



City Council

Agenda Item

Subject: Authorization for the Police Department to add one full-time Communications Officer Position in the 911 Center.

Meeting: City Council - Mar 21 2022

From: Tim Toomey, Chief of Police

SUGGESTED MOTION:

I move to approve the authorization for the Police Department to add one full-time Communications Officer Position in the 911 Center.

STAFF REFERENCE(S):

Connie Cutler

ATTACHMENT(S):

[One FT Communication Officer Justification - 030922](#)



Justification for one Full-Time Communications Officer Position
Watertown Police Department

TROY M. VANDUSEN

The Watertown Regional 911 Center is requesting authorization to add one full-time Communications Officer Position to their staff. This position would eliminate two existing part-time positions.

Currently, the Watertown Regional 911 Center has an authorized workforce consisting of a 911 Manager, 12 full-time Communications Officers and two part-time Communications Officers. The staff provides 24 hour-a-day emergency and non-emergency dispatching services to over 52,000 residents throughout our region.

Unfortunately, due to the demands involved in training and certifications it has become very difficult to effectively train and retain part-time employees. This has left us routinely short-staffed with part-time employees always in training or not lasting long enough to complete the extensive training program.

Since 2015, the 911 Center has hired 18 part-time employees. Out of those employees, only three lasted longer than one year. Four of them were hired full-time when those openings became available. These four employees have remained with us since being hired full-time.

Communications Officers undergo extensive in-house training that lasts approximately eight weeks for full-time and twelve weeks for part-time. At the conclusion of that training, the recruit must then attend a two-week telecommunicator certification course, followed by additional certification courses in Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) and Emergency Fire Dispatching. (EFD)

Conclusion

The Watertown Regional 911 Center understands that this additional full-time employee is a significant and reoccurring endeavor. We believe that adding a full-time employee is fiscally responsible. With this in mind, we have developed a way to absorb the cost without asking for an increase to the existing 2022 Budget. Currently, the 911 Center has budgeted \$57,650 to fund the two existing part-time positions for this year. In January the center also established its first ever non-emergency dispatch contract with a partner county. This has generated \$24,000 of unplanned revenue for the center in 2022. It is anticipated that this contract will be in place for several years to come. Our recommendation is to utilize part of the revenue generated from this contract, along with the budgeted part-time salary to fund the new full-time position at a cost of \$62,900. This amount includes salary and benefits.

According to employee history within the center, this full-time employee is likely to stay and become a long-term vested employee. This ultimately will help us reduce the costs associated with having to constantly train and replace those part-time employees.

Thank-you very much for your consideration of this request.