



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 6057)

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: 8/31/2015

Summary Title: Agreement to Modify Dispatcher Schedule

Title: Adoption of a Resolution to Incorporate a Side Letter With the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to Allow a Change in the Police Dispatcher Schedule from a 4/11 Schedule to a 4/12 Flex Schedule

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Human Resources

BACKGROUND

Recruitment and retention of Public Safety Dispatchers is an ongoing challenge for the Police Department. The current dispatcher schedule was implemented in 2003. Over the past 18 months, staffing has been impacted by several unexpected resignations (dispatchers moving out of the area) and two probationary dispatchers not completing training. The remaining staff has been working an inordinate amount of overtime which, in the long-term, is detrimental to the operation. In order to provide a more balanced schedule for employees, the City proposed to SEIU Local 521 (SEIU) a change of schedule from 11-hour shifts to 12-hour shifts. The City met with SEIU and SEIU agreed with the City's proposal. A copy of the unsigned agreement is attached. A fully executed document will be provided at place on Monday, August 31st.

DISCUSSION

Over the past 18 months, the dispatch staff in the Emergency Communications Center has been well below budgeted personnel levels due to a number of factors including retirements and resignations. Police management is actively recruiting and hiring new employees but the minimum training period for a dispatcher is 10 months. As a result, employees are being mandated to cover both planned and unplanned shortages to ensure minimum staffing for the Emergency Communications Center, which also plays a key role in retention of qualified applicants. Currently, there are 14 full-time Dispatchers and two Dispatcher trainees with an anticipated completion of training in October 2015.

To fully staff the current 4/11 schedule a total of 18 dispatchers are required with the Lead Dispatchers working on circuit full time. A 12-hour schedule can be managed with 16 full-time Dispatchers if each dispatcher works four hours of overtime per pay period. Implementing the 4/12 schedule will allow the Dispatchers to take most of their regularly scheduled time off and

reduce mandatory overtime in the Center. The Lead Dispatchers will still be working supervisors with 14 Dispatchers assigned. Once the two Dispatcher trainees are ready for assignment in October, the Supervisors will serve their intended purpose, providing oversight and quality assurance to the line Dispatchers from four to six hours per shift.

The Police Department researched the efficiency of shift types for dispatch and found in a recent study of Stanislaus Regional 9-1-1 by Matrix Consulting Group in January 2015, that 12 hour shifts are the most efficient.

The 4/10 work schedule is 25% less cost-effective than either the 5/8 or 3/12 schedules. The least effective schedule from a cost perspective is the 11-hour shift program. Interestingly, the 12-hour shift schedule is the most cost effective from the total number of staff positions required because of the additional 104 work hours per annum that are potentially provided by this staffing model. In instances where this additional time is not worked, the “efficiency” of the 12-hour shift is equivalent to the 8-hour shift.

The City met with SEIU leaders to discuss the change in the schedule and SEIU agreed to the City’s proposal. SEIU and the City agreed to move the Dispatch Unit from 11-hour shifts to 12-hour shifts. Floaters and holiday accruals shall be accrued at 12-hour increments. For purposes of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the workweek shall begin and end in the middle of a 12-hour shift, such that every 14-day pay period includes two workweeks of 42 hours each. Every hour worked in excess of 40 hours in paid status in a FLSA workweek shall be paid at time and one-half. The 12-hour schedule regularly includes two hours of overtime pay in every workweek (four hours per pay period), assuming all hours are in paid status as defined in the Memorandum of Agreement. Please see attached Exhibit A-Side Letter to the 2013-2015 SEIU Memorandum of Agreement.

RESOURCE IMPACT

Under the current schedule, the Dispatchers were required to complete 78 hours of annual training to meet the required 2,080 full-time hours annually. Those hours will be reduced to 12 hours annually (the State Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) requirement) in the new schedule and each Dispatcher will work an additional 66 hours in the 911 Center. Due to the change in training hours, the anticipated reduction in overtime is 1,056 hours (16 Dispatchers times 66 hours) or approximately \$57,000. The required amount of overtime of four hours per dispatcher and pay period amounts to 1,664 hours or \$89,000. It is anticipated that this required overtime is necessary due to staff scheduled and unscheduled time off regardless of the shift schedule change. Therefore, it is anticipated that this shift change will result in overall savings to the City due to staff being dedicated 66 hours annually to dispatching related duties that were previously used for training. If this side letter is approved and the shift change implemented, staff will monitor the overtime expenditures during the next few months and adjust the overtime budget for the 911 Center as part of the Fiscal Year 2017 Proposed Budget.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This does not represent any change to existing City policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Attachments:

- SEIU Side Letter Final - Dispatcher Schedule (PDF)

**SIDE LETTER TO THE 2013-2015
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION
AND
THE CITY OF PALO ALTO**

SEIU Local 521 and the City of Palo Alto hereby agree to move the Dispatch Unit from 11 hour shifts to 12 hour shifts. Floaters and holiday accruals shall be accrued at 12 hour increments. For purposes of the FLSA, the workweek shall begin and end in the middle of a 12-hour shift, such that every 14-day pay period includes two workweeks of forty-two hours each. Every hour worked in excess of 40 hours in paid status in a workweek shall be paid at time and one half. The 12-hour schedule regularly includes two hours of overtime pay in every workweek (four hours per pay period), assuming all hours are in paid status.

The City of Palo Alto shall limit vacation bidding to two dispatchers per shift side and may only include one holiday, unless emergency dictates otherwise. The City also agrees to protected weekends, which is defined as the weekend that precedes a bid vacation and the weekend post bid vacation, unless emergency dictates otherwise. Turnaround time between shifts shall be 10 hours, unless emergency dictates otherwise. The City shall contact SEIU 521 as soon as operationally possible in the event of an emergency that affects protected weekends or turnaround time as described in this paragraph.

This side letter Agreement replaces Exhibit C of the City of Palo Alto and SEIU Local 521 MOA effective December 1, 2013-December 1, 2015.

For SEIU Local 521

DocuSigned by:
Daniel Becker
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Daniel Becker, SEIU
Date: 8/20/2015

DocuSigned by:
Lynn Krug
7E2A8997C744D2...

Lynn Krug, Chapter Chair
Date: 8/20/2015

For City of Palo Alto

Subject to City Council Approval

DocuSigned by:
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Kathy Shen, Chief People Officer
Date: 8/19/2015

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Natalie Korthamar, Mgr. Labor Relations
Date: 8/19/2015

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Debra Burger
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Charlie Cullen
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Approved as to Form:

DocuSigned by:
Albert S Yang
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By: _____