



## Item No. 7 Town of Atherton

### CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – STUDY SESSION (REPORT #4)

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

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

**DATE:** JANUARY 13, 2021

**SUBJECT:** AUTHORIZATION TO CREATE A DISPATCHER / CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER POSITION

### RECOMMENDATION

Consider a proposal to create a new position classification titled Dispatcher/Code Enforcement Officer for inclusion in the FY 2021/22 Budget.

### BACKGROUND

In 2014, the contract position of Code Enforcement Officer was eliminated, and the Council authorized a full-time, limited-term Code Enforcement Officer position within the Police Department. The position began as a 3-year limited-term position; but, in 2017 the City Council removed the limited term provision for the position.

The FY 2020/21 budget for Code Enforcement services is approximately \$139,383 with approximately 39 % of those costs being offset through revenue from citations and fines. In the previous years, fees generated have totaled \$12,000 to \$84,200.

<b>FY</b>	<b>Admin Citations</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>\$76,700</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>\$84,200</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>\$44,900</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>\$31,700</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>\$28,600</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>\$18,500</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>\$12,363</b>

### ANALYSIS

The need for Code Enforcement Services continues to grow due to a rising increase in the number of code violations that affect the quality of life of Atherton residents. The Town's Code Enforcement Officer often serves as a mediator between residents when disputes/issues arise. Code

Enforcement personnel can often be more effective at intervening in situations where a uniformed officer could be perceived as a more aggressive response.

The Town has made positive strides in responding to code and ordinance violations within our community. However, the Town's single Code Enforcement Officer is often overwhelmed by the volume of emails, phone messages, and other correspondence and the time required to respond and effectively communicate and problem-solve with community members. Staff believes that additional support will strengthen services delivery, provide continuity of service and improve the Department's ability to address chronic issues.

The creation of a hybrid position of Dispatcher/Code Enforcement Officer will provide much needed support to Code Enforcement as well as provide an opportunity for better coverage within the Town's Dispatch Center for required breaks, training and leaves. It will also provide additional counter support due to the increased amount of foot traffic into the Police Department for resident assistance, police reports, alarm assistance, etc.

It is recommended that Council authorize the new position for inclusion in the FY 2021/22 Budget.

### **POLICY FOCUS**

By adding the newly created position, the Police Department will be able to put more emphasis on quality of life issues via Code Enforcement in Town and add another trained Dispatcher in the Communications Center. The City Council should focus its policy discussion on the short and long-term cost of additional enforcement and support as well as the ability to provide assistance to the community through the additional non-sworn position.

The Town's Dispatch and Communications Center is staffed with one Dispatcher for each 12-hour shift – 6 am to 6 pm and 6 pm to 6 am. Because there is no on shift backup, the On-Duty Dispatcher may not get the necessary lunch or restroom breaks he/she needs during the shift. Other staff in the Police Department can cover in the Dispatch and Communications Center for a brief restroom break; but, due to the State of California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) guidelines, no sworn personnel have the 120 Hour Basic Dispatch Course or the 4+ month Communication Training Officer Program to cover a shift for one hour or allow the dispatcher to leave the agency.

This new position would be able to provide the necessary and required full lunch breaks, and shift coverage as needed without impacts to other police department assigned positions and duties.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The FY 2020/21 salary range for the Town's Code Enforcement Officer position is \$84,226 to \$102,377 per year. The FY 2020/21 salary range for the Town's Police Dispatcher/Records Assistant is \$85,130 to \$103,476 per year.

Staff recommends that a Dispatcher/Code Enforcement Officer position be slotted in between the Code Enforcement Officer and the Dispatcher salary range for equitable compensation for the additional dispatch training and responsibility.

The anticipated salary range would be \$84,678 to \$102,927. Benefit costs for the additional position would be approximately \$37,059 to \$41,980. The total cost for the position for FY 21-22 would range from \$121,737 to \$144,907 and would be an additional positional cost to the department. For analysis purposes, this would equate to a range of \$365,211 to 434,721 in additional costs in the department over a 3-year limited term.

### **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 providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

### **COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL**

This item  has or  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. Code Enforcement Job Description
2. Dispatcher / Records Assistant Job Description

September 2014  
FLSA: NON-EXEMPT

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT/COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICER**

### **DEFINITION**

Under general supervision, performs a variety of non-sworn office and field duties in support of public education and enforcement of codes, ordinances and laws; and performs related work as required.

### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED**

Receives immediate supervision from the Chief of Police or his/her designee. In addition receive general direction from the Public Works, Building, and Planning Departments.

