



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: Public Safety Committee **DATE:** February 19, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Police Department

PREPARED BY: Neil Cervenka, Police Chief

PRESENTER: Neil Cervenka, Police Chief

AGENDA TITLE: Discussion Regarding Update on School Resource Officer (SRO) and Mendocino Major Crimes Task Force (MMCTF) Special Assignments

RECOMMENDATION

After a review of the report and presentation, the Public Safety Committee should:

1. Provide feedback and suggestions

BACKGROUND

The Fort Bragg Police Department participates in two special assignment opportunities for officers. The School Resource Officer program which is funded 70% by FBUSD and the Mendocino Major Crimes Task Force which offers no reimbursement. For many years, staffing has continually hindered our ability to participate in either.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

A School Resource Officer was selected by FBUSD and PD staff and began on the first day of the 24/25 school year. After an incident at FBMS, the program was paused while FBUSD worked on policies, procedures and training for their staff.

The SRO is scheduled to return to SRO duties the first part of March, following a 40-hour SRO school. The current SRO has indicated he will complete this year, but does not want to continue in the assignment. We have begun the process to select a new SRO, but there is little interest for a variety of reasons.

SRO schools have been reserved in advance should an officer show interest and be selected by FBUSD staff. If none are interested, the SRO position will be unfilled next school year.

As a Chief of Police in Mendocino County, I attend monthly meetings regarding the MMCTF and am a voting member on it. It is my desire to assign an officer, but there are three hinderances: 1) Staffing 2) Interest/Ability 3) Overtime.

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Participation in the MMCTF has been a desire for many years as FBPD has had officers assigned to it in the past. Due to staffing, we have been unable to assign an officer there full time. Furthermore, it was noted MMCTF mainly operated in the Ukiah area and did little to impact Fort Bragg.

Shortly after I became Chief, we put an officer in MMCTF on a part time basis, using overtime and shift trades. The understanding was our officer would handle cases on the Coast and could work on them during his regular work hours on Patrol.

I recalled that part time officer when the MMCTF commander accepted a promotion and left the task force without a supervisor.

While our staffing is greatly improving, we will not be in a position to even consider removing an officer from Patrol until 2026 due to academy and field training. Also, the most senior officer has less than four years' experience. Young officers require more direct supervision, which is not possible in a task force setting. Our staffing is stabilizing and officers are gaining more experience. By the time our staffing permits an officer being assigned to MMCTF, experience level would be to the point it would be acceptable. The final factor would be if any of the officers are interested in the position at the time we could participate.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

SRO has a positive impact as up to 70% of salary is reimbursed by FBUSD. MMCTF would require budgeting an additional \$15,000 in overtime as well as the purchase of a vehicle. MMCTF officer would be based in Ukiah and not available to assist Patrol. No funding source identified.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Not applicable.

STRATEGIC PLAN/COUNCIL PRIORITIES/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

None at this time.

COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide feedback and suggestions.

ALTERNATIVES:

No alternatives were identified. The report is intended to be informational only.

ATTACHMENTS:

None applicable.

NOTIFICATION:

None Applicable