
CITY COUNCIL REPORT

Public

DATE: February 5, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Police Chief Kevin Treadway, Deputy Chief Dan Musselman

CC: Josh Copley, Jerene Watson, Leadership Team

SUBJECT: Staffing Concerns at the Flagstaff Police Department

This report is in response to a request for further information from Councilmember Oravits and Councilmember Evans on the current status of staffing (and related information) at the Flagstaff Police Department.

Executive Summary

The *Patrol Section* has an authorized staffing of 64 police officers with primary duties of a patrol officer. We had an average vacancy rate of 29.4% (open positions plus those in training, light duty officers, FMLA, or on military orders) since January of 2013. We currently have two open vacancies (as of February 1, 2015). The duties of a patrol officer require very lengthy training. The training time to progress a newly hired police officer to solo status on average takes approximately ten months. We have lost officers for several reasons: some make poor decisions, have medical issues or are not able to complete the training, but most leave our Department for other law enforcement agencies. These other agencies usually have a lower cost of living and offer higher pay and/or lower cost of health benefits. The overall cost to the city to hire and train a new police officer employee is about \$53,000.00, including ERE's.

The *Communications Section* has an authorized staffing of 30 personnel, including supervisors, dispatchers, call takers and a 911 Coordinator. We have had a 34% vacancy rate (open positions plus those in training, or FMLA) since January of 2013. We currently have five open vacancies for the dispatch positions. The highly technical computer and radio multi-tasking skills needed, along with the shift work requirement cause many trainees to fail or look for easier employment elsewhere. Some of those who leave the center are leaving to relocate to other communities with a lower cost of living and higher wages.

Discussion

The police agency that is both efficient and effective will have the greatest impact on their primary purpose of crime prevention and public safety. Staffing decisions made at the Flagstaff Police Department always place priority on staffing the patrol squads, before specialty assignments or task forces, ensuring squads are staffed adequately to respond to calls for service in a safe and expedient manner.

Turnover from the Past Two Years

For the past two years, the Flagstaff Police Department has done extensive exit interviews on all employees leaving the Department. The exit interview questionnaire is two pages, and is administered by a supervisor who spends on average one hour speaking to the employee. The following represents some data from these interviews and questionnaires:

The *Patrol Section* lost 20 sworn officers (out of our total authorized 113 officers) between January 1, 2013, and December 31, 2013. We lost 18 officers in calendar year 2014. The breakdown of the 38 officers lost since January 1, 2013, is:

- 22 left for other jobs outside of the Flagstaff Police Department. 57.9%
 - 2013: 14 - 37%
 - 2014: 8 – 21%
- 6 were terminated or resigned in lieu of termination. 15.8%
 - 2013: 3 – 7.9%
 - 2014: 3 – 7.9%
- 4 retired. 10.5%
 - 2013: 3 - 7.9%
 - 2014: 1 – 2.6%
- 3 were forced to medically retire from police work. 7.9%
 - 2013: 0 – 0%
 - 2014: 3 – 7.9%
- 2 were unable to complete the training. 5.3%
 - 2013: 0 – 0.0%
 - 2014: 2 – 5.3%
- 1 was killed in the line of duty. 2.6%
 - 2013: 0
 - 2014: 1 – 2.6%

We have kept the police officer position open almost continuously since 2013, and had 283 applicants in 2013 and 250 applicants in 2014. We conducted 32 background investigations in 2013 which led to hiring 20 employees. In 2014, we conducted 28 background investigations and hired 14 police officers. In 2013, the total cost to hire and train 20 new officers was approximately \$1,060,000. In 2014, the total cost to hire 14 new officers was approximately \$742,000.

According to Benchmark City Survey (<http://www.opkansas.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/benchmark-city-survey-section-a-demographics.pdf>), in 2013, the benchmark for the average age of sworn officers was 40.3 years of age. At the Flagstaff Police Department our average officer age in 2013, was 33.6 years. Once again as a recap, 60% of the officers responding to calls for service today have less than two years experience. The average years of service of all our sworn averages out to 8.3 years, this includes several sworn employees in leadership positions who have over 20 years of service. The more time we spend recruiting, testing and training new officers, the less time we are able to devote to preventing crime, collisions and improving the quality of life in Flagstaff. Police work today is a market driven industry and the Flagstaff Police Department has become a training ground for other agencies.