### **CLASS CHARACTERISTICS**

This single-position class provides expert technical assistance to the Town in the area of code enforcement and police support duties that do not require performance by a sworn police officer. Responsibilities include Code Enforcement and Community Services Officer duties.

Code Enforcement Officer duties consist of continuous responsibilities for applying current provisions of the Atherton Municipal Code to given situations, eliciting the voluntary improvement of properties, buildings, and landscaping, conducting education and outreach programs for individuals and groups, contacting and responding to residents regarding code enforcement issues either in person, by written correspondence or citation, assisting the City Attorney's Office in the preparation of cases for court action, preparing routine and complex records, logs, and reports and responsibility for work associated with other code enforcement activity.

Community Services Officer duties may include taking reports on property crimes that previously happened, making home security checks, assisting with the maintenance and recording of property and evidence, crime prevention, school and court liaison, crime statistics preparation, coordination of vehicle maintenance and various responsible officer support duties. These responsibilities are intended to provide a familiarity with law enforcement functions, activities and procedures, but the class is not necessarily intended to be a training class for a sworn classification.

### **EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)**

*Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.*

Code Enforcement:

- Investigate allegations of violations of municipal code provisions which include, but are not limited to signs, parking, building and construction, right-of-way, refuse bins, zoning, nuisance and other property-related regulations concerned with assuring the health and safety of property.
- Contact responsible individuals in person and in writing and perform follow-up investigations to see that remedial action is taken.
- Coordinate and assist in sections and dispositions of cases with public works, building, planning, park and recreation, city attorney, police, and any other departments or agencies necessary.
- Develop and implement effective public education strategies concerning codes and ordinance; assist in carrying out those strategies.

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- Make presentations to community group, neighborhoods, schools, council and committees.
- Prepare and update routine and complex records, logs and reports.
- Other duties as assigned.

Community Services Officer:

- May assist with duties related to the County Superior Court and/or the District Attorney's Office up to and including filing of criminal reports and citations, processing of warrants and subpoenas, and maintaining status and disposition records. Duties may require coordination with allied agencies.
- Responsible for all operations surrounding fleet services including, but not limited to maintenance, record-keeping, transport for services, cleaning, and coordination with DMV for proper registration etc.
- Assists in maintaining all property and evidence, following laws and procedures; ensures that the chain of evidence is maintained and that property and evidence is secured and disposed of in a proper manner.
- Follows up on residential alarm calls; advises citizens regarding home security; may take information from the public regarding thefts, accidents, lost and found property and other incidents that do not require the presence of a law enforcement officer at the scene;
- Prepares and processes a variety of reports and records, using various computer databases and processing programs by following established formats; distributes to the proper individual or agency, such as the District Attorney, Town Attorney, Probation Department, Sheriff's Office or court; files reports and maintains automated or manual logs of departmental actions.
- May process warrants and subpoenas, confirming information provided; distributes them to sworn personnel; maintains status and disposition records and notifies appropriate agencies as required.
- Other duties as assigned.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

**Knowledge of:**

- Municipal Code enforcement methods related to existing properties, techniques of property inspection, building tools and equipment; methods of construction
- Principals of code enforcement, zoning, land use and other municipal permitting and enforcement processes
- Principles and practices of investigation
- Elements of effective public education and community relations
- Basic computer software programs such as Microsoft word
- Basic functions, principles and practices of law enforcement agencies.
- Applicable regulations, policies and statutes.
- Business letter writing and the standard format for correspondence and reports.
- Business arithmetic.
- Correct English usage, including spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Standard office practices and procedures, including records management and the operation of standard office equipment.

**Ability to:**

- Represent Town in a positive manner
- Establish, maintain and foster cooperative working relations with others from diverse backgrounds, including elected officials, co-workers, and the public effectively and with courtesy, in person, via e-mail and over the phone.

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- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, by using proper English grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Learn and apply town codes, ordinances, laws and regulations pertaining to nuisance, property issues, zoning etc. with impartiality and efficiency
- Learn what evidence is necessary to present a case in a hearing or for court
- Understand legal descriptions and boundary maps of real property
- Work efficiently with other town departments

**Education and Experience:**

- Equivalent of a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts degree from an accredited college
- Minimum of three (3) years experience working in the area of code enforcement, community services, enforcement services, planning, or similarly related field with a public agency.
- Possession of an American Association of Code Enforcement certification within 12 months of appointment.
- Any combination of experience and education that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities would be qualifying.

