



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 11/07/2023

ITEM NO: 12

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DATE: October 30, 2023  
TO: Mayor and Town Council  
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager  
SUBJECT: Approve a Side Letter of Agreement Between the Town of Los Gatos and the Town Employee Association (TEA) to establish a "Retention and Recruitment Bonus" for Dispatch Classifications Beginning July 9, 2023 and Ending June 30, 2024, Authorize the Town Manager to Execute the Side Letter, and Authorize a FY 2023/24 Expenditure Budget Adjustment in the Amount of \$103,100 from the Capital/Special Projects Reserve

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve a Side Letter of Agreement between the Town of Los Gatos and the Town Employee Association (TEA) (Attachment 1) to establish a "Retention and Recruitment Bonus" for Dispatch classifications beginning July 9, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024, authorize the Town Manager to execute the Side Letter, and authorize a FY 2023/24 Expenditure budget adjustment in the amount of \$103,100 from the Capital/Special Projects Reserve.

**BACKGROUND:**

Public safety departments throughout the nation and State are experiencing a staffing crisis. The attrition in Police Officers and Dispatchers is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, public protests, heightened anti-Police sentiment, reallocation of funding known as "Defund the Police," accelerated resignations and retirements, and a diminished applicant pool.

The Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department (LGMSPD) faces the same challenges. The Town and the Department have implemented innovative recruitment strategies, including the direct involvement of existing staff in outreach and promotion of our opportunities. The Department has also invested in its culture of community policing, wellness, and training to retain qualified personnel. Unfortunately, higher paying public safety agencies are

**PREPARED BY:** Katy Nomura  
Assistant Town Manager

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Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

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BACKGROUND (continued):

incorporating retention pay and other fiscal incentives, while simultaneously emphasizing a healthy organizational culture to prevent loss of personnel.

The LGMSPD is a high-performing agency with an emphasis on maintaining exceptional standards in customer service, both internally and externally. To that extent, the LGMSPD must be able to recruit and retain high quality personnel that exemplify these values.

Dispatch has eight budgeted positions. Currently there are six operational Dispatchers and one in training. In collaboration with the Town's Human Resources Department, the Town is continuously recruiting, interviewing, backgrounding, and offering Dispatch positions.

DISCUSSION:

It is imperative for the Town to incentivize and retain LGMSPD Dispatchers in this ultra-competitive hiring environment, coupled with a historically low pool of qualified applicants. For this reason, the proposed Side Letter offers a modest \$577 per pay period retention bonus for full-time Dispatchers that have successfully completed the required Dispatch training program. The bonus is non-PERSable. The proposal is estimated to cost no more than \$103,100.

The approval of the Side Letter is expected to incentivize staff to stay with LGMSPD as they may be considering other opportunities with more competitive compensation packages and bonuses. The Side Letter also demonstrates recognition and appreciation of the Dispatchers for their extra duties and overtime to assist the community during this period of staffing shortage. The recommended retention bonus is short-term for the entirety of Fiscal Year 2023-24.

CONCLUSION:

Staff has met its obligation to meet and confer with the Town Employee Association (TEA) on the proposed Side Letter. TEA has indicated support for the proposal. Therefore, it is recommended that the Side Letter of Agreement be approved, and the Town Manager be authorized to execute the Side Letter.

COORDINATION:

The preparation of this report was coordinated with the Human Resources Department, Police Department, Finance Department, Town Attorney's Office, and Town Manager's Office.

PAGE 3 OF 3

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FISCAL IMPACT:

To implement the Side Letter, Town Council must also authorize an expenditure budget adjustment in the amount of \$103,100 from the Capital/Special Projects Reserve.

The longer-term fiscal benefits include reducing overtime costs and improving retention to provide essential public safety services to the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

Attachment:

1. Side Letter of Agreement Between Town of Los Gatos and Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department Town Employee Association (TEA)