
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Subject: Discuss Strategies and adjustments for retaining and recruiting police officers, changes to compensation, residency, recruitment and vacation

Background Summary:

Something that many communities around the country and the state of Iowa are dealing with police officer recruitment and retention. Over the years it has become increasingly difficult to find qualified candidates to hire onto the police department. It has become increasingly difficult to find people who want to work in law enforcement over the last year. We are currently short three officers and other communities are having a tougher time finding and retaining officers. Many communities are seriously looking at ways to fill their ranks.

Most recently the City of Mason City (short about 14 of 40 officers) made some significant changes that could very well impact us directly in Charles city. Mason City changed a number of things including wages and service time, but they have also opened up their residency requirement to allow officers to live within 30 miles of Mason City. This change would allow certified officers currently employed by Charles City to readily become officers of Mason City. We been asked by the Union representing the police to consider some changes in order to help retain existing officers and recruit new officers.

Requests include:

- Adding of two additional “steps” for employment year 8 and year 10 (currently offer steps at 1,2,3,4 & 6 years)
- \$2/hr. wage increase across the board increase for all officers
- Additional 5% increase in wages
- Officers receive one week of vacation at hire (currently need to wait one year)
- Residency opened up beyond existing 10 miles (consider matching Mason City at 30 miles)

Something we’ve already been talking about at a staff level is considering a signing bonus for certified officers of \$5,000. Payable over three years. Also, if we consider loosening the residency requirement to match Mason City, we would also like to implement a “residency stipend” of \$2,000 a year for officers who choose to live inside city limits.

Time is short as Mason City is looking to hire new officers yet in August, so we’d like to reply back to the union with our general intent as soon as possible. We cannot compete dollar for dollar with what Mason City is offering but perhaps we can close the gap enough to retain some existing officers as well as entice new applicants to come to Charles City.

I am currently working on the details about how these changes impact the PD command staff and adjustment in salaries that you would need to do there, and hope to have a full picture for council meeting on Monday.