The *Communications Section* is allocated 22 dispatchers, two call takers, one 911 Coordinator and five dispatch supervisors and has lost 23 dispatchers since January 1, 2013 (14 in CY13, and 9 in CY14). Out of the 23 the breakdown is as follows:

- 7 left for other jobs outside of the Flagstaff Police Department. 30%
 - 2013: 3 – 13%
 - 2014: 4 – 17%
- 2 were terminated or resigned in lieu of termination. 9%
 - 2013: 1 – 4.3%
 - 2014: 1 – 4.3%
- 6 left for family or personal reasons. 26%
 - 2013: 5 – 22%
 - 2014: 1 – 4%
- 5 were unable to complete the training. 22%
 - 2013: 2 – 9%
 - 2014: 3 – 13%
- 3 transferred to another section within the Department. 13%
 - 2013: 3 – 13%
 - 2014: 0 – 0%

We have kept the dispatch position open continuously since 2012, and average about three to four qualified applicants per month. We conducted 27 background investigations in 2013, which led to hiring 14 employees. In 2014, we conducted 23 background investigations and hired 7 employees.

Initiatives to Improve Retention in the Past Two Years

We have made several efforts to recruit locally. Current employees are invited to lecture in Criminal Justice Classes at NAU and we try our best to recruit applicants. We have recruited a few from these classes. We conduct annual recruitment presentations to the NAU Criminal Justice Club. In June the FBI Arizona Leadership Executive Development Program is hosted here locally. We have a contact at Native Americans for Community Action who has put the word out for recruitment to their sources. Human Resources advertises locally, on the Navajo Nation, attends job fairs, and regularly submits a universal advertisement for positions in the Arizona Daily Sun and the Arizona Republic. Our School

Resource Officers teach classes in our high schools related to the police profession, and we present a citizen's police academy twice a year. We often ask our own employees to recruit family and friends. We also advertise on several websites which include: Monster.com, Jobbing.com, Indeed.com, and the Arizona Black Law Enforcement Association website (ABLE). In all cases, we spend an inordinate amount of time discussing the cost of living and commitment with our new employees, especially those re-locating to the Flagstaff area.

Other initiatives to try and help hire and retain competent employees include the following:

- Dispatch applicants are given a validated job competency (typing and multi-tasking) screening assessment prior to interviewing.
- We instituted a pro-rated training payback agreement for those who leave prior to three years of service.
- Offer additional training to keep up confidence and competency.
- Offer tuition reimbursement to all employees.
- Instituted assignment pay for those who are trainers.
- Involved all employees in our strategic planning process.
- Created an "Everyday is a Training Day" program, utilizing daily training bulletins.
- Instituted \$1,000 uniform reimbursement program to help offset out of pocket cost for police uniforms and equipment.
- Created a peer mentoring program.
- Streamlined reporting on minor calls (call notes reporting/straightened pipes).
- Revised our performance evaluations.
- Launched an early warning system to assist struggling officers.
- Redesigned the report writing area in the police station.
- Explored a Patrol Dictation Program to try and reduce overtime.
- Created an eight squad format to better align staffing with calls for service.
- Changed the patrol squad schedule, bringing swing shift in earlier to relieve high call volume and overtime on day shift.
- Created a formal awards banquet in June to recognize employees receiving Departmental awards.

Challenges in Hiring

The *Patrol Section* is holding an applicant test every month. The trend with testing is as follows: Usually 30 applicants will show up to test. Twenty out of the 30 will pass the written exam. Out of the twenty who passed the written exam, ten will pass the physical. We will interview all ten remaining and historically five move forward into the background process. Two out of the five in backgrounds will successfully pass the background process. This entire process usually requires a month or two in order for a formal job offer to be made. We give the recruit a date for the next police academy which can be anywhere from one to two months away. The academy is 17 weeks long followed by 17 weeks of on the job field training. The training can be rigorous and in 2013 and 2014, we lost 5.3% of our recruits out of the academy or in field training. We have only

had one successful lateral applicant in nearly two years, who was hired in May 2013.

