

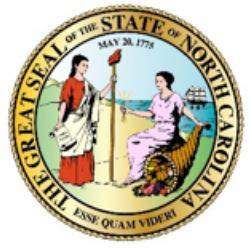


HILLSBOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Chief of Police Duane Hampton



Memo To: Town Manager Eric Peterson
From: Chief of Police Duane Hampton
Date: September 27, 2023
Subject: Proposal to Change Police Career Progression

We are proposing a revision to our career progression system to create more opportunities for officers to use the system and to simplify some aspects of the system. We are proposing to reduce the levels of advancement from three levels (Officer 1st Class, Senior Officer and Master Officer) to two (Officer 1st Class and Corporal) and to increase the associated raise for advancement from 2.5% to 5%. We are also proposing to introduce specializations whereby officers can be recognized as a specialist in specific areas based on their completing defined criteria and earn an additional 2.5% increase for holding a specialization.

Background

HPDs career progression system was established in 2012 as a way to give officers the ability to advance their careers when there were not opportunities to seek formal promotion. It was also established as a tool for recruiting and retention.

As it stands now, our system has 3 levels of advancement – Officer 1st Class, Senior Officer and Master Officer and each step comes with a 2.5% pay increase.

Currently Officer 1st Class, Senior Officer and Master Officer are all in separate salary grades (102, 201, 202) with a 5% spread between each grade. We additionally have Corporal as a salary grade as well (202) and it is an additional 5% above Master Officer. The next rank, Sergeant (402) is 10% above the corporal band. What this means is that between Officer 1st Class and Sergeant there is about a 26% increase in the bands.

Because of the age of our staff (relatively young/new officers) we have found that there has not been very much movement in our career progression system, and what there has been has been limited to primarily Officer 1st class. After taking a hard look at our staffing and how they may progress, we really do not feel that the three levels of advancement are needed and would like to use this as an opportunity to add in something different.

Proposal

We are proposing to change career progression to include two components: *Advancements* and *Specializations*.

Advancement – We would like to drop our current advancement from three levels to two. The two levels of advancement would be Officer 1st Class and Corporal. These would largely stay the same in terms of requirements as the current Officer 1st Class and Senior Officer. The main difference is that we would make the time requirement 12 months rather than the current 18 months. The Corporals would also have a specific requirement to attend 60 hours of supervisory training including First Line and a supervisor liability course so the Corporals would be available to be used as a fill-in supervisor when sergeants and Lieutenants are out.

I would like to see us change the increase from 2.5% to 5% for both levels. There is plenty of room for this within the band structure and I think this would have an impact on folks pursuing it and would help with salary advancement and retention.

Specializations – We would create 6 areas officers can specialize in. Each one would have specific training requirements officers had to complete, and then annual requirements they would have to fulfill to maintain it. The 6 specializations would be:

- Tactical and Medical
- Collision Investigation
- Drug and Traffic Enforcement
- Investigations
- Community Policing, and
- K9

Officers would be allowed to hold 2 specializations and would receive a 2.5% increase for each specialization they hold.

So overall, (assuming we change the advancements to 5% steps) if an officer advances through 1st class to Corporal, and holds 2 specializations, they would be getting a total of 15% increase over the two year period on top of any normal merit/COLA increases. Again, our existing pay bands clearly have room for this and I think it would be a beneficial and positive change in terms of recruitment and retention.

Cost - If this change does result in officers pursuing career progression more aggressively, then it could cost us 5-10% increases in salary over a 2- year period compared to what they can achieve now, but I think that would be worth it as a retention benefit and may make us able to not have to increase starting salaries as much or as quickly to keep out folks.

Conclusion

We believe this proposal would be well suited for our agency, is innovative and aligns with Objective 2 of our Strategic Plan: “Provide quality municipal services through operational excellence and a culture of innovation.” This change will also help us remain competitive, improve our retention and give us an edge when trying to secure the best quality candidates.