**Licenses and Certifications:**

- Possession of an American Association of Code Enforcement certification within 12 months of appointment.
- Possession of, or ability to obtain, an appropriate, valid California Class C driver's license, which must be maintained as a condition of employment.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting, to inspect various Town locations, attend meetings and to operate a motor vehicle; strength to perform physical work in on an occasional basis; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups and over the telephone.

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, to inspect construction sites, including traversing uneven terrain, climbing ladders, stairs, and other temporary or construction access points, to operate a motor vehicle, and to visit various Town and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects weighing up to 25 pounds.

Must be willing to work overtime or respond off-hours to various emergency situations.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS**

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees also work in the field and be exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, road hazards, vibration, mechanical and/or electrical hazards, and hazardous physical substances and fumes. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

**DISPATCHER/RECORDS ASSISTANT****Definition**

Under general supervision, receives 911 police, alarm and medical emergency calls, answers non-emergency calls for public safety and other Town departments; provides a variety of office support work to public safety staff and the public; prepares, processes and distributes a variety of reports, records and other documents following standardized instructions; and performs related work as required.

**Class Characteristics**

This class provides non-sworn emergency dispatch and police records and related specialized office support work required for the Police Department. Responsibilities are centered on extensive contact with the public, in person and over the telephone, in both emergency and non-emergency situations to receive, transmit and provide factual information, forms and reports. The work involves coordinating interdepartmental coordination within the Town as well as with other agencies throughout the County. All activities must be performed within specified legal guidelines. This class is distinguished from other Town technical office support classes in that the work requires knowledge of law enforcement and dispatching policies and procedures in addition to standard office support skills. It further differs from Senior Dispatcher/Records Assistant in that the latter provides scheduling, training and work review to dispatch/records staff.

**Examples of Duties** (Illustrative Only)

- Receives and evaluates 911 police, alarm and medical emergency calls and related business calls for the Town during specified hours; dispatches appropriate public safety staff; provides information and/or transfers calls to the appropriate department, agency or response organization.
- Logs call data in a written or automated format; monitors calls after initial dispatch to provide additional coordination, support or information.
- Accesses federal, state and local law enforcement information data bases to obtain information regarding outstanding warrants, criminal history, records information and vehicle data, relays such information to sworn staff.
- Provides initial non-emergency contact with the public and representatives of other agencies for the requesting of police records or for fire or related services at a public counter or over the telephone; determines the nature of the contact; provides factual information regarding services, policies and procedures, or directs the caller to the proper individual or agency.
- Following specific legal guidelines, prepares and distributes copies of police and other reports to individuals and agencies requesting such reports; explains requirements and limitations and collects alarm fees, prepares receipts and balances fees for services.
- Assists in the preparation and processing of a variety of warrants, reports and records, using a word processor and/or typewriter and following established formats.
- Distributes reports and records to the proper individual or agency, such as the District Attorney, Town Attorney, Probation Department, Sheriff's Office or court, following established procedures.

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- Maintains accurate departmental records and files; researches and compiles information from such files;

**Qualifications**

**Knowledge of:**

- Terminology and procedures used in public safety dispatching.
- Operation of communications equipment, including multiple telephone lines and radio systems.
- Law enforcement document processing policies and procedures.
- Standard office practices and procedures, including filing and the operation of standard office equipment.
- Applicable regulations, policies and statutes.
- Business arithmetic.
- Correct English usage, including spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Computer applications related to the work.
- Record keeping and filing principles and practices.
- Techniques for dealing with and solving the problems presented by a variety of individuals from various socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, in person and over the telephone.

**Skill in:**

- Assessing and prioritizing emergency situations while remaining calm and using sound, independent judgment.
- Memorizing codes, names, street locations and other information.
- Attending to multiple activities simultaneously.
- Obtaining necessary information from individuals in stressful or emergency situations.
- Performing detailed and responsible office support work.
- Applying and explaining policies, procedures and regulations.
- Compiling and summarizing information to prepare clear and accurate reports.
- Maintaining accurate records and files.
- Understanding and following oral and written directions.
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of the work.
- Typing or word processing at a rate of 40 net words per minute.

**Education and Experience:**

Equivalent to graduation from high school and two years of any combination of dispatching, general office support, or secretarial experience, preferably in a law enforcement setting.

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**Physical Demands:**

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment; stamina to maintain attention to detail and work on a computer for an extended period of time; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone.

**Working Conditions:**

Must pass a detailed background investigation. May be required to work holidays, weekends and off-hours shifts.