

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 18, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM:  BRUCE JOHNSON, ACTING CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES (COPS), FOR FUNDING FROM THE COPS HIRING PROGRAM (CHP)

ISSUE: Consideration of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice to obtain funding available through the COPS Hiring Program (CHP) for the hiring and rehiring of additional career law enforcement officers.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the grant application (due May 25, 2011) to the U.S. Department of Justice which provides 100 percent funding for approved entry-level salaries and benefits for 3 years (36 months) for newly-hired, full time sworn officer positions (including filling existing unfunded vacancies); and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

DISCUSSION: The U.S. Department of Justice is offering funding through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The CHP is a competitive grant program that provides funding directly to law enforcement agencies having primary law enforcement authority to impact their community policing capacity and problem solving efforts. This grant request is for 6 community policing related sworn positions and will be expended over a three year period (Federal FY11, FY12 and FY13). Grant funds will be used to hire the following 6 sworn positions the Police Department lost due to budget constraints:

- 2 Domestic Violence Investigators (FY10)
- 3 Tactical Anti-Crime Investigators (FY10, FY11)
- 1 Community Oriented Policing Officer (FY11)

During the FY 2012 Strategic Plan budgeting process, the Police Department identified the need to fund these positions as a high priority in the area of community oriented policing services. These positions, however, were not requested in the proposed budget due to limited resources for FY 2012.

BACKGROUND: The mission of the Alexandria Police Department is to provide competent, courteous, professional, and community oriented police services. We are committed to maintaining and enhancing a strong and productive partnership with the community to continue to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in all of Alexandria's neighborhoods. We are dedicated to protecting life and property while assuring fair and equal treatment to everyone. Regaining these lost community oriented policing positions is pertinent in achieving this core mission.

The goal of community policing is to improve the quality of life of citizens by identifying and addressing crime issues. In the traditional policing model, officers are reactive because they typically respond to emergency calls and arrest criminals. Whereas the community policing model allows for more proactive policing because it allows for officers to work closely with members of the community, city agencies, and Departmental sections to find out what causes crime and disorder and attempt to creatively solve problems in their assigned communities. Officers act as liaisons between communities and various organizations to solve problems and break down the anonymity often perceived by members of the public. When community policing is properly deployed, problems can often be resolved before they start.

The Police Department's goal of developing and maintaining the capacity to safely, effectively, and efficiently deliver public safety services with an emphasis on core public safety programs has been significantly impaired due to the loss of these positions. Without these positions, targeted neighborhoods and programs (areas with higher levels of crime) will continue to receive reduced levels of community policing.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Alexandria Police Department will be requesting \$408,000 per year for the next three Federal fiscal years. There is no local match requirement. However, at the conclusion of the 36 months of federal funding (Federal FY11, FY12, FY13), grantees must retain all sworn officer positions awarded under the CHP grant for a minimum of one additional year (Federal FY14). The City will need to provide funding for the six positions for a full year following the grant. Based on the current entry-level police officer salary and benefit cost projections, the total one-year cost for these positions will be \$425,000. There is no funding available in the Police Department budget to pay for these positions, and the Department will request an adjustment to base during the City's FY 2015 budget process. During that year, the Police Department will re-evaluate the need for these positions and make a recommendation to City Council on whether funding for these positions should be continued or eliminated.

STAFF:

Earl Cook, Police Chief
Scott Ogden, City Council Liaison/TAC, Patrol Operation Bureau
Elisabeth Wheel, Division Chief, Police, Fiscal Management