



## Item No. 7 Town of Atherton

### **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – STUDY SESSION (REPORT #2)**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER**

**FROM: STEVE McCULLEY, CHIEF OF POLICE**

**DATE: JANUARY 13, 2021**

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO OVER-HIRE A POLICE TRAINEE  
POSITION AT THE ACADEMY**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council provide staff with direction regarding the ability to over-hire but not over-fill police officer positions within the Police Department.

### **BACKGROUND**

Hiring Police Officers is a task that takes several months to accomplish with the background investigation process, medical and psychological exams and the cost that equates to several thousand dollars. In addition to the hiring portion, finding an applicant that can pass all of the above and is suitable to work for the Police Department is a never ending. Previous life choices, mistakes, and some offenses are some we cannot overlook during the hiring process.

When we find an applicant that checks all of the boxes, and we are set to offer a confirmed offer of employment, we want to proceed with that applicant in a timely manner as other agencies are also competing for the same personnel. However, present philosophy and policy prohibits the Town from investing time and resources into a potential candidate, to include a commitment for academy costs, if the Town does not have a vacancy target for the candidate. That means that a position has to be physically vacant in order to support a candidate. If the Town is aware of a pending vacancy, the Town can open a recruitment and conduct a recruitment process but cannot make an offer until the position is physically vacant. Supporting a candidate through the Police Academy means that the Town has to hire the individual as a Police Trainee. This step has not been undertaken absent a physical vacancy target for the candidate.

During 2021, we anticipate the retirement of at least one Officer and one Sergeant. There will be a promotion list of Officer candidates for Sergeant to fill the Sergeant vacancy when it becomes available. However, the officer position would need to be filled externally.

## **ANALYSIS**

In the past year, the Police Department has filled six (6) vacant officer positions. The ability to maintain full staffing (21 sworn) continues to be a challenge. If given the ability to over-hire using the Police Trainee position and sending such a recruit to the April 2021 Academy (graduation in October 2021), the Department would be able to backfill the coming Officer position (assuming successful graduation).

We have a reservation in the April 2021 Police Academy at the College of San Mateo for one Police Trainee. The candidate has passed all steps in the background investigation process and is eager to begin as a Police Officer for the Town. Based on his previous life experience in the military, we have complete confidence that the trainee will succeed and become the next member of the Police Department in October of 2021. Our goal is to get ahead of the opening before they become more than 1 thus increasing our overtime budget and spreading staff thin by having to work additional shifts and remove specialty positions. As a small agency our specialty positions are an important factor in adding experience, knowledge and a morale boost. These are attributes that play a large role in retaining our current workforce.

## **POLICY FOCUS**

The additional over-hire will keep us moving in the direction of alleviating the gaps in our staffing thus lowering the impact to patrol and the use of overtime funds to fill for vacant shifts.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The calculated salary and benefits for the over hire position for a full year is \$142,534. This includes serving as a Police Trainee for 6 months and Step A for Police Officer for the remaining 6 months. This is based on a PEPRP PERS member. Yearly salary is \$101,269 and Yearly benefits of \$41,266. This equates to a monthly salary and benefits of \$11,877.83.

Annual Salary (6 months) Trainee	\$47,365
Annual Salary (6 months) Step A Officer	\$53,904
Salary TOTAL	\$101,269
Benefits Total	\$41,266
<b>TOTAL Salary &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>\$142,535</b>

The Police Department is able to absorb the costs of the salary and benefits from April – June 2021 in the current FY 20-21 budget under Regular Salaries. From July 1, 2021, FY 21-22 budget will reflect the above costs but note once the Trainee has completed the Police Academy in October, one of our Sergeants will retire. This will open an internal promotion to Sergeant and leave no gaps with the hire of the Police Trainee. The three months over hire gap in FY 21-22 is estimated at \$35,631 for the Police Trainee position.

In the past FY, our overtime costs have been high due to reduced staff.

FY	Overtime
16-17	\$410,010
17-18	\$393,463
18-19	\$491,977
19-20	\$467,730

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town’s electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town’s electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders – to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire District, service provides (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

**COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL**

This item \_\_\_ has or  X  has not been before a Town Committee or Commission.

- Audit/Finance Committee (meets every other month)
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (meets as needed)
- Civic Center Advisory Committee (meets as needed)
- Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)
- Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)
- Planning Commission (meets each month)
- Rail Committee (meets every other month)
- Transportation Committee (meets every other month)
- Tree Committee (meets each month)

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Police Staffing Proposal Spreadsheet

*Police Department Staffing proposal FY 21-22*

**Additional Position Code Enforcement/Dispatcher**

Salary & Benefit Range	Step A	Step E	Step A	Step E
	<b>FY2021-PEPRA</b>	<b>FY2021-PEPRA</b>	<b>FY2021-Classic</b>	<b>FY2021-Classic</b>
Salary	84,678	102,927	84,678	102,927
Benfits	37,059	39,308	39,258	41,980
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>121,737</b>	<b>142,235</b>	<b>123,936</b>	<b>144,907</b>

**Police Trainee/Officer Overhire Position-PEPRA member**

Overhire position for 3 months FY21-22	35,631	35,631	35,631	35,631
<b>Additional 1 year cost of above postions</b>	<b>157,368</b>	<b>177,866</b>	<b>159,567</b>	<b>180,538</b>

**Position of Communications Supervisor over Lead Dispatcher (Classic Member)**

Lead Dispatcher	Step A Lead Dispatcher	Step A Communications Supervisor	
Dispatcher Salary	85,130	115,000	Increase Differential
Lead Dispatcher Special Assignment	4,257		
Total Salary	89,387	115,000	25,613
Benefits	40,612	44,620	4,008
<b>Total Salary &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>129,998</b>	<b>159,620</b>	<b>29,622</b>

Lead Dispatcher	Step E Lead Dispatcher	Step E Communications Supervisor	
Dispatcher Salary	103,476	130,000	Increase Differential
Lead Dispatcher Special Assignment	5,174		
Total Salary	108,650	130,000	21,350
Benefits	43,626	46,967	3,341
<b>Total Salary &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>152,276</b>	<b>176,967</b>	<b>24,691</b>

Yearly additional costs to the Department for Communications Supervisor	Salary Range		Step A	Step E
	Step A	Step E		
	25,613	21,350	25,613	21,350
	4,008	3,341	4,008	3,341
	<b>29,622</b>	<b>24,691</b>	<b>29,622</b>	<b>24,691</b>

**Total Yearly Increase to the Police Department Year 1**      **186,990**      **202,557**      **189,188**      **205,229**

Code Enforcement/Dispatcher Hyrbid/Overhire/Communications Supervisor

**Total Yearly Increase to the Police Department Year 2**      **151,359**      **166,926**      **153,557**      **169,598**

Code Enforcement/Dispatcher Hyrbid/Communications Supervisor Positions Only