



City Council

Agenda Item

Subject: Authorization for the reclassification of the Police Sergeant position from a grade 165 to a grade 170.

Meeting: City Council - Jan 21 2025

From: Kristen Bobzien, Interim City Manager/Chief Financial Officer

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Please see the attached document for background information.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

An approximate \$12,000.00 per year impact on the Police Department's personnel budget.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION / SUGGESTED MOTION:

I move to approve the reclassification of the Police Sergeant position from a grade 165 to a grade 170.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Sergeant Grade Justification](#)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Holien and City Council

FROM: Tim Toomey, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Sergeant Reclassification Request

DATE: January 13, 2025

Purpose

This memo seeks approval to adjust the starting salary for sergeants in the Watertown Police Department from grade 165 (\$70,179) to grade 170 (\$77,188). This increase aims to enhance competitiveness, recognize the critical responsibilities of the position, and support the department's recruitment and retention efforts. Currently, the WPD employs 7 Sergeants. According to Human Resources, the financial impact would be approximately \$12,000 per year. We anticipate this amount can be absorbed in our current budget.

Background

A recent analysis of sergeant salaries across 17 agencies in South Dakota reveals that Watertown PD currently ranks 11th, with a starting salary of \$70,179. The current pay scale hinders our ability to attract and retain experienced law enforcement professionals, jeopardizing the department's operational effectiveness.

Justification

1. Competitiveness and Market Position:

- Watertown's rank of 11th places the department in the lower tier of compensation, trailing agencies such as Aberdeen, Brookings, and Box Elder.
- Increasing the starting salary to \$77,188 would position Watertown PD at approximately 6th place, significantly improving our competitive standing.

2. Role and Responsibilities:

- Sergeants oversee police operations, manage critical incidents, and ensure public safety. They act as leaders within the department and liaisons with the community.
- These responsibilities demand experience, leadership, and accountability, which should be reflected in their compensation.

3. Recruitment and Retention:

- Higher-ranked agencies with more competitive salaries attract the most qualified candidates, leaving lower-paying agencies at a disadvantage.
- An increase in salary would enhance our ability to retain talented personnel and reduce turnover costs associated with recruitment and training.

4. Fairness and Morale:

- Adjusting the salary acknowledges the essential contributions of sergeants to the department and community, boosting morale and reinforcing the value placed on their service.

5. Cost Comparison:

- The proposed adjustment remains fiscally responsible, aligning with regional averages while ensuring Watertown PD remains competitive.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council approve the adjustment of the starting salary for sergeants to grade 170, increasing from \$70,179 to \$77,188. This adjustment is a critical step in maintaining the department's operational effectiveness and competitiveness in the state.

Conclusion

The proposed salary increase is a modest but necessary adjustment to address the challenges of recruitment, retention, and market competitiveness. It reflects the critical role sergeants play in ensuring public safety and upholding the values of the Watertown Police Department.

I appreciate your consideration of this proposal and am available to provide additional information or address any questions.

Sincerely,

Tim Toomey
Chief of Police
Watertown Police Department

CC: Kristen Bobzien, Chief Finance Officer
Darci Nichols, Human Resources Director



CITY OF
WATERTOWN
SOUTH DAKOTA

Starting Salary for Sergeant

Rank by Pay	Agency	Starting Salary	Per Hour	Rank by # of Officers
1	Sioux Falls PD	103,209	49.62	1
2	SDHP	86,923	41.79	
3	Aberdeen PD	84,136	40.45	3
4	Rapid City PD	78,603	37.79	2
5	Box Elder	77,812	37.41	11
	Watertown @ 170	77,188	37.11	
6	Pierre PD	75,940	36.51	7
7	Belle Fourche PD*	74,880	36.00	13
8	Brookings PD	71,895	35.42	5
9	Pennington County	72,800	35.00	
10	Mitchell PD	71,478	34.37	
11	Brandon PD	70,699	33.99	13
	Watertown @ Gr 165	70,179	33.74	4
12	Huron	70,158	33.73	9
13	Madison	69,284	33.31	13
14	Yankton	68,827	33.09	6
15	Spearfish PD	67,080	32.25	8
16	Vermillion	66,040	31.75	12
17	Sturgis	65,332	31.41	10

Starting Salary for Sergeant

