

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 22, 2003

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION FOR FUNDING TO ADD POLICE OFFICERS UNDER THE COPS UNIVERSAL HIRING PROGRAM

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a grant application from the U.S. Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, Universal Hiring Program.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Approve the grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice for a total of \$1,444,941 for 3 years, of which the federal share is \$659,979 and the City share is \$784,962;
2. Contingent upon federal approval of this grant application, allocate \$282,540 from the City's FY 2004 Contingent Reserve; and
- 3.. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

It should be noted that the COPS program requires that the local government plan to retain grant-funded officers for a period of one full budget cycle after the grant expires. The City has accomplished the retention of 12 COPS-funded officers since 1993, and staff would work with OMB in FY 2007 to accomplish a retention plan.

DISCUSSION: The proposed grant is being submitted under the federal COPS Universal Hiring Program, for grants to improve local law enforcement terrorism preparedness and response through community policing. On May 2, 2003 staff were able to access and download the application package from the Department of Justice website. It is due to the Justice Department by June 6, 2003.

Since September 11, 2001, the Bush administration has redirected the COPS program grants from school and neighborhood specific programs toward preparing for and responding to terrorism. The COPS grant requested would provide local governments with police officers for 3 years and cover approximately 45% of the officers' salary and benefit costs for that entire period. The City has used COPS grants since 1993 to build its community policing programs, to staff a small gang

intervention unit, to provide 4 school resource officers to the School system, and to provide 4 Residential Police Officers in Alexandria.

The proposed grant would provide a core group of 9 community-policing officers who would focus on the broad area of homeland security with specific responsibility for:

- providing security and surveillance during high-profile, high-risk events (such as the Moussaoui trials, high national threat alert periods, and important political gatherings);
- providing a rapid response team for emergencies and major incidents;
- providing training and education for terrorism responsiveness, preparedness and community protection programs; and,
- handling special surveillance, intelligence gathering, protective equipment for first responders, and other duties associated with homeland security.

The officers would be assigned to the Community Support Section, and they will be available for community policing operations and other police functions during some of their work time.

The Police Department would use the grant to hire 9 additional police officers. We would assign 8 veteran officers and one sergeant to the new core group and the new officers will be assigned to police duties. For FY 2004, the Police Department requested 10 additional police officers to handle increased requests for services on patrol beats due to large development projects in the City, and to improve the City's response to terrorism and homeland security issues. As noted in my Budget Message, I was unable to recommend City funding for additional public safety personnel for FY 2004. This grant would enable the City to leverage its own resources to fund 9 officers at 55 percent of their cost over 3 years instead of 100 percent of their cost, reducing City costs by about \$660,000. I recommend that City Council approve the grant request.

FISCAL IMPACT: If a grant is awarded, the federal government would provide up to \$75,000 per officer for a period of 3 years, or \$675,000 for the 9 requested officer positions. The City must provide a match to fully fund each officer plus the necessary vehicles, uniforms, and equipment. In addition, the City share must increase each year under the COPS grant rules.

In FY 2004, the City share will be \$136,008 for 30 percent of 9 officers' salary and benefits, plus \$146,532 for 4 cruisers, issued uniforms, radios and equipment, making the total City share \$282,540. The federal share will be \$317,340 for 70 percent of the salary and benefits costs for 9 officers. It is recommended that the \$282,540 in City funding for FY 2004 originate from the FY 2004 Contingent Reserve account (\$925,000 was budgeted for FY 2004).

In FY 2005 the estimated federal and City shares would be equal, at \$240,534 each (there are no additional vehicle or equipment costs). In FY 2006 the federal share would be \$102,105 and the City share would be \$408,420. As a grant condition in the fourth year the City must plan to retain the positions at City's cost for at least one full budget cycle (FY 2007). After the phase-out of federal funds, the City retained at its cost all of its initially COPS-funded officers since 1993.

The City is responsible for the normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the administering agency, as well as by the Office of Management and Budget and by the Finance Department.

ATTACHMENTS: None. The grant application may be reviewed in the Office of Management and Budget, Room 3600, City Hall during normal working hours.

STAFF:

Charles Samarra, Police Chief

Michele Evans, Assistant City Manager

Pete Crawford, Police Captain, Special Operations Division

Amy Flenniken, Division Chief, Fiscal Management, Police

Al Coleman, OMB Analyst