Market Based Pay

In the *Patrol Section* a 2014, market comparison of market midrange to City of Flagstaff midrange shows the following:

- Officers are 5% under market midrange to midrange, and to bring those below market just up to market minimum would cost an additional \$27,000 annually ongoing.
- Sergeants are 20% under market midrange to midrange, and to bring those below market up to market minimum would cost an additional \$8,200 annually ongoing.
- Lieutenants are 25% under market midrange to midrange, and to bring those below up to market minimum would cost an additional \$3,400 annually ongoing.
- Deputy Chiefs are 23% under market midrange to midrange and to bring those below up to market minimum would cost an additional \$3,800 annually ongoing.

Pulling those personnel who are below market minimums up to market minimums will create compaction and equity issues, where a five year employee is being compensated the same as a one year employee. To maintain the current spread among all ranks and employees in the pay range when those below the minimum are brought up to the new market minimum the total cost would be \$1,100,000 annual ongoing (includes ERE's).

In the *Communications Section* a 2014, market comparison of market midrange to City of Flagstaff midrange shows the following:

- Call Takers are 7% under market midrange to midrange, and to bring those below market just up to market minimum would cost an additional \$3,000 annually ongoing.
- Dispatchers are 10% under market mid-range to midrange, and to bring those below the market minimum just up to market minimum would cost an additional \$56,000 annually ongoing.
- Dispatch Supervisors are 4.7% under market mid-range to midrange, and to bring those below market just up to market minimum would cost an additional \$2,800 annually ongoing.

Pulling those dispatch personnel who are below market minimums up to market minimums will create compaction and equity issues, where a five year employee is being compensated the same as a one year employee. To maintain the current spread among all ranks and employees in the pay range when those below the minimum are brought up to the new market minimum the total cost would be: \$209,379 ongoing (includes ERE's).

In conducting the dispatch market analysis we learned 18 out of 24 agencies offer shift differential pay. This averaged 3% for swing shift and 5% additional for graveyard shift. A relatively inexpensive option to assist with compensation

would be to explore shift differential pay. The cost to give swing shift dispatch employees an additional 3% per hour (those shifts that begin after 1400 hours), and graveyard an additional 5% per hour (shifts that begin after 2000 hours), would cost the City \$20,800 ongoing (includes ERE's).

Current Staffing Levels

The current staffing levels of the *Patrol Section* are being impacted by the following:

- We currently have two open vacancies.
- We have five officers at the police academy.
- We have seven officers in the Field Training Program.
- We have two officers on military leave.
- We have two officers out on light duty.
- We have two officers out on FMLA.
- Three officers are in the testing process with other agencies and are expected to resign within the month.

The current staffing levels of the *Communications Section* are being impacted by the following:

- We currently have five open vacancies for dispatcher.
- We have one dispatcher out on FMLA.
- Three dispatchers are currently in training.
- One call taker is in training.

Staffing and Calls for Service Demands

We were authorized 118 officers in 2008. We are currently authorized 113, and we keep one of these positions vacant to fund our training, (the position is usually held vacant due to an officer away on military leave anyway). We have civilianized four officer positions in the last two years to save salary expenses as follows:

- July 2013 (two court security officers, and one training coordinator).
- July 2014 (one intelligence analyst).

We also receive reimbursement for some of our officers who are included in our authorized staffing as follows:

- METRO Task Force reimburses one sergeant and one officer.
- Three officers are paid for by the COPS Grant (until June 2016).
- Housing Officer .5 FTE.
- Airport Screening Officer (partial grant reimbursement \$40K per year).
- State Gang Taskforce 1.5 (currently vacant).

The Flagstaff Police Department reviewed our calls for service and overtime expenditures and learned that due to an ever increasing call for service volume our dayshift officers averaged 2-3 hours of overtime per day. After we received budget approval last year to move from a six squad to an eight squad patrol schedule, we re-aligned our patrol squads to reduce overtime and better align

with our calls for service. Due to our high vacancy rate we were only able to staff seven squads; once staffing improves we will move from the current seven squad format to the eight.

