



Kensington Police Protection & Community Services District

Item #1

Date: October 26, 2021
To: Board of Directors
From: Rick Benson, Interim General Manager
Mike Gancasz, Police Chief
Subject: Police Officer Signing and Referral Bonus

Recommendation

Approve a signing bonus for new officers, retention bonus for current officers and a referral bonus for district employees responsible for referring candidates ultimately hired by the department.

Background

In order to enhance and improve the service to the public, the Kensington Police Department has gone through a great deal of change over the last two years. The force has purposely seen significant turnover. Several new officers have been added while others have left the force. Recruitment of officers has been an ongoing endeavor with mixed results.

During the same time period, much as happened to the profession outside the control of our local department. Many individuals have chosen to leave police service and there are fewer young recruits moving into the career. These market forces have made it even more difficult for our department to recruit and retain good officers.

At the October 14 Board meeting a proposal was presented to approve a \$3,000 signing bonus for new officers who join and maintain their employment with the Kensington Police Department. At that time your Board directed that the item be reintroduced at a special meeting to allow for more flexibility in the bonus amount.

Discussion

Currently, staffing of the Kensington Police Department is at a critical stage. During the last few weeks two officers have decided to move on to other departments. It is becoming more and more difficult to recruit qualified applicants at precisely the time they are most needed.

This problem is not unique to Kensington and more and more Departments have turned to offering a signing bonus for new officers who come to their departments and make a

commitment to stay for a specified period of time. It is not uncommon to see signing bonuses well over \$10,000 being offered. It has become so common that new recruits are now expecting to see a signing bonus in their initial offering.

Rationale for Recommendation

In order to assist in being competitive in recruiting officers the District needs to offer a more competitive package. A signing bonus in the amount of \$10,000 is recommended as one way to attract new recruits. The recommended proposal is that effective upon approval, the bonus will be paid to lateral officers and academy graduates hired by the Kensington Police Department as follows:

- \$2,000 at time of appointment.
- \$2,000 at the completion of six (6) months successful service.
- \$2,000 at completion of probation (12 months lateral, 18 months academy grad)
- \$2,000 at completion of two years' service (24 months)
- \$2,000 at completion of three years' service.

Given that obtaining qualified officers has become so competitive, it is also recommended that Kensington officers currently serving also be given a retention bonus so as to make them less likely to leave the department for other jurisdictions. Except for any current officer who has not yet completed their probationary period, it is proposed that the bonus be structured similarly to the signing bonus given to new officers. An officer on probation will receive their first bonus immediately after reaching permanent status. Other officers will receive a bonus as follows:

- \$2,000 on January 1, 2022
- \$2,000 on July 1, 2022
- \$2,000 on January 1, 2023
- \$2,000 on July 1, 2023
- \$2,000 on January 1, 2023

The bonus will be included in the first paycheck following those dates. It is further recommended that the bonus program expire when the force reaches full staffing or December 31, 2023, whichever comes first.

It should also be noted that since this is a change in compensation it is subject to approval by the officers' association.

Finally, it is also deemed helpful to make sure that other members of the KPPCSD staff are actively working to bring new individuals into the department's ranks. Therefore, a bonus of \$1,000 is recommended to any KPPCSD employee responsible for referring a new officer. This bonus will be paid in full after the new recruit has served for six months.

Financial Impact

The financial impact is dependent upon the number of new officers recruited, therefore the ultimate amount is unknown. However, the maximum possible impact is approximately \$90,000. Given the number of vacancies within the force, salary savings this year alone are

more than adequate to cover these incentives.