



## **Report on Police and Dispatch Retention Survey February 12, 2022**

### **Summary**

In January of 2022, Assembly Members Meucci and Kensinger spoke to the Borough Manager regarding a review of the Police and Dispatch Departments by the Public Safety Advisory Board. This item was placed on the agenda for the February 7, 2022, Assembly meeting, but failed to gather enough support. Prior to the meeting, on February 2, 2022, Manager Giesbrecht scheduled a meeting with Assembly Member Meucci, Deputy Clerk Regula, and Police Chief James Kerr. The purpose of this meeting was to go over an employee retention survey developed by Manager Giesbrecht and make any appropriate changes. Also, during this meeting, Chief Kerr, and Manager Giesbrecht explained the process we would follow regarding the administering of the survey, and how the results would be disseminated and used. Assembly Member Meucci appeared to agree with the steps outlined at the meeting, and staff proceeded with the process.

The survey<sup>i</sup> was finalized, delivered to the employees and results were provided to the Manager Wednesday, February 9, 2022. Staff feels there are two major problems needing to be solved: employee retention, and employee recruitment in both Dispatch and among the Officers. While the survey identifies multiple potential issues, staff has developed proposals addressing the top 2-3 in each area for the Assembly and will continue to work on the remaining issues through HR and the Police Command Staff.

The results of the survey show some consistent concerns by both groups, with specific priorities of pay (base pay, longevity, certifications etc.), health care benefits, opportunity for advancement and retirement programs. The small sample size (7 officers, 3 Dispatchers) makes the survey less comprehensive, but the information is useful for starting conversations.

The costs for these potential changes are significant, depending upon what choices the Assembly makes. A property tax increase would likely be required, and this may not be sufficient to fund the full range of issues. If the Assembly chooses to move forward with either of these proposals, decisions will need to be made regarding reductions in other General Fund departments, a deficit budget using General Fund reserves, or some other increase in revenue to fund the programs. For calculating the costs, staff assumed implementation as of July 1, 2022, however this could be modified by the Assembly.

**The proposals for the Assembly are as follows:**

## Proposal 1 Option – Incentive Payments

### Police Officers – Recruitment

- Implement a \$5,000 recruitment incentive payment, \$2,500 distributed at hire, and \$2,500 at 1 year of tenure with the Borough. **Estimated Cost for 2022-23 would be \$5,000.**

### Police Officers – Retention

- Implement longevity incentive payments at 3, 5, and 10 years of \$5,000 each, and \$7,500 at 15 & 20 years. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$40,000.**
- Increase match to Borough Public Safety employees' 457 plan to 6%/7% (6% prior to vesting, and 7% once vested). Current match is 3%/4%. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$15,227 (Officers).**
- Conduct Health Care plan review with all officers to gather and answer questions regarding existing health care plans. This has been done, but none of the Officers attended.

### Dispatchers – Recruitment

- Start new hires at Step C, \$22.38, up from Step A which is currently \$20.14. **No additional costs in 2022-23.**
- Implement a recruitment incentive of \$2,500 payable at one year. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$12,500.**

### Dispatchers – Retention

- Add two additional positions: Chief Dispatcher, and Support Services Supervisor<sup>iii</sup> **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$195,840.83 minus the elimination of the part time Dispatcher position (\$80,657) equaling a revised total cost of \$115,183.**
- Implement longevity incentives at 3, 5, and 10 years. \$2,500 each, and \$3,750 at 15 & 20 years. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$5,000.**
- Add the Police restrooms and the cells to our cleaning service. **Cost for 2022-23 is to be determined.**
- Increase match to Borough Public Safety employees 457 plan to 6% / 7% (6% prior to vesting, and 7% once vested). Current match is 3% / 4%. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$6,186 (includes EMS Coordinator and Dispatchers).**
- Conduct Health Care plan review with all dispatchers/correction officers to gather and answer questions regarding existing health care plans.

