not trained to address all these issues, we would need to train them to report all
141 incidents to the proper channels including calling 911 directly to get immediate response from
142 the Sheriff, Fire Department or Ambulance services as needed, instead of waiting for
143 Administration and/or Management to make a decision, which could take too long and could
144 cost us Student, Faculty or Staff lives. Staff need to be proactive, see something do something.

145 **Adjournment:** President Rivera adjourned the meeting at **1:00 p.m.**