



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** BEAU D. PRYOR, CHIEF OF POLICE

**BY:** MICHAEL T. MARTINEZ, PATROL SERVICES COMMANDER

**SUBJECT:** CONSIDERATION OF A LATERAL POLICE OFFICER RECRUITING INCENTIVE PROGRAM

**DATE:** JUNE 11, 2019

**SUMMARY OF ACTION:**

Approval of a Recruiting Incentive Program for Lateral Police Officers.

**IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:**

This action will have no fiscal impact to the General Fund since the incentive program will be paid for using U.S. Department of Justice Community Orientated Policing Services (COPS) grant funding, in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 during fiscal year 2019-20.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a Resolution authorizing the establishment of a lateral Police Officer Recruiting Incentive Program.

**BACKGROUND:**

In recent years the law enforcement community has experienced several challenges recruiting well-qualified candidates to fill open Police Officer positions. The Arroyo Grande Police Department ("Department") has specifically noticed a decline in its ability to recruit qualified lateral Police Officers. A lateral Police Officer is someone who has a minimum of one (1) year of recent law enforcement experience and possesses a California POST Basic Peace Officer certificate. The decline in lateral Police Officers has created an imbalance of experience within the Department. The lack of lateral applicants is only compounded by the lack of applicants interested in law enforcement in general. The Department recently implemented a two (2) year Strategic Plan, which identifies recruitment and retention as a top goal for the organization. Staff is bringing forward recommended changes to enhance recruitment strategies designed to attract and retain lateral Police Officers.

**CITY COUNCIL  
CONSIDERATION OF A LATERAL POLICE OFFICER RECRUITING INCENTIVE  
PROGRAM  
JUNE 11, 2019  
PAGE 2**

**ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:**

Over the past several years, the Arroyo Grande Police Department has faced steady challenges recruiting and retaining qualified Police Officers. On a state and local level, there have been far more police jobs available than eligible candidates to fill them. The Department is experiencing a diminished pool of well-qualified candidates for Police Officer positions and retention has been increasingly problematic over the past five (5) years. Staff recently conducted a 5-year review focused on the retention of AGPD Police Officers hired between 2009 and 2013. It was determined 6 out of the 10 (60%) Police Officers hired in that time period continue to serve with the Department. In comparison, staff conducted a similar 5-year survey of AGPD Police Officers hired from 2014 to 2018. It was discovered only 7 out of the 19 (36%) Police Officers hired in that time period continue to serve with the Department. This illustrates a significant difference in the amount of officers recruited and retained over the past five years.

To address this problem, the Department took a number of steps to improve recruitment and retention of Police Officers. In August 2017, the Department introduced a police trainee program aimed at sponsoring viable candidates to the Academy as fully paid recruit trainees. It is worth mentioning the Department has had a great deal of success recruiting candidates for this program directly from the Department's Police Cadet Program. The Department also introduced a fast track hiring process which enabled lateral applicants the opportunity to streamline the formal testing process if sponsored by a current AGPD officer. The Department also formulated an outreach recruitment team assigned to visit police academies, participate at local job fairs and visit local military installations in an effort to seek out future police candidates. Finally, the City's Human Resources Department launched the online NEOGOV human resources software program which made the process of recruiting, selecting and hiring personnel more strategic and efficient.

Over the past ten (10) years, there have been several factors causing shortages of qualified Police Officers. Some of those include a rebounding economy creating employment opportunities in the private sector, negative publicity scrutinizing Police Officers and the inability of applicants to meet the minimum police hiring standards. In the most recent round of recruitment (April 2019), the Department had sixty (60) applicants apply for four (4) vacant Police Officer positions. Among the sixty, ten (10) applicants showed up to the final testing phase and a total of five (5) met the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training pre-questionnaire background standard. Unfortunately, merely because a candidate passes the background does not mean they are employable as a peace officer. A fair number of candidates will not be able to pass the Academy or some portion of the training program. On the other hand, lateral Police Officer candidates offer greater experience, less formal training and allow the Department to balance the level of knowledge and expertise within the patrol rank, specifically when there are multiple vacant positions.

