



DATE: May 8, 2018

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: City Manager/Human Resources

TITLE: **Adopt Resolutions to Amend Compensation for Emergency Communications Center Personnel, Execute a Side Letter with Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 521, and Amend the City's Hourly Salary Plan**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager or His Designee to Pay a One-Time, Lump-Sum Bonus to Regular (Full-Time and Part-Time) Employees in the Positions of Public Safety Dispatcher II, Public Safety Dispatcher III, Lead Public Safety Dispatcher, and Communications Operations Supervisor, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).
2. Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager or His Designee to Amend by a Side Letter the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 521, and the City of Mountain View, for the Period of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020 to Establish Communications Training Officer Pay and Extend the Probationary Period for Public Safety Dispatcher Is, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 2 to the Council report).
3. Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager or His Designee to Revise the City's Hourly Salary Plan to Establish Overtime Pay for Qualified Hourly Public Safety Dispatcher IIs Working Full-Time for Other Agencies, Establish Communications Training Officer Pay for Qualified Hourly Public Safety Dispatcher IIs Assigned as Communications Training Officers, and Reclassify the Hourly Lead Public Safety Dispatcher Position to Hourly Public Safety Dispatcher III, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 3 to the Council report).

BACKGROUND

The City's Emergency Communications Center (ECC or Center) dispatches Police, Fire, EMS, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and after-hours Public Works response units and processes over 132,000 inbound and outbound calls each year. The ECC's ongoing staffing includes 14 personnel in the positions of Public Safety

Dispatcher I, II, III, and Lead who are assigned to take calls and dispatch emergency response units.

The ECC is experiencing a significant staffing and training challenge which threatens to impact the effective operation of the Center. These issues are not unique to Mountain View in that dispatch is a difficult and stressful profession, and it is not unusual among public safety agencies to have difficulty attracting, training, and retaining dispatchers. Of the Center's 14 positions, two are currently vacant, one is not staffed due to an extended leave, and three are filled with recent entry-level trainees who are not yet able to "work the boards." The City has struggled to successfully fill dispatcher vacancies, with five hires not successfully completing probation over the past two years and extended recruitment periods.

With only eight personnel to cover the Center's 24/7 hours of operation, the Center has been making regular use of mandated overtime. In 2017, this resulted in an average of nearly 14 hours of overtime per employee per week. High levels of overtime can take a toll on employees, impacting their ability to get adequate rest and relaxation, and is not sustainable over the long term. In addition, the limited depth of staffing raises concern about a potential worst-case scenario in which it would not be possible to provide the minimum staffing required to process incoming calls for service and safely dispatch our Police and Fire personnel.

It is a top priority to fill ECC vacancies and get new hires up to speed as quickly as possible. Leadership from the Police Department, Fire Department, Human Resources, and City Manager's Office are meeting with ECC shift supervisors and working together to pursue a variety of operational, recruitment, and training strategies to achieve appropriate and sustainable staffing for this critical emergency response service. This Council report seeks approval for three compensation items and authorization to amend the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 521 for items related to communications training as part of a comprehensive response to the current staffing and training issues.

Other actions being pursued include assigning a Police Lieutenant to assist with administration of the ECC, enhancing ECC recruitment efforts, with a focus on hiring experienced "lateral" dispatchers, developing and implementing a more effective training program, extending the probationary period for entry-level hires, prioritizing and reducing ancillary dispatch services, continuing to explore the transition to a sub-regional model for Fire dispatch services, improving working conditions, and increasing cooperation with neighboring agency dispatch functions.

ANALYSIS

The following items are compensation-related and require Council approval. These items, which were the subject of a Council closed session on March 30, 2018, are intended to recognize the extraordinary contributions of current dispatchers, improve the success of the training program, and reduce mandated overtime.

One-Time, Lump-Sum Bonus

The current level of vacancies in the ECC has created a significant challenge which has required extraordinary effort for personnel in the Center who must develop the schedule and staff a 24/7 operation. As previously mentioned, this has resulted in significant levels of overtime, including overtime that is mandated rather than voluntary. In recognition of this extraordinary effort to maintain this critical emergency service, staff proposes a one-time, lump-sum bonus as described below.

One-Time, Lump-Sum Bonus: Regular (full-time and part-time) employees working and on paid status as of May 1, 2018 in the positions of Public Safety Dispatcher II, Public Safety Dispatcher III, Lead Public Safety Dispatcher, and Communications Operations Supervisor will receive a one-time, lump-sum payment equivalent to five percent (5%) of annual salary as of May 1, 2018, pro-rated for eligible part-time employees. This bonus is in recognition of extraordinary service to maintain 24/7 Emergency Communications Center staffing over the past 12 months during which the Center has experienced a significant staffing shortage. This bonus will be paid in the first full pay period following Council approval or the employee's last check upon separation from City employment, whichever occurs first.

