



AGENDA REPORT

Mayor's Office

DATE:	July 26, 2022
TO:	Members of the City Council
FROM:	Tom Butt, Mayor Nathaniel Bates, Councilmember
Subject:	Richmond Police Department Minimum Staffing Levels
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	Costs associated with funding 20 additional police officers
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	N/A
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	Richmond Police Department management has communicated that a minimum staffing of 165 sworn officers, 20 more than the current funded level of 145, would create a healthy work force with minimal OT.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	APPROVE a minimum Richmond Police Department staffing of 165 sworn officers – Mayor's Office (Mayor Tom Butt 510-620-6503) and Councilmember Nathaniel Bates (510-620-6547).

DISCUSSION:

Over the past two fiscal years, the City Council both defunded the Richmond Police Department (RPD) and cut vacant sworn officer positions. The number of funded RPD sworn officers went from 178 to 157 in FY 2020-2021, and from 157 to 145 in FY 2021-2022.

For FY 2022-2023, the number of funded sworn officer positions remains at 145. However, as of July 20th, 2022, RPD is down 28 sworn officers (2 trainees are currently in the academy), with an additional 18 out on leave. This leaves the City of Richmond with only 99 active sworn officers, not accounting for vacations, sick and bereavement at any given point in time.

The City of Richmond is 52.5 square miles. To cover a city this size, RPD has five (5) patrol teams, covering nine (9) beats that must be patrolled 24/7. To meet the City's patrol needs, Chief Bisa French and Acting Chief Louie Tirona had to reduce, combine, or eliminate many of our investigative units over the past two years.

- The Criminal Violence Reduction Team (previously the Gang Unit) was eliminated.
- The Intelligence Unit was eliminated.
- The Narcotics Unit was eliminated.
- The Robbery and Property Theft Investigative Units were combined and staffed with fewer officers.
- The Homicide Unit has fewer officers.
- The Regulatory Unit was transferred to Code Enforcement.
 - As Code Enforcement is also understaffed, there is no active regulatory unit in the City of Richmond. This is of great concern since they ensure laws pertaining to alcohol, tobacco and cannabis are enforced and applied appropriately. This is not happening in Richmond.

RPD is also down in the number of sworn officers for both traffic and parking enforcement. This is contributing to the increase in vehicles running red lights, stop signs, speeding; participating in donuts and sideshows; and parking illegally throughout our City as they simply do not have the bandwidth to provide more effective oversight.

The number of sworn officers eligible for retirement by the end of 2022 (based on age) stands at 19, with most eligible now. If those 19 officers retire, Richmond would drop from 99 to 80 active sworn officers, depending upon the fluid number of officers out on leave due to injury/medical, administrative, or modified duty. That number drops further due to unforeseen sick, Covid, and bereavement leave. If officers resign given the current climate, this number declines further.

To address this staffing crisis, RPD adopted mandatory overtime (OT) starting April 1, 2022. On June 1, police management ordered an additional 60 days of mandatory OT and are projecting they will need to do this through at least December 2022, likely longer. RPD also has a mandatory OT cap of 64 hours per pay period. They recently had to lift that cap to provide flexibility to address unknown/unpredictable vacancies due to sick, Covid, and bereavement leave. This cap lifting will expire at the end of this deployment year.

Due to the tremendous amount of OT to meet patrol needs, RPD's patrol captain is now working patrol shifts, without extra pay, to alleviate one more officer having to come in on a mandatory 18-hour shift to help address stress and fatigue.

RPD is also understaffed for Crime Scene Investigators (CSI, sworn officer position) and Crime Scene Technicians (CST, civilian position). In an ideal setting, RPD would have a total of five (5) CSIs and CSTs, one per patrol team. Because RPD currently has only three (3) CSI/CSTs, an on-duty, cross-trained patrol officer must be pulled from one of the nine (9) beats to investigate and process a scene. This means the other beat officers must cover additional territory. Patrol coverage across all nine (9) beats is further diluted when a large or multiple events occurs.

It is understandable that when any individual is this over-worked, over-stressed, and over-fatigued that it impacts their mental and physical health and ability to perform at their peak. And when officers are this stressed and fatigued, it logically leads to an increase in sick leave, which further compounds OT needs.

We all must understand that when working conditions puts the lives of our sworn officers at this much risk, it also puts the well-being of those they have sworn to protect at risk.

This staffing crisis is simply unsustainable, and we must work to retain and recruit quality sworn officers. We must also support minimum RPD staffing to alleviate OT, thereby promoting better safety as well as the mental and physical well-being of our officers and community.

It is difficult to fill RPD vacancies as the department is competing against other Bay Area and surrounding cities who are similarly vying for quality candidates from a historically low applicant pool. Yet some Bay Area cities with similar attributes can attract and retain quality officers and sustain adequate or full staffing levels.

When you look at those cities (e.g., San Pablo) to understand why, there are three primary attributes contributing to their success:

- 1) Their elected officials listen to everyone in their community and their concerns.
- 2) Their elected officials and city manager create a supportive atmosphere and publicly voice their desire to have a healthy and robust law enforcement staff. This culture, in turn, attracts the best and brightest law enforcement personnel.
- 3) These statement and values are articulated in their labor contract, including competitive salaries, and hiring incentives.

Richmond is currently falling short in all three areas. Some of our elected officials are not listening to the community at large and their concerns, and they have created an unsupportive atmosphere resulting in the lowest morale in RPD's history. Moreover, the class and compensations studies independently conducted by both the City and Richmond Police Officers Association (RPOA) show that our sworn officers (at all

levels) are paid significantly below the median salary amongst differing cities in the Bay Area.

The RPOA contract expired on June 30, 2022, and is currently in negotiations. We must work to pass a labor contract that includes competitive salaries and hiring incentives as well as a minimum staffing level.

RPD management has communicated that a minimum staffing of 165 sworn officers, 20 more than the current funded level of 145, would create a healthy work force with minimal OT. To put this number in perspective, that is 13 fewer officers than the 178 funded positions from FY 2017-2018 through FY 2019-2020 and 31 fewer officers than the 196 funded positions in FY 2014-2015 when RPD had a nationally acclaimed community policing model.

Our community and RPD deserve this council's understanding and support to ensure we have a safe community for all, while we continue to promote transparency, accountability, and partner with the County to develop and implement an effective community crisis response program that meets Richmond's needs.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

None