



WEST ALLIS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Patrick S. Mitchell
Chief of Police

Robert Fletcher
Deputy Chief of Police

Christopher Marks
Deputy Chief of Police

Date: July 8th, 2020

To: Chief Patrick S. Mitchell

From: Dep. Chief Robert Fletcher

RE: Request to Administration and Finance Committee to Hire Part-Time Dispatchers

This memo is to outline the basis for requesting approval from the West Allis Common Council's Administration and Finance Committee for the West Allis Police Department to start a hiring process for part-time dispatchers and to promote a current part-time dispatcher to an FTE position. In accordance with the 2020 City of West Allis budget, the WAPD is budgeted for 9 full time dispatchers and 8 LTE part time dispatchers. Expenditures for the LTE part time dispatchers are for an amount totaling \$73,500.00. Due to a somewhat recent resignation, the current staffing is 8 full time dispatchers and 6 LTE part-time dispatchers. In early May of 2020, the Common Council instituted a hiring freeze for the City of West Allis due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore in order to start a hiring process and/or promote to a full FTE position, the WAPD needs an approval/exemption to this freeze from the Administration and Finance Committee.

The WAPD Communications Center is normally staffed with a minimum of 1 supervisor and two dispatchers. An additional dispatcher may be scheduled during peak dispatch times such as weekends during the summer months, holidays and special events. Part-time dispatchers are used to cover dispatchers calling in sick, extra time off accrued by full time dispatchers, summer weekends and special events. In 2019, part-time dispatchers covered approximately 1,558.25 hours of duty time in the dispatch center.

Communication Center Manager Doreen Blattner researched the amount of time off coverage needed for the dispatch center at 1,149.53hrs. This includes all vacation time, comp time and random holidays. In addition, approximately 1,000 full time dispatcher hours would need to be covered due to being short one full-time dispatcher. Although all of the special events for 2020 have been cancelled, the communications center will staff an additional 440 extra hours for weekends and holidays. This totals 2,589.53 "extra" hours, without any other sick time usage, that will need to be covered for the remainder of the year.

In 2019, the WAPD's part time dispatchers each worked an average of 243.54 hours during the year. The WAPD does not have any policy requiring a minimum number of hours a part time dispatcher must work. Of the six current part-time dispatchers, 2 hold other full time jobs and two are retired WRS annuitants who are restricted in the number of hours they may work. If this



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workload was to be divided amongst the 6 current part time dispatchers, there average annual hours of work would increase to 431.58 hours of work.

As indicated above, the part-time dispatchers are not required to work a minimum number of hours. If a part-time dispatcher does not cover the extra hours, a full-time dispatcher is required to cover the hours. The average overtime pay rate for a full-time dispatcher is \$31.85 per hour and the average part-time dispatcher pay rate is \$20.34 per hour. As an example if full-time dispatchers on overtime are utilized to cover the additional summer weekend hours the salary cost would be \$9,172.80, if part-time dispatchers filled these hours the cost would be \$5,857.92. For the remaining vacation hours, the cost difference is \$25,989.60 for full-timers and \$16,597.44 for part-timers. There is a clear cost savings in having a part-time dispatcher cover the hours.

It is difficult to estimate how many of the "extra" hours the current part-time dispatchers will be willing to cover. But it is not realistic to think the current part-timers would be willing or able to almost double the amount of hours they work in a year. If the WAPD hired s additional part-time dispatchers and the extra hours were divided evenly, the average annual workload for a part-time dispatcher would be 323.69 hours. This would still an almost 80 hour increase per year for each part-time dispatcher. If the WAPD is permitted to promote a current part-time dispatcher to a FTE position as well as hire additional part-time dispatchers, the annual average hours of a part-time dispatcher would decrease.

In addition to the cost savings of not having a full-time dispatcher work fill hours at the overtime rate, there are additional benefits to not having overtime hours worked. These include reducing employee burnout, reducing stress, increasing morale and improving work/life balance. There is also an increase in flexibility of schedules for everybody in the dispatch center from supervisors to full and part time dispatcher. All of this leads to an efficient, well operating communications center.

Based upon all of the above reasons the WAPD is respectfully requesting permission to promote a current part-time dispatcher to a FTE positon and hire additional part-time dispatchers. If filling the FTE position is not economically feasible at this time, as an alternative the WAPD is requesting permission to fill the part-time dispatcher positions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert Fletcher".

Robert Fletcher
Deputy Chief of Police – Support Services