



Legislation Text

File #: 22-718, **Version:** 1

Adopt a Resolution to Approve and Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Side Letter Agreement to the Memorandum of Understanding Between the City of San Leandro and the San Leandro City Employees Association (SLCEA) to Amend Certain Terms for Public Safety Dispatcher Classifications and to Amend the SLCEA Salary Schedule

COUNCIL PRIORITY

- Public Safety
- Infrastructure

SUMMARY

Due to emergency staffing issues, the City of San Leandro opened discussions with the San Leandro City Employees Association (SLCEA) to amend certain terms in the current Memorandum of Understanding for Public Safety Dispatchers, Senior Public Safety Dispatchers, and Public Safety Dispatcher Supervisors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution approving and authorizing the City Manager to execute a Side Letter Agreement to amend the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of San Leandro and the San Leandro City Employees' Association (SLCEA) and the respective SLCEA salary schedule.

BACKGROUND

The City's current Memorandum of Understanding with the San Leandro City Employees' Association (SLCEA) is for the period January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024. The City is currently experiencing significant difficulty in both attracting and retaining qualified dispatch staff for the Police Department's Communications Center.

The Communications Center is currently budgeted for 12 full-time Public Safety Dispatcher positions, two Senior Public Safety Dispatchers, and two Public Safety Dispatcher Supervisors. The primary function of the Communications Center is to answer community emergency and non-emergency calls for police services and to dispatch and provide critical communications to the appropriate emergency services personnel. The Center operates twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, including weekends and holidays. In 2021, San Leandro's dispatch team fielded 100,802 calls.

Over the last few years, it has been typical for the Communications Center to operate with a number of vacant positions. Public Safety Dispatcher is an inherently difficult position to fill as it requires an applicant with a special skill set. As the Communications Center is a twenty-four hour operation, a dispatcher must also be able to do shift work, including nights, weekends, and holidays. Dispatchers

are generally confined to the Communications Center for the entire shift, which is typically either a ten or twelve hour period. Due in part to staff vacancies, the dispatch staff are also subject to working mandatory overtime. In 2021, dispatchers worked a total of approximately 4,040 hours of overtime, almost equivalent to two full-time positions.

In addition to the challenging work conditions, the selection and training standards for Public Safety Dispatchers, established by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), results in a comprehensive and lengthy hiring process, including pre-employment testing, a comprehensive background screening, security clearances, and medical, polygraph, and psychological exams. Due to the rigorous standards, many candidates are not able to successfully complete the background process. For those applicants who are successful in completing the process, it takes approximately one year from the time of application to operate as a solo dispatcher.

In an effort to attract qualified candidates, the City conducted numerous recruitments to attract both lateral Public Safety Dispatchers from other public agencies and entry-level dispatchers new to the field. Despite the best efforts of the Human Resources and the Police Departments to recruit and retain qualified staff, the City has been unable to successfully fill and maintain full staffing levels in the Communications Center and has experienced a high turnover rate. Both current and former employees have cited pay and benefits as reasons to pursue other employment. Based on these concerns regarding pay and benefits, and the difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified candidates, the City conducted a labor market survey. In a review of total compensation for comparator benchmark agencies, San Leandro is currently well below the median.

Analysis

To address the extraordinary recruitment and retention issue, representatives from the City and the San Leandro City Employees' Association (SLCEA) met and conferred on the changes to the salary and benefits for dispatch staff intended to mitigate the critical staffing shortage. The following is a summary of the provisions from the tentative agreement.

Compensation

A special salary adjustment of 12.5% effective upon City Council approval, for the following dispatch classifications: Public Safety Dispatcher, Senior Public Safety Dispatcher, and Public Safety Dispatcher Supervisor.

Specialty Pays

- Field Training Officer Pay will increase from \$25 to \$75 per day.
- Standby Pay will increase from one (1) hour to two (2) hours' pay at the employee's straight time hourly rate when assigned on each normal workday and shall receive a total of three (3) hours' pay at the employee's regular hourly rate on regularly scheduled days off and City holidays.
- New POST Certification Pay - Employees who obtain their POST Dispatcher Intermediate Certificate will receive 2.5% of base salary. Employees who obtain their POST Dispatcher Advanced Certificate will receive 5% of base salary (total percent not to exceed 5%).

Vacation Leave

POST-certified lateral hires will accrue vacation at the rate commensurate with their total years of Public Safety Dispatcher experience. Given the extremely competitive labor market agencies are facing, the City will utilize this as a recruiting tool along with other benefits to help differentiate itself against competitors.

Salary Schedules

The SLCEA salary schedule has been updated to reflect the proposed 12.5% salary adjustment for the classifications assigned to dispatch and the modified salary ranges are presented to Council for consideration and approval.

Previous Action

- On April 4, 2022, by Resolution No. 2022-051, the City Council approved the prior SLCEA MOU for the period January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024.

Fiscal Impacts

The proposed changes would go into effect December 20, 2022. The terms will result in a Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (January 1, 2023-June 30, 2023) cost of \$182,771 but will not impact the City's General Fund unrestricted fund balance, because there is sufficient funding from appropriations in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 adopted budget to absorb the cost. Costs for the remaining fiscal years affected by the term of the MOU will require Council appropriation as part of actions to be undertaken through subsequent biennial budget processes to the corresponding salary allocations as follows:

- Fiscal Year 2023-2024: \$382,671
- Fiscal Year 2024-2025: \$395,108

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution amending the SLCEA MOU

Attachment B: Side Letter of Agreement to Amend the SLCEA MOU

Attachment B: SLCEA Salary Schedule

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