**Total Estimated Cost if implemented: \$199,096**

## Proposal 2 Option– Change to the Salary Matrix

### Proposed Police Wage Matrix for FY 23 (effective July 1, 2022)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Administrative Assistant/Dispatcher/Corrections Officer II 3%	\$ 21.25	\$ 22.43	\$ 23.61	\$ 24.11	\$ 24.61	\$ 24.86	\$ 25.11	\$ 25.36
Administrative Assistant/Dispatcher/Corrections Officer III 3%	\$ 21.55	\$ 22.75	\$ 23.95	\$ 24.45	\$ 24.95	\$ 25.20	\$ 25.45	\$ 25.70
<b>Chief Dispatcher/Corrections Officer</b>	<b>\$ 23.33</b>	<b>\$ 24.62</b>	<b>\$ 25.92</b>	<b>\$ 26.42</b>	<b>\$ 26.92</b>	<b>\$ 27.17</b>	<b>\$ 27.42</b>	<b>\$ 27.67</b>
Dispatcher/Corrections Officer 1 4%	\$ 20.95	\$ 22.11	\$ 23.28	\$ 23.78	\$ 24.28	\$ 24.53	\$ 24.78	\$ 25.03
Dispatcher/Corrections Officer 2 4%	\$ 21.45	\$ 22.64	\$ 23.84	\$ 24.34	\$ 24.84	\$ 25.09	\$ 25.34	\$ 25.59
<b>Dispatcher/Corrections Officer 3</b>	<b>\$ 22.46</b>	<b>\$ 23.70</b>	<b>\$ 24.95</b>	<b>\$ 25.45</b>	<b>\$ 25.95</b>	<b>\$ 26.20</b>	<b>\$ 26.45</b>	<b>\$ 26.70</b>
Police Officer 1 3%	\$ 27.46	\$ 28.28	\$ 30.51	\$ 31.01	\$ 31.51	\$ 31.76	\$ 32.01	\$ 32.26
<b>Police Officer 2</b>	<b>\$ 28.22</b>	<b>\$ 29.78</b>	<b>\$ 31.35</b>	<b>\$ 32.85</b>	<b>\$ 33.35</b>	<b>\$ 33.60</b>	<b>\$ 35.60</b>	<b>\$ 37.10</b>
<b>Police Sergeant</b>	<b>\$ 30.19</b>	<b>\$ 31.86</b>	<b>\$ 33.54</b>	<b>\$ 35.04</b>	<b>\$ 35.54</b>	<b>\$ 35.79</b>	<b>\$ 37.79</b>	<b>\$ 39.29</b>
<b>Support Services Supervisor</b>	<b>\$ 25.07</b>	<b>\$ 26.46</b>	<b>\$ 27.85</b>	<b>\$ 28.35</b>	<b>\$ 28.85</b>	<b>\$ 29.10</b>	<b>\$ 29.35</b>	<b>\$ 29.60</b>

Note: The current wage matrix provides for levels of Police Officer (1 & 2) and Dispatcher/Corrections Officer (1, 2 & 3) put in place by former Police Chief Swihart. Police Chief Kerr proposes to return to one level of Police Officer and Dispatcher/Corrections Officer and pay the positions at the highest level in the current matrix.

Included in the attachments you will find the above proposed wages entered into the comp study for the positions of Dispatcher/Corrections Officer 3, Police Officer 2 and Police Sergeant (pages are marked “Option 2 Proposal”).

#### Police Officers – Recruitment

- The negotiated wage matrix (effective July 1, 2022) for the Police Department starts an Officer at \$27.46 per hour. By eliminating the Police Officer 1 position and paying a new hire at the current Police Officer 2 wages, the new hire would start at \$28.22 per hour, which is an increase of \$0.76 per hour. This wage increase will bring the Borough into competitive range with other agencies. **Estimated cost for 2022-23 would be \$3,570.**

#### Police Officers – Retention

- The proposed wage matrix, shown above, adds an additional \$1.00 per hour to Step D (above what is currently negotiated for that step increase) for the positions of Police Officer and Sergeant; and an additional \$1.00 per hour to Step G (above what is currently negotiated for that step increase) for the positions of Police Officer and Sergeant. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$22,241.**
- Increase match to Borough Public Safety employees 457 plan to 6% / 7% (6% prior to vesting, and 7% once vested). Current match is 3% / 4%. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$16,783 (Officers).**
- Conduct Health Care plan review with all officers to gather and answer questions regarding existing health care plans. This has been done, but none of the Officers attended.