In 2014, we saw a 5% increase in calls for service, with a corresponding 7% rise in violent crime and 5% increase in property crime. According to a 2013 Benchmark City Survey (<http://www.opkansas.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/benchmark-city-survey-section-a-demographics.pdf>), the calls for service benchmark average is 473 calls for service per 1,000 population. Flagstaff is at 648 calls for service per 1,000 (based on 2013 population of 68,677). Another benchmark shows a police department should average 63% of their sworn staff responding to calls for service. When fully staffed we will be above 70%. All patrol officers at FPD are assigned to assisting with handling calls for service with the exception of two officers assigned to the Northern AZ Street Crimes Task Force (Metro Unit), one officer assigned to the US Marshal's Officer Fugitive detail, one officer assigned as a rotator in criminal investigations, and two officers assigned to the DPS GIITEM Gang Unit. It should be noted that the Metro Unit works predominantly in Flagstaff as well as the Marshal's Fugitive Detail. We re-assigned the two officers working GIITEM early in 2014, due to staffing shortages and have not yet been able to replace them. A final benchmark shows the average number of calls for service per first responder should be 530.7. With our current staffing we are at 717 calls per first responder, but when fully staffed this number should drop to 562.

The Flagstaff Police Department has minimum staffing levels in order to keep the community and officers safe. They are as follows:

- Day shift - A supervisor and six officers.
- Swing shift - A supervisor and six officers.
- Graveyard shift - A supervisor and five officers.
- Overlap shift - A supervisor and five officers.

Squad supervisors will call in other officers to maintain minimum staffing if an officer is out sick, hurt, or on FMLA, and this results in overtime. We struggle with our current budget to cover our overtime and other unanticipated costs. According to the Benchmark Cities Survey previously discussed, the average police department's operating budget is 29% of the total operating budget for its respective city. Our Police Department was almost half of that at 16.5 % in FY 2015 (\$18 Million out of \$110 Million). The average cost of police service per citizen in 2013 according to the benchmark was \$233.56 per citizen. Using our FY 2013 budget (\$16,698,304), our average cost per citizen (68,867 population) was \$242.47.

The benchmark for overtime is that your overtime cost is 3% of personnel budget. It should be noted, that not every agency in the study operates a multiagency dispatching center. Our personnel budget is \$14,392,218.00, and 3% of our personnel budget would put us at \$431,766. Our current overtime budget is \$368,000 and we anticipate being over budget at the end of the year by

\$180,000, (however we are well under budget in personnel services due to staffing shortages).

Promotional Opportunities

We were unable to find any benchmarks that discuss the average number of promotions within an agency, but do not believe we lack in opportunities. Due to our high turnover we feel we have more promotional opportunities than other agencies our size.

The *Patrol Section* has seen the following promotions in 2013 and 2104:

- Paul Lasiewicki to the Lieutenant position.
- Five Corporals were promoted to Sergeant: Dave Holyfield, Jeff James, Steve Van Ooteghem, Todd Bishop and Clint Hill.
- Five Officers were promoted to Corporals: Nick Jacobellis, Charles Hernandez, Dave Saurer, Ben Sandoval and Jerry Rintala.

The remainder of the Department saw the following promotions in 2013 and 2014:

- Irene Hunkler to Communications Manager.
- Jennifer Brown to Support Services Manager.
- Tamara Pugh, Michelle Schultz, Erin McCabe, Chantel Mitchell, and Katie Brandis to Dispatch Supervisor.
- Aaron Kimmel and Chad Smith to Special Services Supervisor.
- Tamara Pugh to the 911 Coordinator.
- Kelsey Short to Dispatcher.

Police Union

The Flagstaff Police Department has an organized officers association affiliated with AZ COPS. They have been in place since about 2005. Currently, there is no President of our Association, but there is a Secretary and Treasurer. The Association is not very active, does not have regular meetings, but approximately 51% of the officers participate and pay dues. Recently, the Association has been active in planning and organizing both the annual "Moose Run" and Department lunch in remembrance of the loss of Officer Jeff Mortiz, as well as the newly designed annual awards banquet held in June.

This report has been completed for informational purposes only.