

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

LATOYA CANTRELL  
MAYOR

GILBERT MONTAÑO  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Amy Trepagnier, Director of Personnel  
Civil Service Department  
1340 Poydras St., Suite 900  
New Orleans, LA 70112

September 8, 2022

Director Trepagnier:

Over the past two and a half years, the City of New Orleans has experienced once-in-a-generation challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the so-called “great resignation,” double-digit inflation, and a universal reexamination of what employment, compensation, and benefits mean to workers in the twenty-first century. In response, the Cantrell Administration has asked for bold reforms to the City’s hiring and retention incentives, and, together with the Civil Service Commission, Civil Service staff and City Council, we delivered unprecedented retention payments, expanded recruitment options, a Cost of Living Payment, and structured raises for our employees. I sincerely appreciate the time and effort that the Civil Service staff and Commission have dedicated towards implementing solutions to the extraordinary challenges faced by the City and its employees. While the changes made to date represent significant progress, I write today because additional measures are critically needed to fully address the staffing crisis currently faced by the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD). Over the last two years, we have lost nearly 300 officers, and it has become increasingly difficult to attract qualified recruits to join NOPD. Existing NOPD staffing levels are perilously low, and core public safety functions will be compromised absent swift, consequential action.

Today, the Cantrell Administration proposed several critical reforms that will further our ongoing efforts to facilitate the recruitment and retention of officers at NOPD. This proposal is based on targeted discussions with NOPD leadership, law enforcement recruitment and retention experts, and police labor groups. The resulting package of solutions is designed to make workplace improvements directly responsive to officer feedback while also bringing the City’s compensation and incentive offerings to a competitive level.

Given the acute nature of the NOPD staffing crisis, it is critical that this proposal be heard at the September 19, 2022, Civil Service Commission meeting. Due to the urgent nature of the proposed changes, it would be greatly appreciated if an exception to the agenda deadline can be granted and the proposal, outlined below, can be placed on the agenda for the September 19th meeting.

### **1. Recruitment Incentives**

The labor market for new recruits and lateral transfers of uniformed officers is highly competitive across the country. Many jurisdictions are offering hiring incentives to attract new officers, including large cities like Seattle and Washington D.C. as well as local jurisdictions like Lake Charles. In order to remain competitive, the New Orleans Police Department would like to offer hiring incentives as well. The City is proposing a recruit incentive payment of \$20,000 to be paid at the completion of one year of service following successful completion of the formalized training program conducted by NOPD. This benefit would be in place for 2 years, starting with new recruits hired as of today. The



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proposed amendment to the previously adopted Special Rate of Pay: Police Retention Pay is enumerated in the attached Exhibit A.

**2. Additional Retention Incentives**

Earlier this year the Civil Service Commission took the bold step of passing retention payments based on a favorable advisory opinion issued by the Attorney General. The Administration would like to add an additional retention payment of \$10,000 to be paid three years after the passage of this proposal for all current NOPD officers that remain employed by NOPD and to be paid at the completion of the third year of service following completion of the formalized training program requirements for new recruits and lateral transfers. This proposed amendment to the previously adopted Special Rate of Pay: Police Retention Pay is also enumerated in the attached Exhibit A.

**3. Additional Guaranteed Pay Raises**

In addition to the service wide hiring rate increases and pay plan changes previously adopted by the Civil Service Commission on August 12, 2022, the Administration requests that the Civil Service Commission approve further hiring rate increases for 2024 and 2025 for commissioned officers and police recruits, so that they are guaranteed three consecutive 4-step pay increases over the next three years.

**4. Fully Funded Health Insurance**

Finally, the Administration is requesting the ability to fully fund our officers' healthcare. Under this proposal, the City would pay 100% of the employee and dependent/spousal premiums through 2025 for all commissioned officers and recruits, beginning with the first full pay period of 2023.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. My team and I look forward to working with you and the Commission in the coming days to ensure a common understanding of the challenges we face and solutions we are proposing to bolster the ranks of our frontline public safety agencies. We hope you will grant our request to hear these proposals on the nineteenth, and I stand ready to discuss at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Gilbert Montaña  
*Chief Administrative Officer*

CC: Commissioner Brittney Richardson  
Commissioner Clifton J. Moore, Jr.  
Commissioner John H. Korn  
Commissioner Mark Surprenant  
Commissioner Ruth White Davis  
Executive Counsel Christina Carroll



## EXHIBIT A

### **Amendment to Special Rate of Pay: Police Retention Pay**

Amendments added are underlined.

#### **Special Rate of Pay: Police Retention Pay**

##### POLICE RETENTION PAY

Employees in the classification of Police Officer, Senior Police Officer, Police Corporal, Police Sergeant, Police Lieutenant, Police Captain, and Police Major are eligible for a special rate of compensation upon completion of a specific number of years of service with the New Orleans Police Department.

##### Years of Service Retention Pay

Five Years \$5,000

Ten Years \$5,000

Fifteen Years \$5,000

Twenty Years \$5,000

1. Employees are eligible to receive each level of retention pay.
2. Retention pay is paid in a lump sum to be paid out at the end of the first complete pay period after the employee reaches the specified number of years of service, provided that no payment is made until one calendar year from the effective date of this amendment.
3. The years of service do not need to be contiguous, but all credited time must be in an eligible classification employed by the New Orleans Police Department.
4. One year after the passage of this amendment to the pay plan, all eligible officers shall receive retention pay equivalent to the cumulative amount due from their years of service. For example:
  - a. A Police Officer at the time of the passage of this amendment has six years of service with NOPD. Twelve months after the passage of this amendment that officer will receive \$5,000. That officer will be eligible for another \$5,000 payment as soon as they reach 10 years on the force.
  - b. A Senior Police Officer at the time of the passage of this amendment has nine and a half years of service with NOPD. Twelve months after the passage of this amendment that officer will have ten and a half years of service and will receive \$10,000. That officer will be eligible for another \$5,000 payment as soon as they reach 15 years on the force.
5. Additionally, one year after the passage of this amendment to the pay plan, all officers who have at least one year of service and fewer than five years of service, will receive a \$5,000 payment which will serve as their retention payment for five years of service. Any officer who receives this initial payment will be ineligible to receive an additional payment upon reaching five years of service but will be eligible for payments upon reaching ten years of service.
6. To fight a severe staffing shortage by attracting and retaining new officers, all NOPD officers hired between September 8, 2022 and September 8, 2024 shall receive a retention payment of \$20,000 if

they remain employed with NOPD for one year following completion of the formalized training program conducted by NOPD. The \$20,000 retention payment is paid in a lump sum to be paid out at the end of the first complete pay period one year after the employee has completed the appropriate formalized training program.

7. In addition, all NOPD officers hired between September 8, 2022 and September 8, 2024 shall receive an additional \$10,000 retention payment if they remain employed with NOPD for three years after completion of the appropriate formalized training program conducted by NOPD. The \$10,000 retention payment is paid in a lump sum to be paid out at the end of the first complete pay period one year after the employee has completed the appropriate formalized training program.
8. To fight a severe staffing shortage by retaining current officers and recruits, all NOPD officers and recruits that are employed with NOPD as of September 8, 2022 shall receive an additional \$10,000 retention payment if they remain employed with NOPD through December 1, 2025. The \$10,000 retention payment is paid in a lump sum to be paid out at the end of the first complete pay period after December 1, 2025.