#### Dispatchers – Recruitment

- The negotiated wage matrix (effective July 1, 2022) for the Police Department starts a Dispatcher/Corrections Officer at \$20.95 per hour. By eliminating the Dispatcher/Corrections Officer 1 and 2 positions and paying a new hire at the current Dispatcher/Corrections Officer 3 wages, the new hire

would start at \$22.46 per hour, which is an increase of \$1.51 per hour. This wage increase will bring the Borough into competitive range with other agencies. **Estimated cost for 2022-23 would be \$9,422.**

- Implement a temporary recruitment incentive payment of \$2,500 for the next 3 Dispatcher/Corrections Officers hired, with \$1,250 distributed at hire and \$1,250 at 1 year of tenure with the Borough. **Cost, as soon as possible, would be \$7,500.**

#### Dispatchers – Retention

- Provide a one-time Retention Incentive payment of \$2,500 to the two current dispatchers for their hard work and dedication to the Department. **Immediate cost would be \$5,000.**
- Add two additional positions: Chief Dispatcher, and Support Services Supervisor<sup>w</sup> **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$195,841 minus the elimination of the part time Dispatcher position (\$80,657) equaling a revised total cost of \$115,183.**
- The proposed wage matrix adds an additional \$1.00 per hour to Step C (above what is currently negotiated for that step) for the position of Dispatcher/Corrections Officer. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$10,400.**
- Add the Police Department restrooms and the cells to our cleaning service. **Cost for 2022-23 is to be determined.**
- Increase match to Borough Public Safety employees 457 plan to 6% / 7% (6% prior to vesting, and 7% once vested). Current match is 3% / 4%. **Cost for 2022-23 would be \$14,023** (includes EMS Coordinator and Dispatchers).
- Conduct Health Care plan review with all dispatchers/correction officers to gather and answer questions regarding existing health care plans.

**Total Estimated Cost if implemented: \$204,122**

## Survey Results – Detail

The survey gave us some good insight, but like any survey there are additional questions that will need to be asked by HR and the Police Command Staff. We have outlined some of the pertinent issues, and the raw data can be viewed on the surveys which are available in HR.

### PD

Most important things

Take Home Pay (base pay and longevity)  
Supportive Supervisor (pleased with their supervisors)  
Retirement Program  
Health Care

Other

Separate Union  
Accountability for unfriendly co-workers  
Support from the Assembly (feel there is a lack of support)

### Dispatch

Most important things

Potential for advancement  
Supportive Supervisor (pleased with their supervisors)  
Take Home Pay (base pay)

Other

Scheduling  
Lunch breaks  
Rotating shift schedules  
Pay based upon responsibilities  
Relocation Pay  
Support from the Assembly (feel there is a lack of support)

Some of the questions we have:

Which cities in Alaska have better health care benefits than in Petersburg? What makes their benefits more attractive to the employees? Are the employees comparing our benefits to the lower 48 or larger entities?

How does your current supervisor support you? What else could they do? When you think of a supportive supervisor, what traits do they have?

## Scheduling:<sup>v</sup>

### Dispatch 5.5 FTE

The schedules for our current approved staffing are based upon 5 full time employees working 8 hr. shifts (40 hrs. per week), and one part time employee (30 hrs. per week). This provides minimal staffing, with little to no coverage for PTO and holidays without using overtime. There is no career path that is specific to Dispatchers.

### Dispatch 7.5 FTE

The schedules for this model primarily use 4 – 10 hr. shifts, and include the Chief Dispatcher, and Support Services Manager positions. This does provide for coordinated coverage of planned PTO and holidays, and limited coverage of non-planned PTO without overtime. This model creates a specific Dispatch career and advancement path for employees. Administrative duties will be removed from the Officers and Dispatchers daily job duties. Part time Dispatcher position could be eliminated if the two additional supervisory positions are added (Chief Dispatcher and Support Services Supervisor).

### Police – Budgeted staffing

The schedule examples attached to this report outline two different models that we have used when fully staffed and trained. One is using 4 -10 hr. shifts, the other is a two-week schedule where the first week is 34.5 hrs., and the second, 46 hrs. In both cases there is some overlap to allow for mid shift briefings by the officers, and on-duty training rather than training done on overtime. Additional schedule models are possible but would need to be approved by the employees and the union before the Borough could implement.

