



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, February 25, 2025

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PERSONNEL COMMISSION
POLICE CHIEF ZAMORA
ASSISTANT CHIEF OF POLICE RODRIGUEZ

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF NEW AND REVISED WATSONVILLE POLICE
DEPARTMENT JOB CLASSIFICATIONS

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve and authorize the following new and revised classifications and proposed salaries, where applicable:

- Police Civilian Manager at a salary range of \$50.30 - \$67.41 per hour or \$8,719 - \$11,684 per month (new job description)
- Investigative Specialist at a salary range of \$31.95 - \$42.81 per hour or \$5,537 - \$7,420 per month (new job description)
- Police Sergeant at established salary range of \$56.35 - \$75.52 per hour or \$9,768.16 - \$13,090.31 per month (revised job description)

The Personnel Commission considered these items at its February 18, 2025, meeting and recommends City Council approval. These job classifications, descriptions and salaries have been reviewed and approved by the bargaining groups representing these classifications.

DISCUSSION:

The Watsonville Police Department (WPD) is facing staffing challenges, including recruitment and retention. To address these challenges, the WPD wants to hire professional staff to take roles traditionally handled by sworn personnel, especially those with administrative tasks, this allows officers to focus on more critical law enforcement activities. Creating professional positions in key areas will bridge the gap in the current vacancies and provide a fiscally responsible way to meet the needs of the Watsonville community. Below is a description of the new and revised classifications:

Police Civilian Manager: this position will improve service quality, bolster productivity, stabilize key agency roles and provide civilian insight and perspective to department policies and procedures. The Police Civilian Manager will supervise some activities and operations that are currently assigned to a sergeant and captains, such as police records, property and evidence, crime analysis and community services programming. Historically,

a sergeant or captain oversees these units and they rotate approximately every 3 years; this rotation causes interruptions in projects and creates instability because a new captain has to be re-introduced to the existing activities, programming and operations. The transfer of administrative duties from sworn personnel to this position will allow sworn personnel to increase oversight and supervision to the patrol, detectives, and special units. This position is proposed to be added to the Management bargaining group and placed at a salary that is consistent with other managers within that unit. This position is part of the current classification and compensation city-wide study, and is subject to change through that process.

In 2024, the WPD retained the Matrix Consulting Group to conduct a comprehensive analysis of police operations to determine appropriate and optimum staffing levels while ensuring efficient operation management. As part of the organization and management recommendations, the Matrix Consulting Group recommended that the department hire a non-sworn mid-management position. A Police Civilian Manager would improve programming by providing the units with stability, consistency and increased efficiency.

Investigative Specialist: this is a non-sworn position that will support detectives and officers by investigating cases, collecting evidence and property, and preparing court filing packages. Duties will include assisting in criminal, missing persons, and/or other assigned investigations; evaluation of case facts, cellphone and digital data analysis, preparing and presenting investigative findings to sworn personnel and performing other related duties as assigned. Given the limited staffing, the number of detectives under the Specialist Operations Division has been reduced from 6 to 4, the average case load of a detective is between 20-30, and this division is in dire need of assistance. If cases are not expedited, the community can lose faith in systems, but having an investigative specialist assisting detectives can expedite these cases that involve homicides, robberies, burglaries, assaults, arson, fraud, vandalism, sexual assaults, missing persons and narcotic investigations among others. This position has been created in other law enforcement agencies in order to address the staffing shortages and fill needed gaps in their law enforcement organizations.

This position is proposed to be added to the Mid-Management bargaining group and the salary scale is consistent with a similar job description in a nearby law enforcement agency. This position is part of the current classification and compensation city-wide study, and is subject to change through that process.

Police Sergeant: this sworn position supervises, assigns, trains and evaluates employees as assigned; ensures that department policies, procedures and protocols are followed by staff, and receives reports of emergencies and determines priority and appropriate action to be taken among other duties. The WPD is proposing a minor change to the Police Sergeant job description that removes the requirement to be a WPD officer for 3 years and will be replaced with the following:

- Five years of continuous experience as a California Peace Officer in a Police or Sheriff Department pursuant to PC 830.1 and completion of probationary period

This minor change is intended to support the ability of lateral officers coming to the department with experience to test for promotional opportunities sooner. Making this change could assist with the recruitment with hiring of lateral police officers. Hiring lateral police officers is an advantage as they have experience, faster onboarding due to prior training, and increased diversity in perspectives. Removing the three year wait to compete for a promotional opportunity will make coming over as a lateral officer more attractive. This position is part of the current classification and compensation city-wide study, and is subject to change through that process.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

These new job descriptions align with the following strategic plan goals:

- 5-Public Safety
- 7-Efficient and Well-performing Government

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The WPD is proposing to eliminate a police sergeant position and use these funds to absorb the hiring of the two new civilian positions.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

No reasonable alternatives are known at this time.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

None.