

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: July 24, 2025

From: Police Department

Subject: Police Department Staffing

Recommended Action: Authorize the over-hire of one Police Officer Trainee position for a period of three months, while concurrently holding a vacant Community Service Officer position to offset the cost.

Background: The Capitola Police Department continues to face critical staffing challenges due to the time required for new officers to complete the Police Academy and subsequent field training. Even with proactive hiring, there is a significant delay—often exceeding six months—before newly hired officers are available for solo patrol duty.

While the Department has recently hired new personnel, those officers remain unavailable for full deployment due to ongoing training requirements. As a result, the Department is experiencing operational strain, with existing staff working extended shifts and overtime to maintain minimum staffing levels and public safety coverage.

Discussion: To ensure continuity of public safety services and to relieve pressure on current staff, staff recommends over-hiring one full-time Police Officer Trainee, utilizing the savings from two Community Service Officer (CSO) vacancies.

This approach will allow the Department to plan for anticipated retirements and training delays while maintaining staffing flexibility. This over-hire would be for a 3-month period based on the retirement date of a Senior Officer in November 2025. Once the Senior Officer officially retires, the Police Department will begin the hiring process to fill the CSO positions.

Over-hiring is a proactive strategy that reduces overtime costs, improves officer safety and wellness, and ensures consistent public safety services during the transitional period.

Fiscal Impact: The cost of a police officer trainee is approximately \$10,000 per month. However, this cost will be offset by existing monthly savings from the two vacant CSO positions (approximately \$19,600 per month).

Report Prepared By: Sarah Ryan, Chief of Police

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager