



CITY OF COSTA MESA

Agenda Report

77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

File #: 24-351

Meeting Date: 9/17/2024

TITLE:

APPROVAL OF SIDE LETTER WITH THE COSTA MESA CITY EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION REGARDING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU AND UPDATES TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT HIRING AND REFERRAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER'S DEPARTMENT - HUMAN RESOURCES
DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: KASAMA LEE, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

CONTACT INFORMATION: KASAMA LEE, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER (714) 754-5169

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Approve and Adopt the Side Letter with the City Employees Association.
2. Approve and Adopt Resolution Number 2024-XX renaming Communications classifications and updating pay rates.
3. Approve and Adopt Resolution Number 2024-XX establishing the Reserve Senior Public Safety Dispatcher.
4. Approve the certified Fiscal Impact Analysis.
5. Authorize the City Manager and members of the City's Negotiation Team to execute the Side Letter documents.
6. Approve an appropriation increase of \$319,000 in the FY 2024/2025 Budget for year one of the one-time incentives for the retention and retroactive overtime costs and the new Hiring and Referral Incentive Program for Police Officers and Dispatchers.
7. Approve an appropriation increase of \$270,650 in the FY 2024/2025 Budget for recurring costs due to compensation adjustments for the Public Safety Dispatchers.

BACKGROUND:

The Telecommunications Bureau in the Police Department provides citywide 911 and dispatch services to the City of Costa Mesa via a centralized, computer-aided Communications Dispatch Center that receives citizen requests for emergency fire, paramedics, and police services. The

Bureau also provides medical pre-arrival instructions using Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) procedures and provides a means of contact for emergency Public Services, Water District Services, Animal Services, and Orange Coast College Security outside of normal business hours. The Bureau is currently budgeted at 21 full-time communications employees in the classifications of Communications Officer, Senior Communications Officer and Communications Supervisor.

The Bureau currently has six full-time vacancies in addition to a number of employees currently out on leave or under work restrictions. In the past 12 years, the Bureau has hired 46 full-time employees, and of these 46 hires, only nine remain as full-time employees resulting in an 80% turnover rate. The high turnover is a result of employees converting to part-time status or leaving for other local agencies due to the high workload or inability to complete the probationary period due to the rigorous and complex training period.

ANALYSIS:

The City and the Costa Mesa City Employees Association (CMCEA) held several collaborative meetings to address recruitment and retention issues. The results of these meetings have been compiled in a proposed Side Letter of Agreement (Attachment I).

The following are the key provisions of the negotiated Side Letter of Agreement:

- **Classification Updates** - Renaming classifications from “Communications” to “Public Safety Dispatch” to coincide with job functions and industry standards and realigning job functions within the current classifications:
 - “Communications Officer” will be renamed to “Public Safety Dispatcher” and will be responsible for call-taking and Fire dispatch functions.
 - “Senior Communications Officer” will be renamed to “Senior Public Safety Dispatcher” and will be responsible for call-taking, Fire dispatch and Police dispatch functions.
 - “Communications Supervisor” will be renamed to “Public Safety Dispatch Supervisor.”
- **Compensation Updates** - Adding special training assignment pay and addressing compaction.
 - Creation of a training officer assignment and internal selection process and adding special assignment pay of 12.5% for all hours worked as a training officer.
 - Effective September 22, 2024 - 12.5% adjustment and removal of 5% move up pay for Public Safety Dispatch Supervisor (net 7.5% increase) to address compaction with the training officer.
- **Retention Bonus** - Adding a \$15,000 one-time retention bonus for current full-time employees.
 - \$7,500 paid upon Council approval
 - \$7,500 paid one year following initial payment
- **Overtime** - Adding an additional overtime benefit if staffing falls below 18 full-time, active, fully

trained employees.

- Effective June 18, 2023 - Additional ½ time at base rate for all hours worked above 60 physical hours.
- PT to FT Conversion - For employees who convert from PT to FT status.
 - Waiver of probationary period

In addition to the proposed CMCEA Side Letter, the staff is also recommending the following updates to part-time Communications staff:

- Creating a Reserve Senior Public Safety Dispatcher classification
- Adding special training assignment pay of 12.5% for all hours worked as a training officer similar to the full-time benefit.

