



## Staff Report

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Keith Stahley, City Manager

**FROM:** Michele Bennett, Human Resources Operations Division Manager

### **SUBJECT:**

Compensation adjustment for sworn police employee ranks and the non-represented Executive Assistant and Recreational seasonal job classifications.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Good Governance.

### **SUMMARY:**

The Police Department is facing severe staffing issues in hiring and retaining sworn police employees in all ranks. This is having measurable impact in the department's ability to maintain minimum staffing levels and the delivery of public safety services. A compensation adjustment is recommended for all sworn police employee ranks (Officer through Deputy Police Chief) to improve market competitiveness in the City's mission to attract and retain qualified employees, while recognizing and supporting current employees who continue to perform essential job duties, and absorb additional workload caused by a high vacancy rate to meet our community's public safety needs. In addition, compensation adjustments to the non-represented Executive Assistant and Recreational seasonal job classifications are requested to improve current market competitiveness.

### **ISSUE:**

Shall City Council approve a three percent salary adjustment to all sworn police employee ranks, Police Officer through Deputy Police Chief, retroactive to January 1, 2023, and compensation adjustments to the non-represented Executive Assistant classification and Recreational seasonal job classifications effective February 13, 2023?

## RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a three percent salary adjustment to all sworn police employee ranks, Police Officer through Deputy Police Chief, retroactive to January 1, 2023, and compensation adjustments to the non-represented Executive Assistant classification and Recreational seasonal job classifications effective February 13, 2023.

## FACTS AND FINDINGS:

**Sworn Police Employee Ranks** - The Salem Police Department, similar to other police agencies across the nation, continues to experience an increase in recruitment and retention issues of law enforcement employees. Shrinking applicant pools, increased loss of employees to other agencies, as well as higher number of early retirements is impacting daily operations, instability in maintaining staffing levels, and employee morale. The City has attempted to utilize new programs and services to attract new officers and strengthen community relationships, such as the newly formed Community Action Unit, revival of the Community Police Academy, and other emerging partnerships and opportunities to help educate, promote, and encourage understanding and support between law enforcement and the community served.

While these services and opportunities have proven valuable, increased attrition combined with diminished interest in policing as a career have rapidly created a high number of staff vacancies, slowing departmental progress and exacerbating existing staffing challenges. The department received additional funded positions in fiscal year 2023, but those new positions will not be realized until and unless ongoing efforts in recruitment and hiring are enhanced and remain a constant priority.

As of January 4, 2023, there are 22 sworn vacancies within the department. 16 recruitments have been conducted over the past year with 14 hires. 11% turnover of staff either due to agency transfers or retirement/separation. This attrition rate and inability to hire up to adequate staffing levels is causing the need for increased overtime to maintain minimum staffing levels, working down line of the higher ranks for coverage issues, and negatively impacting the overall work-life balance of the employees.

Human Resources completed a market review for Police Officer rank and found that current pay is behind market by approximately seven percent (which includes the one and one-half percent cost-of-living adjustment the represented SPEU ranks received January 1, 2023). This is below the City's Compensation Philosophy to be within five percent of market of comparator cities. An additional three percent salary adjustment will improve the City's comparison to market and will raise it to be

within the five percent margin in comparison to market, improving our ability to both attract and retain qualified staff.

The City has established accepted compression tolerance levels between police ranks up through Police Management as issues with overtime eligibility and special incentive pays caused significant compression. City Council approved pay adjustments over the past fifteen months to correct compaction issues specifically for these issues. It is recommended that all ranks including Police Officer, Corporal, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Deputy Police Chief receive the same three percent adjustment to maintain the existing compression levels between ranks following the City's Compensation Philosophy.

**Executive Assistant** - The job classification was updated recently and assessed to market and in comparison to other internal job classifications that are similar in essential job functions and skill sets. The analysis found that there is internal inequity to other non-represented jobs with similar skill sets that are compensated more than the Executive Assistant. In comparing to other cities with similar executive support positions, the City is behind market more than ten percent at minimum pay. To align the classification to be more equitable in pay, both internally and externally, a compensation adjustment is recommended from pay grade B05, \$4,472 - \$6,009 per month, to pay grade B08, \$4,915 - 6,609 per month.

**Recreation** - The seasonal recreational job classifications were also assessed to market and more specifically to local competitors as recruitments for entry-level, student-age jobs have been very challenging. Due in part to the pandemic and then staffing demands for minimum wage and/or entry-level jobs locally. In order to maintain competitiveness within the same temporary applicant pool, it is recommended to adjust the recreation seasonal job classifications now to assist with hiring efforts and ensure adequate staffing in place for spring and summer recreational programs:

1. Program Aide - from \$13.50 per hour to \$14.50 per hour (flat rate)
2. Recreation Assistant - from \$13.80 per hour to \$15.37 per hour (flat rate)
3. Recreation Lead - from \$14.58 per hour to \$16.29 per hour (flat rate)
4. Recreation Coordinator - from \$15.11 - \$19.31 per hour to \$18.00 - \$22.97 per hour (pay range)

The anticipated fiscal impact of the proposal is approximately \$389,309 for the current fiscal year for Police. The additional cost will be absorbed by personnel savings within the department budget. Funding for the other compensation adjustments for Executive Assistant and Recreational classifications are available in their respective department budgets.

Allison Pavelek  
Sr. Human Resources Analyst

Attachments:

1. None.