**CITY COUNCIL  
CONSIDERATION OF A LATERAL POLICE OFFICER RECRUITING INCENTIVE  
PROGRAM  
JUNE 11, 2019  
PAGE 3**

In recent years, several cities and counties throughout the State have adopted hiring incentive programs for law enforcement officers, given the extremely competitive job market. Below is a sample of the current hiring incentives being offered by other communities throughout the State:

Antioch	\$10,000	Modesto	\$15,000
Capitola	\$10,000	Palm Springs	\$10,000
Fairfield	\$10,000	Palo Alto	\$25,000
Fresno	\$10,000	Pleasant Hill	\$20,000
Hemet	\$15,000	Turlock	\$16,000

Locally, the Grover Beach and Santa Maria Police Departments are offering hiring incentives for lateral applicants. The Grover Beach program offers lateral Police Officers a \$10,000 pay incentive consisting of \$5,000 upon hire, \$1,000 upon successful completion of the Field Training program, \$1,000 upon successful completion of the 18-month Probationary period and \$3,000 upon completion of 24 months of continuous service with the City. The Santa Maria program offers \$6,000 upon hire, up to an additional 40 hours of pay for relocation assistance that can be cashed out or rolled over into a vacation bank and vacation accrual equivalent to the lateral officer's years of law enforcement service.

To meet the demands of recruiting well qualified police candidates, staff is recommending a Recruiting Incentive Program to increase the number of experienced officer candidates applying for open positions with the City. The program is intended to develop the Department's recruitment strategies and assist in attracting lateral police officers who are contemplating a move to a new organization.

The proposed incentive is designed to attract Lateral Police Officers only and shall not exceed \$30,000 during Fiscal Year 2019-2020. The proposed incentives are as follows:

**Lateral Police Officers**

1. Offer a lateral police officer signing incentive of \$10,000 to the new hire payable as follows:
  - a) \$5,000 paid upon hire
  - b) \$2,500 paid upon successful completion of the Field Training Program
  - c) \$2,500 paid upon successful completion of the 12-month probationary period
2. Grant an additional 40 hours of vacation upon completion of the first six months of employment

**CITY COUNCIL  
CONSIDERATION OF A LATERAL POLICE OFFICER RECRUITING INCENTIVE  
PROGRAM  
JUNE 11, 2019  
PAGE 4**

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The following alternatives are provided for the Council's consideration:

1. Adopt the Resolution authorizing a Lateral Police Officer Incentive Program;
2. Modify and adopt the Resolution;
3. Do not adopt the Resolution; or
4. Provide direction to staff.

**ADVANTAGES:**

Approving the recommended action will assist in recruiting and hiring experienced, qualified Lateral Police Officers.

**DISADVANTAGES:**

No disadvantages to approving the incentive program are identified other than a reduction in the amount of available grant funding for other programs.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

No environmental review is required for this administrative action.

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:**

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

**RESOLUTION NO.**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ARROYO GRANDE AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LATERAL POLICE OFFICER RECRUITING INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Arroyo Grande recognizes the need to hire experienced staff to fill Police positions; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Arroyo Grande recognizes that there is currently an experience gap between current Officers and new Officers; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Arroyo Grande understands the growing demand across the state for experienced Officers; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Arroyo Grande wants to be competitive in recruiting and retaining experienced Police Officers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lateral Police Officer Recruiting Incentive Program would be funded from the U.S. Department of Justice Community Orientated Policing Services (COPS) grant.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Arroyo Grande as follows:

1. The recitals set forth above are true and correct.
2. The City Council hereby approves a Lateral Police Officer Recruiting Incentive Program. The incentive is designed to attract Lateral Police Officers only and shall not exceed \$30,000 during fiscal year 2019-2020. A Lateral Police Officer is defined as currently employed as a California Police/Peace Officer with a California Basic P.O.S.T. certificate, has completed a patrol Field Training Officer (FTO) program and successfully completed the probationary period. The incentives are as follows:

**Lateral Police Officers**

- A. Offer a lateral police officer signing incentive of \$10,000 to the new hire payable as follows:
  - a) \$5,000 paid upon hire
  - b) \$2,500 paid upon successful completion of the Field Training Program
  - c) \$2,500 paid upon successful completion of the 12-month probationary period.
- B. Grant an additional 40 hours of vacation upon completion of the first six months of employment.

**RESOLUTION NO.**  
**PAGE 2**

On motion by Council Member \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Council Member \_\_\_\_\_,  
and by the following roll call vote, to wit:

**AYES:**

**NOES:**

**ABSENT:**

The foregoing Resolution was adopted this 11<sup>th</sup> day of June 2019.

**RESOLUTION NO.  
PAGE 3**

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**CAREN RAY RUSSOM, MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

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**KELLY WETMORE, CITY CLERK**

**APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:**

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**JAMES A. BERGMAN, CITY MANAGER**

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

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**HEATHER K. WHITHAM, CITY ATTORNEY**

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