Communications Training Officer Pay

The ECC currently has three entry-level hires (PSD Is) who started with the City within the last six months. Recent efforts to train newly hired dispatchers have been inconsistent, with five employees (three hired at entry level and two as laterals) in the last two years being unable to successfully complete probation. The effectiveness of the City's training efforts has been hindered by a variety of factors, including: the workload of experienced dispatchers who are assigned to train; the complexity of the job and the steep learning curve to become proficient in call-taking and Fire, EMS, and Police dispatch; and the lack of a structured training program consistent with the model program provided by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

To address this situation, a Limited-Period Communications Training Supervisor position was approved in the Fiscal Year 2016-17 Budget. This position was posted for seven months and the City was unable to fill it. Instead, in July 2017, the City entered into an agreement with a consulting group to prepare a training and operational efficiency assessment, develop a training manual, and provide some hands-on training for trainers. The consultant's assessment report was completed and accepted by the City in February 2018. (The consultant is still completing deliverables related to the ECC's training program.) Some recommendations included in the assessment report have already been implemented and others are being explored.

As part of the development of a more structured Communications Training Program, staff is seeking Council authority to establish a Communications Training Officer specialty pay (as described below). Such training officer pay is also available for Police Field Training Officers, Community Services Officers, and Records Specialists who train new employees.

Communications Training Officer Pay: Public Safety Dispatcher IIs assigned by the Police Chief or his/her designee to train a probationary Public Safety Dispatcher I, probationary Public Safety Dispatcher II, or other assigned trainee in accordance with a Police Department-approved Communications Training Program will receive seven and one-half percent (7.5%) Communications Training Officer pay when assigned a trainee and conducting training of the trainee during the Communications Training Officer's shift.

Establishing Communications Training Officer pay requires a side letter to amend the current Memorandum of Understanding with SEIU. The above language has been reviewed and approved by SEIU. The side letter will also address another of the consultant's recommendations, which is to extend the probationary period from 12 to 18 months for entry-level dispatcher hires in order to provide adequate time for classroom and on-the-job training covering all aspects of the job, as well as sufficient time for new hires to act as independent dispatchers before a final determination must be made as to their ability to successfully complete probation. As an operational item, the extension of probationary periods does not require Council approval but is included in the resolution authorizing the side letter with SEIU.

Hourly Salary Plan Adjustments

Staff is exploring various strategies to fill shifts and reduce mandated overtime, including service agreements with neighboring agencies to provide dispatch services, assigning trained, off-duty Mountain View Police Officers to work as dispatchers, and enhancing efforts to attract qualified dispatchers who work for other agencies and may

be interested in additional work on an hourly basis. To provide an incentive to such dispatchers who are already employed full-time for another center, staff proposes amending the hourly salary plan to include overtime pay as described below.

Hourly Public Safety Dispatcher II Overtime Pay: Hourly Public Safety Dispatcher IIs who work full-time for other jurisdictions in communications centers designated by the Police Chief as sufficiently compatible to enable independent work upon hire will receive overtime at fifty percent (50%) of the hourly base rate of pay.

To extend the pool of trainers, especially during the current period of staffing shortage and a higher than normal number of trainees, the City is exploring the potential of hiring hourly dispatchers who would be qualified to serve as Communications Training Officers. To provide an incentive for retired annuitants or other qualified hourly dispatchers employed elsewhere to take on this role, staff proposes an amendment to the hourly salary plan to include Communications Training Officer pay as described below.

Hourly Public Safety Dispatcher II Communications Training Officer Pay: Hourly Public Safety Dispatcher IIs assigned by the Police Chief or his/her designee to train a probationary Public Safety Dispatcher I, probationary Public Safety Dispatcher II, or other assigned trainee in accordance with a Police Department-approved Communications Training Program will receive seven and one-half percent (7.5%) Communications Training Officer pay when assigned a trainee and conducting training of the trainee during the Communications Training Officer's shift.

In addition, staff is seeking authority to revise the hourly salary plan, reclassifying the hourly Lead Public Safety Dispatcher to an hourly Public Safety Dispatcher III. This is a clean-up measure to reflect an organizational change made by the Police Department in 2013 to establish the Public Safety Dispatcher III as the frontline shift supervisor position within the dispatcher classification series and focus the Lead on administrative responsibilities rather than staffing dispatch shifts. This change has been implemented for the transition from Lead Public Safety Dispatcher to Public Safety Dispatcher III for regular employees and is being recommended now for the hourly salary plan for consistency.

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated one-time cost for the lump-sum bonus for Public Safety Dispatcher II, Public Safety Dispatcher III, Lead Public Safety Dispatcher, and Communications

Operations Supervisor is approximately \$54,000. This cost can be funded through Police Department salary savings in the Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget. The estimated annual cost of Communications Training Officer pay per trainee is \$13,250. The actual annual cost per year would depend on the number of new hires. It is not anticipated that there will be significant cost associated with Communications Training Officer pay during the remainder of Fiscal Year 2017-18, and we expect to be able to fund any such cost in salary savings from this year's budget. With Council's approval, funding for Communications Training Officer pay for next year will be added as part of the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Proposed Budget. The cost associated with paying an overtime rate to qualified hourly dispatchers who are working full-time for other agencies is expected to be similar to or less than the overtime paid to Mountain View dispatchers working overtime shifts.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not adopt the proposed resolutions.
2. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING – Agenda posting and distribution to SEIU.

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ASR/2/CAM
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- Attachments:
1. Resolution – Compensation for Emergency Communications Center Personnel
 2. Resolution – SEIU Side Letter
 3. Resolution – Hourly Salary Plan