### **Overtime:**

While the Departments have exceeded the overtime budgets, the overall costs for these years are under budget. This is a clear indication that overtime is being used in replacement for the required staffing. Overtime will always be a necessity in the Police and Dispatch operating environment due to PTO, emergency responses, and active investigations or actions that require an Officer or Dispatcher to come in early or stay later. Again, this can be somewhat mitigated when we are able to have a full staff.

### **Police/Jail Budget and Actual Comparison (cannot be broken down by individual components)**

FY2017-2018	Actual	Budget	Difference
Regular Pay	\$ 781,750	\$ 856,441	\$ 74,691
Overtime	\$ 155,215	\$ 84,064	\$ (71,151)
Benefits	\$ 472,641	\$ 533,946	\$ 61,305
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	\$ 1,409,606	\$ 1,474,451	\$ 64,845
FY2018-2019	Actual	Budget	Difference
Regular Pay	\$ 735,209	\$ 834,572	\$ 99,363
Overtime	\$ 135,933	\$ 78,044	\$ (57,889)
Benefits	\$ 428,236	\$ 554,173	\$ 125,937
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	\$ 1,299,378	\$ 1,466,789	\$ 167,411
FY2019-2020	Actual	Budget	Difference
Regular Pay	\$ 772,783	\$ 813,495	\$ 40,712
Overtime	\$ 162,387	\$ 75,631	\$ (86,756)
Benefits	\$ 420,605	\$ 488,528	\$ 67,923
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	\$ 1,355,776	\$ 1,377,654	\$ 21,878
FY2020-2021	Actual	Budget	Difference
Regular Pay	\$ 764,298	\$ 837,632	\$ 73,334
Overtime	\$ 104,454	\$ 73,555	\$ (30,899)
Benefits	\$ 441,100	\$ 514,608	\$ 73,508
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	\$ 1,309,852	\$ 1,425,795	\$ 115,943

### **Current Police and Dispatcher Salaries: (as requested by Assembly member Meucci)**

#### Dispatcher/Correction Officers

Barbara Beasley	Dispatcher/Corrections Officer 3	\$25.75 per hr.
Andrea Naylor	Dispatcher/Corrections Officer 2	\$22.92
Amelia Pritchyk	Police Dispatcher 2	\$21.78 resigned 2/25/2022

Police Officers

Andrew Ayriss	Police Officer 2	\$30.94 per hr.
Randall Holmgrain	Captain	\$37.89
James Kerr	Police Chief	\$100,877.18 annually
Jared Popp	Police Officer 2	\$32.69
Carl Tate	Police Officer 2	\$30.94
Derek Thorsen	Sergeant	\$37.00
Robert Waechter	Police Officer 1	\$26.66
Eric Wolf	Police Officer 2	\$30.94

**Salary comparisons from Compensation Study: (Adjusted for CBA through 2022)**

The Police Officer and Dispatcher/Corrections Officer comp study information is attached to this report. For clarity purposes, I have summarized the salary comparisons from the study.

	Current Salary Matrix	Comp Study Recommendation	CBA 7/2022
<b>Dispatcher/Corrections 1</b>			
Min (starting)	\$ 20.14	\$ 21.76	\$ 20.95
Mid (4-5 years)	\$ 23.13	\$ 25.07	\$ 22.99
Max (15+ years)	\$ 24.12	\$ 28.28	\$ 25.03
<b>Dispatcher/Corrections 2</b>			
Min (starting)	\$ 20.63	\$ 21.75	\$ 21.45
Mid (4-5 years)	\$ 23.67	\$ 25.70	\$ 23.52
Max (15+ years)	\$ 24.67	\$ 29.42	\$ 25.59
<b>Dispatcher/Corrections 3</b>			
Min (starting)	\$ 20.92	\$ 22.27	\$ 21.55
Mid (4-5 years)	\$ 22.96	\$ 25.68	\$ 23.63
Max (15+ years)	\$ 25.00	\$ 28.98	\$ 25.70
<b>Police Officer 1</b>			
Min (starting)	\$ 26.66	\$ 27.51	\$ 27.46
Mid (4-5 years)	\$ 30.37	\$ 32.29	\$ 29.86
Max (15+ years)	\$ 31.37	\$ 36.78	\$ 32.26
<b>Police Officer 2</b>			
Min (starting)	\$ 27.39	\$ 28.78	\$ 28.22
Mid (4-5 years)	\$ 31.19	\$ 33.98	\$ 31.66
Max (15+ years)	\$ 34.19	\$ 39.03	\$ 35.10
<b>Sergeant</b>			
Min (starting)	\$ 29.03	\$ 32.68	\$ 30.19
Mid (4-5 years)	\$ 33.00	\$ 37.83	\$ 33.74
Max (15+ years)	\$ 36.00	\$ 42.89	\$ 37.29

