



WATERTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

David Brower, Chief of Police

To: City of Watertown Finance Committee

From: Assistant Chief Ben Olsen

Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Subject: Interim Assignment Pay - Mindy Fry

There is currently one vacant full-time dispatch position in dispatch. Another full-time employee submitted their two-week notice. Their last day will be on Monday, March 11, 2024. At full staff there are eight full-time dispatchers plus the dispatch supervisor. Dispatchers work a rotating schedule (2 on, 2 off, 3 on, 2 off, 2 on, 3 off) either 5 a.m. – 5 p.m. or 5 p.m. – 5 a.m. There are also two part-time dispatchers. Generally, full-time and part-time dispatchers are able to fill empty shifts when there is one vacant position. Two vacant positions will be difficult to fill. Not only will it create an exorbitant amount of overtime, but it will also most likely lead to employee burnout.

Mindy Fry, our records specialist, was a dispatcher with our department for approximately three years before moving to her current position. Prior to that, she was a dispatcher for the Jefferson Police Department, also for approximately three years. Mindy is currently at Grade G, Step 5 (\$24.32). We have asked her to fill one of the vacant night positions until a dispatcher is hired and trained. If Mindy were still a dispatcher with the department since her original start date at our department, she would be at Grade H, Step 5 (\$26.54). I am seeking the Finance Committee's approval to place her at Grade H, Step 6 (\$27.22), starting on Wednesday, March 13, 2024 and extending for at least 60 days.

I direct you to the City of Watertown Employee Handbook, page 19, which discusses Compensation Upon Interim Assignment. The department is aggressively seeking applicants, and we are in the process of scheduling interviews. The selected candidates will have to pass a background investigation, psychological, amongst other conditions prior to being offered a position. They will then have to be trained, which ideally will take four months to complete. We have asked Mindy to be in this position for at least 60 days, during which time she will be performing the work of a full-time dispatcher on the night shift, in addition to continuing with her responsibilities as a records specialist.

It would cost \$5,716.80 in overtime for dispatch to cover one of the vacant positions for one month with overtime. This is a low estimate using an entry level wage since most of our dispatchers receive higher pay. It would cost \$4,355.20 for Mindy to cover one of the vacant positions if approved for Grade H, Step 6 (\$27.22). This is a savings of at least \$2,700 over 60 days and will prevent the burnout of our valuable employees.