



Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date:	July 5, 2025
Agenda Item:	Police Department Hiring Strategy
Staff Contact (name, email, phone):	Rachelle Blitch, rblitch@whitewater-wi.gov , 262-473-1380

BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

The recent referendum approved the addition of five patrol officer positions beginning in 2026. However, each new officer that isn't a lateral transfer must complete approximately 18 weeks at the academy, followed by 3 to 4 months of field training before they are fully prepared for independent duty. Given the limited capacity within the Police Department to train multiple new officers simultaneously, we are proposing an early start to the hiring process.

Specifically, we are requesting approval to hire two officers in 2025. These individuals were identified as high-quality candidates during the most recent recruitment cycle. One candidate would begin the academy at the end of July, while the other has self-sponsored his academy training and will be ready to begin field training in September.

To support this initiative, we propose using fund balance in 2025, with the understanding that not all five officers will begin on January 1, 2026. This staggered start will result in salary savings during 2026. Those unspent funds can then be used to replenish the portion of the fund balance utilized for the early hires. This approach helps ensure a smoother onboarding and training process, while minimizing strain on department resources.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

6/18/2025 – Finance Committee approved and recommended to Common Council

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

The total cost for the recruit beginning in July is estimated at \$23,024 in salary. During the 18-week academy, the recruit will be paid 75% of the full wage, or \$24.00 per hour, for 40 hours per week. Upon completing the academy, the recruit will transition to the full rate of \$32.00 per hour, with approximately four weeks remaining in the calendar year. The second recruit, starting in September, is expected to cost approximately \$22,976 in total salary over the 16 weeks. Overtime of 13 hours a month are included however, benefits were not calculated into these figures.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends proceeding with the early hiring of two patrol officers in 2025 to support the five positions approved by referendum for 2026. Due to the required academy and field training timelines, and the Police Department's limited training capacity, staggering the onboarding process will ensure proper preparation without overwhelming existing resources. Utilizing fund balance in 2025 will allow us to begin training now, with anticipated savings in 2026 from staggered start dates helping to replenish those funds. This approach ensures operational readiness and a smooth transition into full staffing.

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)