

Date: May 9, 2025

To: Common Council

John Weidl, City Manager

From: Rachelle Blitch, Director of Financial and Administrative Services

Re: Public Comment Response from May 6, 2025 Common Council Meeting

This memo is intended to provide clarification and address the concerns that have been raised regarding the School Resource Officer (SRO) funding. It is important to note that the questions posed relate to two distinct matters, and they will be addressed separately for clarity.

First, with regard to the current contract with the school district, there appears to be a misunderstanding. The agreement is not for a flat \$60,000. Instead, the school district reimburses the City for 60% of the School Resource Officer's (SRO) salary and benefits, along with any overtime costs and associated benefits incurred for school-related events.

For reference, in 2023, the district was billed \$64,143.22 for 60% of the officer's salary and benefits, \$2,129.21 for overtime, and \$499.51 for overtime-related benefits, totaling \$66,771.94. In 2024, the district was billed \$78,435.83 (60% of salary and benefits), \$10,238.54 (overtime), and \$2,434.66 (overtime-related benefits), for a total of \$91,109.03.

The significant increase from 2023 to 2024 is primarily due to a salary adjustment resulting from the collective bargaining agreement. However, since the agreement was not finalized until December 2023, the district was not billed for any retroactive pay related to the SRO position. Negotiations for the upcoming contract term have not yet begun, and therefore, the financial terms for future agreements remain subject to change.

The second issue pertains to the potential addition of a second SRO. The recent study recommended the need for an additional school resource officer, and this was factored into early budgeting discussions related to the public safety referendum. Consistent with the existing agreement, the new position was initially budgeted with a 40% reimbursement assumption ([see item 14, page 224-226](#)). However, during the December 17, 2025 Council meeting, Councilperson Singer raised valid concerns about budgeting for a position without a finalized contract in place—particularly given that negotiations with the school district were not close to resolution at the time ([Video 2:32:00](#)). In light of this uncertainty, it would have been fiscally imprudent to assume partial funding without a formal agreement, as it could have required mid-year budget cuts to cover the gap. As a result, adjustments were made to the referendum request to reflect a more responsible financial approach.

On January 7, 2025, revised figures were presented to the Council. As part of those updates, it was determined that rather than funding a detective position through the referendum, the proposed SRO would be converted to a patrol officer. This approach ensures that, should a future agreement with the



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school district be reached, the department's patrol staffing levels would remain stable and uninterrupted. This question was also addressed previously at this meeting ([see video 1:22:10](#)).

We appreciate the public's engagement and are committed to maintaining transparency around budgeting and public safety planning. Please feel free to reach out with any further questions or concerns.