



**CITY OF FORT BRAGG**

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**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE ITEM SUMMARY REPORT**

**MEETING DATE:** October 3, 2018  
**TO:** Finance and Administration Committee  
**FROM:** Scott Schneider, Administrative Services Director  
**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** **Receive Report and Consider Recommendation to City Council Regarding Proposed Implementation of Hiring and Recruitment Bonuses for the Police Officer Classification**

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**BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW:**

The City of Fort Bragg currently has 10 Police Officer positions within the Department. Currently, 8 of those positions are filled with an active ongoing recruitment underway to fill the last two open positions. Recruitment efforts have been consistent over the past couple of years in trying to fully staff the Officer positions within the department with no success.

Current recruitment efforts include social media, word of mouth, advertising in local papers as well as buying ads on websites which have historically been successful in attracting candidates. In addition, visits to local Police Academies have taken place to entice recent or upcoming graduates to work in Fort Bragg. Approximately \$2,000 has historically been spent for each recruiting effort on advertising for Police Officers.

Despite these ongoing efforts, the City has been unsuccessful in hiring for the Police Officer position. The last effort resulted in a full set of interviews with three candidates considered for employment. All three candidates, for a multitude of reasons, none of which the City had any control over, did not pass the pre-employment process in order to be offered employment with the City.

City Administration, in discussions with the Fort Bragg Police Association (FBPA), came up with a proposal to implement two types of bonuses in order to help fill the current and any future open Police Officer positions. While two positions are currently open, there is a good chance with the filling of the currently vacant Sergeant position, an additional Officer will need to be recruited and hired. These recruitments are going to prove to be very difficult as the competition for successful candidates is fierce. Where several years ago only a few agencies were recruiting for Officers, in looking at the POST website at the time of the writing of this report, 330 Officer positions are open in California.

In order to explore current trends, an informal survey was done of other Cities in Northern California regarding their recruitment activities and bonuses. Many cities communicated similar

failed attempts at recruiting Officers in their communities. 13 cities responded with specific details with 6 of them providing bonuses of at least \$5,000 and several others exploring options to put bonuses in place. If we are to be successful in filling open Officer positions now or in the future, the City needs to be more competitive in its recruiting efforts.

Part of the strategy to be more competitive is to increase advertising – specifically in the Press Democrat and other advertising avenues throughout the North Bay. This can be expensive and Staff will closely monitor the effects of said advertising. However, in order to increase our chances at a successful recruitment(s), Staff along with the FBPA, have discussed implementing two types of bonuses.

The first, a hiring bonus, would be given to candidates who are offered a final offer letter of employment from the City. Two levels of hiring bonuses are being recommended. For lateral candidates (those with experience and with a basic POST certificate) \$6,000 would be given at the signing of the final offer letter of employment; however \$3,000 or half would be subject to repayment if the 18-month probation is not completed. For recruit candidates (those that have no experience and/or no POST certificate) \$5,000 would be offered and given at the time of the final offer letter of employment, also subject to repayment of 50%, if 18-month probation is not completed.

The second bonus, a recruitment bonus, would be offered to members of the Police Department who successfully recruit an applicant to work for Fort Bragg. It is believed this type of bonus will motivate current members of the department to actively recruit candidates they feel will be a good fit with the department. The bonus, proposed at \$4,000, would be given at two stages - \$2,000 at the signing of the final offer letter and \$2,000 upon completion of the Field Training program.

Staff is seeking feedback and a recommendation we can take back to the FBPA and, ultimately, City Council for approval in order to implement the bonuses as soon as possible. With the current vacant positions within the department, current budget exists should the bonuses be approved.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommend the proposed bonuses in the recruitment and hiring of Police Officers.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

Provide direction to staff for revision of the proposed plan.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposed bonus program summary
2. Informal Officer recruitment survey results