



POLICE DEPARTMENT

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TO: Mayor Joel Greer
Members of the City Council
Jessica Kinser, City Administrator

FROM: Michael W. Tupper
Chief of Police

DATE: 23 February 2022

RE: Hiring Incentive for Non-Certified Police Officer Applicants

Policy Issue:

The law enforcement recruitment landscape is changing rapidly. The recruitment of quality police officer applicants is a national crisis. Actually, professions of all shapes and sizes are struggling to find quality job applicants. There is no business, or service organization in Iowa, that has not struggled to recruit staff. The Marshalltown Police Department has not been immune to these workforce challenges.

Recently, we opened a police officer hiring process. We did so with the hope of hiring two police officers who would be sent to the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in May. We received only six applicants. All six have been eliminated in step one of the hiring process. Consequently, we are starting the hiring process over. Hiring police officers is not an easy or quick task. Even under ideal conditions, these hiring processes take a lot of time and cost us a lot of money. Training police officers takes time. Due to this recent hiring process failure, at best we can hope to send police officer applicants to the law enforcement academy beginning in late August.

Officers we hire in August will not be fully functioning on their own before March 2023. Due to a lackluster recruitment result in January and February of 2022, we have lost a lot of time. Time truly does cost money and we will be paying overtime to backfill vacant police officer positions. Having officers work overtime, to fill holes in the work schedule, creates additional stress for our police officer staff. Being a police officer is a challenging job. It is crucial we take steps to minimize unnecessary stress and corresponding risk. We cannot continue the same failing recruitment efforts and hope for better results. Our competition for applicants is speeding ahead and we need to take steps to catch up.

Since April 2017, the City of Marshalltown has utilized financial incentives to assist the police department in the recruitment of certified peace officers. It has become common practice in Iowa for communities to offer monetary incentives to police officer applicants regardless of certification status. Available incentives vary and are like nothing I ever thought we would see when I became a police officer nearly thirty years ago. Many public and private businesses now offer a sign-on bonus to find quality employees. It is becoming common for city governments to offer financial incentives to find the professionals they need to serve in their police departments. Being able to recruit top notch police officer applicants enhances public safety and is an investment in the future of our police department. We need to take steps to be more competitive in the police officer hiring market.

CITY COUNCIL

Al Hoop, Gabriel Isom, Barry Kell, Mike Ladehoff,
Jeff Schneider, Gary Thompson, Dex Walker

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the city council authorize the police department to offer a \$2,000.00 hiring bonus for non-certified police officer applicants. Staff recommends paying the bonus over two payments. An initial \$1,000.00 payment is paid to the applicant immediately upon hire. A second \$1,000.00 payment is paid to the applicant after the applicant has successfully completed probation.

Already existing police officer hiring incentive programs for certified police officer applicants would remain in place. Currently, the City offers certified applicants a \$7,500.00 hiring bonus. The City also incentivizes City employees to assist the department in hiring police officer candidates by paying city employees a one-time bonus of \$500.00 when a city employee helps recruit a non-certified police officer applicant that is hired by the department. If a city employee recruits a certified police officer applicant who is hired by the department, the city employee receives a one-time recruitment bonus of \$1,000.00. Department directors, police captains, the city HR director, and the city administrator are not eligible for recruitment bonus pay.

Budget Impact:

The proposed recruitment bonus paid to new hires and city employees is not currently a budgeted item and will be worked into recruitment or operation expenses.

Attachment:

Not Applicable