



City Council

Agenda Item

Subject: Authorization for the Police Department to hire a "Plus One" patrol officer.
Meeting: City Council - May 20 2024
From: Amanda Mack, City Manager

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Please see attached justification

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The position is already in the 2024 budget

STAFF RECOMMENDATION / SUGGESTED MOTION:

I move to approve the authorization for the Police Department to hire a "Plus One" full-time permanent officer due to staff shortages.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[2024 Plus One Justifcation 2](#)



Request for Budgetary Authorization - Increase in number of Sworn Police Officers

I am writing to propose an adjustment to our current budgetary authorization concerning the total number of sworn police officers within our department. Specifically, I am requesting an increase in our authorized strength by one additional position. This request is not made lightly; it is driven by a clear operational necessity, the significant time and investment required to train a police officer, and our commitment to maintaining public safety and effective law enforcement coverage for our community.

At the January 17, 2023 City Council meeting, the WPD was approved to hire a "Plus One" police officer to compensate for staff shortages. This allowed for a total of 41 sworn officers, with the understanding we would not backfill the "Plus One" if the 41st officer left the department. Unfortunately, after 37 weeks of training, one of the trainees we hired was unable to successfully pass the Police Training Officer (PTO) program. We now have 40 sworn officers, however one is still in training at the Law Enforcement Training Center.

Subsequently, a current patrol officer informed staff that he was going to be leaving the department to move out of state with his fiancée. His employment will terminate at the end of May, 2024. Interviews were conducted and a qualified candidate was selected and is now in the background check phase. Additional qualified candidates have applied and are being placed on a hiring list.

The WPD is requesting budgetary authorization to continue with the "Plus One" after considering the qualified candidates that were generated by the vacancy. Chief Finance Officer Bobzien confirmed that the "plus one" officer has been budgeted for 2024. We will be composing a request to possibly make this a permanent position for 2025. On average the PD is shorthanded at least two officers per year.

Below are just a few reasons to justify maintaining a "Plus One" sworn police officer.

Justification for Increase:

1. **Training and Onboarding Duration:** The process of recruiting, training, and fully integrating a new officer into our police department is both time-intensive and resource-heavy. It encompasses rigorous and extensive classroom education, practical exercises, and police training officer (PTO) programs, spanning several months to over a year. Once a solo officer, it takes additional time to acclimate fully and operate at peak efficiency.
2. **Operational Readiness:** By authorizing an additional position, we can better manage the inevitable gaps caused by National Guard deployments, retirements, resignations, or long-term leave. This foresight ensures that our operational readiness and capacity to serve the community are not compromised during such transitional periods.



3. **Proactive Planning for Community Growth:** Our community is growing both in population and complexity, leading to an increased demand for police services. To keep pace with this growth and maintain our standards of service, it is imperative that our department's strength not only matches current needs but is also poised to address future challenges.
4. **Cost Efficiency:** Investing in an additional officer now is a strategic move that anticipates and mitigates future staffing shortfalls. It allows us to distribute workload more evenly, prevent burnout among current officers, and reduce overtime expenses—a proactive approach that is both cost-effective and conducive to maintaining high morale and job satisfaction within the force.
5. **Enhanced Public Safety and Community Engagement:** With an additional officer, we can further enhance our community policing efforts, which are vital for building trust and collaboration with the community we serve. An increased presence allows for more proactive policing, crime prevention initiatives, and community engagement activities, directly contributing to a safer and more cohesive community environment.

In conclusion, the addition of one sworn police officer position is a strategic and necessary step to ensure our department remains agile, prepared, and fully capable of meeting the current and future needs of our community. I am confident that this request aligns with our shared commitment to public safety and fiscal responsibility. I look forward to discussing this proposal further.

Thank you for considering this critical request.

Tim Toomey
Chief of Police