In order to enhance our recruitment efforts, the Human Resources Division and the Police Department have also implemented a Hiring and Referral Incentive Program for Lateral Police Officers, Entry Level Police Recruits and Lateral and Entry Level Dispatchers. This is a two-year pilot program to attract entry level and lateral candidates to apply to the City of Costa Mesa. Many agencies in Orange County and other surrounding counties have implemented hiring incentives starting at \$5,000 - \$25,000 and even as high as \$40,000 and \$100,000 for Police Recruit/Police Officers. A few agencies have implemented hiring incentives for Public Safety Dispatchers. The program also incentivizes employees to refer applicants to the City for these hard-to-fill positions. The program includes the following incentives:

Lateral Police Officer Hiring Incentive - \$25,000

- 1st installment - \$7,500 upon hire
- 2nd installment - \$7,500 upon completion of Field Training Program
- 3rd installment - \$10,000 upon completion of probationary period

Entry Level Police Recruit/Non-Lateral Officer Hiring Incentive - \$10,000

- 1st installment - \$3,000 upon completion of academy (Recruit) or upon hire (Non-Lateral)
- 2nd installment - \$3,000 upon completion of Field Training Program
- 3rd installment - \$4,000 upon completion of probationary period

Lateral Public Safety Dispatcher Hiring Incentive - \$15,000

- 1st installment - \$5,000 upon hire
- 2nd installment - \$5,000 upon completion of one year of employment
- 3rd installment - \$5,000 upon completion of probationary period

Entry Level Public Safety Dispatcher Hiring Incentive - \$10,000

- 1st installment - \$5,000 upon hire
- 2nd installment - \$5,000 upon completion of probationary period

Employee Referral Incentive - \$2,000

- 1st installment - \$1,000 upon hire of referred applicant
- 2nd installment - \$1,000 upon referred applicant's completion of probationary period

Staff recommends the Council approve the pilot program for two years through fiscal year 25/26 and appropriate \$400,000 to include approximately \$300,000 in hiring incentives (for both entry level and lateral hires) for Police Officer/Recruit and \$100,000 in hiring incentives for Public Safety Dispatcher.

Approval of the proposed Side Letter and the Hiring and Referral Incentive Program will assist in attracting entry level and lateral candidates for the Police Officer and Dispatcher positions.

ALTERNATIVES:

The parties to the side letter agreement considered a variety of issues in the context of good faith negotiations in accordance with Government Code Section 3500, et seq. (Meyer-Milias-Brown Act). The Side Letter represents the successful conclusion of labor negotiations, and alternatives need not be considered as a result of collaborative efforts.

FISCAL REVIEW:

The estimated annual ongoing impact of the Public Safety Dispatch compensation adjustments are \$485,219. In FY 2024-25, the estimated pro-rated impact is \$270,650.

The cost of the one-time retention bonus for Dispatchers is \$105,000 in FY 2024-25. Staff is also requesting a one-time retroactive pay for overtime worked in excess of 60 hours in FY 2023-24 up to the most current payroll, of an estimated \$14,000. In addition, the proposed one-time Hiring and Referral Incentive Pilot Program is estimated to cost \$200,000 in FY 2024-25 covering hiring incentives for both Police Officers and Dispatch Positions. The total for these one-time costs in FY 2024-25 is \$319,000, for the first series of payments and the same amount for year two of the payments. The City Manager's Contingency funds for FY 2024-25 of \$500,000 and current Citywide salary savings are sufficient to support all of the recommended costs.

Future years' recurring costs will be included in each years' annual budget making process.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City's special counsel, Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (LCW) and City Attorney's Office have reviewed the agreements and resolutions and this report and approved them as to form.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

The proposed updates support the City's Strategic Plan Goals to recruit and retain high quality staff and strengthen the Public's Safety and Improve the Quality of Life.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Approve and Adopt the Side Letter with the City Employees Association.
2. Approve and Adopt Resolution Number 2024-XX renaming Communications classifications and updating pay rates.
3. Approve and Adopt Resolution Number 2024-XX establishing the Reserve Senior Public Safety Dispatcher.
4. Approve the Fiscal Impact Analysis.
5. Authorize the City Manager and members of the City's Negotiation Team to execute the Side Letter documents.
6. Approve an appropriation increase of \$319,000 in the FY 2024/2025 for year one of the one-time incentives for the retention and retroactive overtime costs and the new Hiring and Referral Incentive Program.
7. Approve an appropriation increase of \$270,650 in the FY 2024/2025 for recurring costs due to compensation adjustments for the Police Department dispatch staff.