



Report to the City Council
Council Meeting of August 23rd, 2016

Agenda Section: Consent

Subject: Consideration and proposed approval of a resolution authorizing the Police Department to temporarily Over Hire one Police Officer position effective September 9th, 2016, in advance of an announced Officer retirement in December, 2016, at no additional cost to the City

CEQA Status: Not a CEQA project

Prepared By: William Imboden, Chief of Police 

Approved By: Jennifer Phillips, City Manager 

BACKGROUND

The approved FY 2016/17 Operations Budget includes funding for one Chief of Police, one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, and eight officers. The Lieutenant position is currently vacant, but is anticipated to be filled in September, 2016. One of the Officer positions is also vacant with an applicant in the hiring process. That position is anticipated to be filled in early September.

In January, 2016 the Police Department asked the Council for permission to hire an Officer in May 2016, to fill an anticipated vacancy in July, mitigating two additional and expected long term absences. The Department immediately but unsuccessfully began a hiring and testing process for a new Officer. In the four months prior to May 1st five applicants failed out of the hiring process. After May 1st, another three applicants failed out and one was hired by another agency before they could be offered a job in Saint Helena. There are currently two applicants in the hiring process, and the Department anticipates hiring one of them in early September. Because of the difficulty the Department has had in finding qualified applicants, when two qualified people applied in the same week, they were both submitted to the hiring process. Therefore one of the applicants is still available, and almost completely through the lengthy hiring process.

The Police Chief has recruited applicants in person from the Napa Police Academy three times since January, 2016, and the Santa Rosa academy twice. The Department has posted job announcements on websites, trade related classified ads, and mailed job announcements to several other academies and local agencies. These efforts resulted

in a total of eleven applications. Eight of those applicants failed the hiring process; the final two are still viable candidates (one was hired by another agency).

Finding and hiring qualified applicants has been an issue for Police agencies all over the region. Academy classes that start with 30+ cadets are graduating 15 – 17. Of those graduates, 5 – 10 may be qualified candidates and most of those are already hired before they complete the academy. When the Chief visits an academy to recruit, typically there are 3 or 4 cadets in attendance.

DISCUSSION

In June, 2016 one Saint Helena Officer announced his retirement date of December 17, 2016. In light of the difficulty the Department has had in recruiting qualified applicants, the Department is requesting to hire the second qualified applicant prior to the position being available.

The second applicant is attending the Napa Basic Police Academy, scheduled to graduate on September 10, 2016. Hiring this applicant prior to having the position open assures that the Department will have a qualified person in place when the position is available, preventing a long drawn out vacancy, as has been experienced lately. Having these vacancies is taxing on the current ranks as they have to cover absences with overtime, from an overtime budget that is already stretched thin due to vacancies, trainings, vacations, and illnesses.

An additional benefit to filling the Officer position early is having the time to put the new Officer through the entire Field Training Program before the vacancy occurs. When the retiring Officer separates from employment, the new Officer will fill right into the position with no loss of service to the community, no impact to the existing personnel, and no need for overtime expenses to fill the position.

This hire would be an “over hire” position, temporarily authorizing the Police Department a total sworn staff consisting of one Chief, one Lieutenant, two Sergeants and nine (9) Officers. Once the retiring Officer separates from employment with the City in December 2016, the existing authorized staffing of eight (8) Officers would be maintained.

Since the Department has not been able to hire an officer for the currently funded vacant Officer position, there has been two months salary and benefits savings. The proposed Over Hire position would span three months (Sept. 9, 2016 – December 17, 2016). The first two months of the Over Hire would be cost neutral due to the vacant position savings. The remaining five weeks of salary and benefit costs for the Over Hire position are approximately \$9,209.

The difference between the total combined salary and benefits of the retiring Officer and the total combined salary and benefits of the new Officer is approximately \$4,957 per

month. Between January and June, 2017 these savings to the salary budget are expected to cover the remaining five weeks of salary and benefits costs for the Over Hire position. Therefore the Over Hire position would result in no additional cost to the department. No additional funds or budget adjustments are being requested.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts to the City at this time. The funding for the Over Hire position (approximately \$23,943) will be taken from Police Department salary savings currently existing. The position will be fully funded through the adopted FY 16/17 Police budget (101-4900).

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends the City Council adopt the resolution authorizing the Police Department to Over Hire one Police Officer position, effective September 9th, 2016, in advance of an announced Officer retirement in December, 2016.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

**CITY OF ST. HELENA
RESOLUTION NO. 2016-_____**

Resolution authorizing the Police Department to Temporarily Over Hire one Police Officer position effective September 9th, 2016, in advance of an announced Officer retirement in December, 2016, at no additional cost to the City

RECITALS

- A. The City of St. Helena Police Department is minimally staffed to cover required Patrol shifts; and
- B. Any time the Department loses staffing, overtime must be used to maintain minimum staffing levels for safety; and
- C. The Department is anticipating an announced retirement in December, 2016; and
- D. The Department is having difficulty locating and recruiting qualified Police Officer applicants; and
- E. The Department currently has two qualified applicants for one vacant Officer position; and
- F. The Over Hire position will be filled no sooner than September 9th, 2016; and
- G. There will be no additional cost to the City to Over Hire one officer position.

RESOLUTION

The City Council of the City of St. Helena hereby resolves as follows:

- 1. The Over Hiring of one police officer position is approved.

Approved at a Regular Meeting of the St. Helena City Council on August 23rd, 2016, by the following vote:

Mayor Galbraith: _____
 Vice Mayor White: _____
 Councilmember Crull: _____
 Councilmember Dohring: _____
 Councilmember Pitts: _____

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Alan Galbraith, Mayor

Cindy Black, City Clerk