



Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Councilmember Pete Constant

Subject: INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR
SJPD RE-HIRES & LATERAL
HIRES

Date: August 30, 2013

Approved:

RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that the City Council:

1. Approve the memorandum submitted by Mayor Reed and Councilmember Liccardo regarding developing a strategy for the restoration of police staffing.
2. Direct the City Manager to present a Police Officer Re-Hire and Lateral Hiring Incentive Program that would:
 - a. Provide a Re-Hire Signing Bonus for any former San José police offer who left the SJPD between January 1, 2012 and August 30, 2013 and would like to return to employment with the SJPD.
 - i. The signing bonus should be substantial, reflecting up to 50% of the savings realized by not putting a new hire through training, e.g., police academy, in-house academy, and the full field-training program.
 - ii. The signing bonus should allow a choice for the re-hired officer to accept the bonus immediately upon re-hire or defer a portion of the incentive - subject to IRS limitations - into a city sponsored deferred compensation program.
 - b. Provide a Lateral Hire signing bonus for any applicant who meets the lateral officer hiring requirements, as indicated above, modified if necessary due to a difference in cost savings.

BACKGROUND

Public safety is a core responsibility of local government and must be a priority of this Council as the City's financial situation improves and new sources of revenue are discussed. I support the memorandum presented by Mayor Reed and Councilmember Liccardo regarding the development of a strategy for the restoration of police staffing. This discussion is an important step in restoring the level of essential police services in San José.

In June 2006, the Mayor directed the Police Department to produce a five year staffing plan due to concerns over low staffing and rising crime rates. Now, in 2013, we find ourselves far below the staffing levels that generated the original concerns and far below what was recommended for the present.¹

Through years of budget deficits, the City of San José continues to struggle with the impacts of a long-lasting recession, where the primary method of balancing the budget has been through service reductions and employee position eliminations. There is no doubt that these actions have severely affected our employees, residents, and businesses. And unlike many other city services, changes in police staffing affect everyone. Reductions in police services equate to slower response times throughout the city, less time for investigations, fewer perpetrators arrested, and rising crime throughout virtually every neighborhood in San José.

The memorandum submitted by Mayor Reed and Councilmember Liccardo provides a path to examine how we will be able to financially commit to funding this pressing need. Unfortunately, even when we are able to commit the financial resources for hiring the needed officers, we are faced with the challenges of getting officers trained and on the street providing the public safety services we all want. It takes a long time to prepare someone to be a street-ready police officer. To complete the process of recruitment, application, backgrounding, hiring, police academy, and field training it can take up to one and a half years.

Our police chief has told us there is a maximum throughput capacity, and that even reaching this capacity with the financial resources we have, we will struggle to add any meaningful number of new officers to the streets.

While we acknowledge that large numbers of officers have left the city due to retirement and resignation, we also know that several officers have returned to the SJPD. There are other officers who have left for other agencies that have expressed an interest in returning as well. Developing a Re-Hire Incentive Program will potentially make it easier for those officers to return.

The Re-Hire Incentive Program and Lateral Incentive Program proposed will allow the City to more quickly fill current vacancies by:

- Providing a clear incentive for officers interested in joining/re-joining SJPD.
- Providing significant budget savings in the training of street-ready officers.
- Providing street-ready officers to be placed on beat patrol in a fraction of the time required for new officers.

If this program is successfully implemented, it could save tens of thousands of dollars for each new hire. These incentive programs should remain in effect at least until the police department reaches the 1,250 officers outlined in Mayor Reed and Councilmember Liccardo's memo.

I look forward to input from my colleagues, staff, and the Police Department as we continue to make public safety the number one priority in San José.

ⁱ As I previously discussed in my June 13, 2011 memorandum (http://www3.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/Agenda/20110614/20110614_0901att8.pdf), the Mayor's June Budget Message for FY 2006-07 directed the police department to complete a five year staffing plan due to concerns over low staffing and trend of rising crime rates. As a result, the San José Police Department Five Year Staffing Plan (http://www.sjpd.org/records/5_Year_Staffing_Plan_OCR.pdf) was released on November 17, 2006, and was subsequently approved by the City Council. The conclusion of the staffing plan was that the SJPD would require 332 additional officers above the FY 2006-07 authorized staffing level of 1,353 officers, for a total of 1,685 officers, to effectively address the city's growth and adequately provide for the public's safety by FY 2011-12. The City currently budgets only 1,109 officers and only 988 positions are filled with street-ready officers. That means San José is currently 697 officers below targeted levels.