

**Police Recruiting, Retention & Attrition  
Executive Summary**

CONN. L. Arundel  
ITEM NO. 2017-0012  
5, 23, 17  
CLERK'S OFFICE

Since August 2016, the County Operations and Public Safety (COPS) Committee of the Board of Commissioners (BOC) has been reviewing recruiting and retention data for sworn police provided by the Human Resources (HR) Department. Commissioner Gannon, BOC presiding officer and former chair of COPS, requested that HR compile an executive summary of research conducted on police recruiting and retention as oversight responsibility has changed to the Employee Relations and Public Safety Committee in 2017.

Attached please find a notebook with detailed reports and analyses of police pay, recruiting, turnover, staffing level and career progression. Also included are suggestions to improve recruiting and retention. Following is a summary of HR's findings with the corresponding notebook tab listed:

**Police Pay**

The 2016 Pay & Class Study raised the salary ranges for sworn police. Rank-and-file pay is shown below:

<u>Job Classification &amp; Grade</u>	<u>Salary Range</u>	<u>Starting Pay w/o Degree</u>	<u>Starting pay with degree</u>
Police Recruit (Grade 14):	\$38,151 - \$59,134	\$38,151	\$40,059
Police Officer (Grade 15):	\$39,747 - \$61,607		
Senior Police Officer (Grade 16):	\$41,343 - \$64,081		
Master Police Officer (Grade 19):	\$46,928 - \$72,739		

**Sworn Positions**

As of December 31, 2016, there were 1108 authorized, 834 funded, and 769 filled sworn police positions. The recommended 2017 budget will fund 854. (Inside notebook pocket)

**Turnover**

Voluntary resignations remained relatively constant the past two years. There were 60 resignations in 2016 and 49 in 2015. This was an improvement over 2014 which had 99 resignations. Police turnover is comparable to other County departments with sworn personnel but lower than Watershed and Sanitation. Of surveyed departments (Police, Fire, E911, Marshal, Sheriff, Sanitation and Watershed), E911 was much higher. (Tab 2)

**Pay Progression**

An officer entering the academy previously started at \$37, 956 and within 36 months promoted to Master Police Officer (MPO) at \$42,240. After the Pay & Class Study, Police Recruits start at \$38,151 and 36 months later promote to MPO at \$46,928. The overall percentage increase from Recruit to MPO went from 11% to 23%. (Tab 7)

DeKalb's pay progression from Recruit through MPO is virtually identical to Gwinnett. (Tab 8)

## **Police Recruiting, Retention & Attrition Executive Summary (cont'd)**

An officer who started in 2009 and progressed to MPO by 2016, without annual increases of 5% realized a 24% increase in pay. If the increases had been granted, the officer would have realized a 66% increase in pay. With the Pay & Class Study and reinstatement of 5% annual increases, the officer would realize a 72% increase over the same number of years. (Tab 8)

### **Salary Survey**

A survey of local jurisdictions revealed DeKalb's sworn police salary ranges are competitive with the market as a result of the Pay & Class Study. Average actual pay for Police Officer also is at market. However, average pay for Senior and MPO are 6% and 5% below the market, respectively. This is why it is important to have a mechanism for moving sworn employees through the pay ranges, otherwise pay remains static. (Tab 9)

### **Pay Initiatives**

In addition to the 2016 Pay & Class Study increases, a number of other pay enhancements were implemented over the past several years. These included a 3% lump-sum payment for sworn personnel in 2013, a 3% countywide COLA in 2014, and tuition reimbursement up to \$2K annually for sworn police starting 2015. Police also implemented in 2015 a take-home car program for officers residing within a certain radius of DeKalb. (Tab 6)

### **Staff Recommendations and Focus Group**

A number of strategies have been suggested to improve recruitment and retention going forward. Some of these ideas include signing incentives with service commitments, increasing hazardous duty pay, greater flexibility in hiring requirements, changes to current insurance and pension benefits, reimbursing travel and costs of Georgia equivalency certification for out-of-state officers, and perhaps providing shift differential pay. (Tab 5)

A focus group of sworn personnel was convened in September 2016 to discuss factors affecting recruiting and retention. Some of the issues voiced by this group included financial concerns due to increase in pension and insurance costs and lack of regular pay increases. Other concerns expressed related to work environment - lack of support and appreciation from the administration and public and a desire to keep the 4-day, 10-hour work schedule. Leadership topics discussed were understaffing, outdated management styles, lack of stability in leadership, and lack of growth opportunities. (Tab 10)

### **Unexplored Options**

Analyze where overtime is highest to identify most critical staffing areas. Compare cost of overtime for current officers to cost of hiring new officers (salaries and benefits).

It was suggested that DeKalb consider hiring Green Card holders as police officers, however, the State of Georgia requires officers to be U.S. citizens.

Reach out to local Hispanic and Asian communities for recruiting. Consider initiating programs in schools to build relationships and interest in law enforcement.