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. On the Police Officer recruitment incentive payments in Proposal Option 1, will this be paid to existing officers?  
Answer: No.
2. On the Police Officer longevity incentive payments in Proposal Option 1, will this be paid in arrears?  
Answer: No. They will receive a longevity incentive based upon their current longevity. For example, an existing employee who has been here for 11 years, will receive a longevity incentive of \$5,000.
3. On the increased match to the 457 retirement plan in both Proposal Option 1 and Option 2, will this be paid for all employees?  
Answer: This will only be available to Tier 4 employees in Public Safety positions. Currently 1 person in Fire/EMS, and 9 in Police/Dispatch.
4. On the increase of Dispatcher new hire pay to Step C in Proposal Option 1, will this impact existing employees?  
Answer: No.
5. On the recruitment incentive for Dispatchers in Proposal Option 1, will this be paid to existing dispatchers?  
Answer: No
6. What will the Chief Dispatcher and Support Services Supervisor do if added?  
Answer: These positions will add Dispatch coverage to help allow for employee time off and holidays. In addition, administrative duties which are currently spread among different dispatchers, will be consolidated in these positions. The addition of these positions will provide a clear opportunity for advancement for the dispatching group and give them a supervisor that is dedicated to the dispatching skill set and responsibilities.
7. Why are we recommending changing of the cleaning process?  
Answer: One of the clear messages from the dispatchers was their frustration about this aspect of the job. Cleaning the cells and bathrooms is unpleasant, and difficult when the dispatchers are also asked to monitor the incoming calls. This function (bathrooms) is generally done by dedicated janitorial staff in almost all other departments.
8. How do these recommendations improve scheduling issues in the Dispatch area?  
Answer: (Applies to both Proposal Option 1 and Option 2) With two additional trained dispatcher positions (Chief Dispatcher and Support Services Manager), the department gains flexibility for issues related to PTO and Holidays, as well as projects and turnover. Also, on-duty training can be done without having to use overtime. These recommendations would promote longevity through a better working environment. These should also increase our ability to attract employees when openings do occur.
9. Are the schedules put forward in this document the only potential schedules?  
Answer: No. Scheduling in a 24/7 environment is often fluid. Work loads can change, and employee PTO



and holidays can often present a need to alter the schedules. The schedules provided here are examples of ideal operations, with fully trained employees in place.

10. Do changes in schedules have to be vetted by the Union?

Answer: Yes. The Union has the right to challenge our scheduling and how schedules are assigned to specific employees. The schedule the employee works is considered a working condition issue, and the Union most often will only approve seniority-based assignment of schedules. Any changes to employee scheduling would need to be approved by the employees and the union. Traditionally if the employees approve, the Union will also give approval.

11. It looks like it is cheaper to pay overtime than to be fully staffed. Is this correct?

Answer: Yes and no. The overtime numbers show the Department came in under budget because of being perpetually understaffed. While overtime was above budget, regular pay came in significantly under. In the short term this works, but it causes employee burn out and long-term retention issues. In general, overtime above 3% is considered excessive. In a police environment, maybe 5%. We are averaging over 9%. Employee burnout from the current workload is a major factor affecting employees in the department. Employees would rather be compensated appropriately with a fully staffed department allowing for much needed time off.

12. Does the wage matrix proposal in Proposal Option 2 include the expected increase in overtime?

Answer: Yes.

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<sup>i</sup> Documentation of Survey process is available to the Assembly from HR if needed.

<sup>ii</sup> Employee Retention Survey administered to the Police/Dispatch Employees is available to the Assembly from HR if needed.

<sup>iii</sup> Job Descriptions for the Chief Dispatcher and Support Services Supervisor are available from HR if needed by the Assembly.

<sup>iv</sup> Job Descriptions for the Chief Dispatcher and Support Services Supervisor are available from HR if needed by the Assembly.

<sup>v</sup> Detailed schedules are attached to this report