



CITY OF OAKLAND

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# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** DEANNA SANTANA  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

**FROM:** Sean Whent  
Interim Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** Employee Retention Plan  
for the Oakland Police Department

**DATE:** February 6, 2014

City Administrator  
Approval

Date

2/12/14

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** City-wide

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends acceptance of this informational report from the Oakland Police Department (OPD) that addresses the development of a Retention Plan for OPD.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This informational report addresses the development of a Retention Plan for the Oakland Police Department (OPD). The report will cover the strategy components to address retention through the Hiring and Selection process; Academy Training; Succession Planning at the final stage; and a Preventive Plan. The identified components of the hiring and training process are addressed in this report; (1) Recruiting and Hiring, (2) Academy Training; and (3) Field Training. Without a strong recruitment and training plan, adverse impact on retention could result, because the two are so closely related. Achieving and maintaining adequate staffing levels require a focus on recruitment and retention. Succession Planning, including Career Development through a Mentor Program, addresses the need to identify and assess employees' career desires, obstacles or concerns. The last component is a Preventive Plan to address current employees who are seeking employment with other agencies.

According to an employee survey, the current challenges include low resources (human, equipment and technology) and a negative image for the City, as well as the agency that must be addressed. By focusing on these areas, the chances of attracting qualified candidates as well as retaining good employees may improve.

## BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

OPD is experiencing approximately a 5% attrition rate annually. Over the last 12 months there have been 28 officers who have resigned from the Department. The vast majority, approximately 82% had over 10 years of service with OPD. During the exit interview of the 17 officers that

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resigned from OPD who were under the age of fifty, their reasons for leaving ranged from commute time; stress from work condition; mandatory overtime; personal/family obligations; and a desire for a more stable environment.

Table 1

Attrition Category	# of Sworn	Age Group
Service Retirement *	11	50 and over
Resigned **	7	40 to 49
	5	30 to 39
	5	25 to 29

\* Average age from the Service Retirement group was 51.1 years

\*\* Average age from the Resignation group was 35.8 years

The current challenges that OPD is facing, include low resources (human, equipment and technology) and a negative image for the City as well as the agency that must be addressed. By focusing on these areas the chances of attracting qualified candidates as well as retaining good employees may improve.

Several law enforcement agencies were contacted regarding their attrition rate in comparison to OPD which is currently at 5% annually.

Table 2

Surveyed Cities	Annual Attrition Rate %
BART	1.0
Berkeley	0.5
Fremont	8 (All retirees)
Hayward	4.0
San Francisco	4.4
Sacramento	4.0

OPD's attrition rate over the last seventeen (17) months has increased due to the separation of 44 long-term medical disability employees and 16 service retirements. In addition, twenty-four (24) officers resigned, eighteen (18) of which left to go to other agencies for various reasons. This has resulted in an increase over the previous average attrition rate of 4%. In 2013 OPD hired a dedicated Administrative Analyst to focus on Worker's Compensation/Medical Unit duties and as a result the long-term medical leaves were finally addressed. The medical separations were a necessary step in working towards filling vacant positions. Table 2 denotes agencies similar to OPD (Hayward, San Francisco, Sacramento) who are experiencing an average of a 4% attrition rate, similar to what OPD was experiencing in 2012. On average, it

costs \$100K to recruit and hire one (1) police officer, so retaining our officers is the sure way to reduce costs. However, having the ability to fill vacant positions quickly by funding and planning for annual academies will provide OPD with the ability to address attrition as employees retire/resign for various reasons, thus reducing the demands placed on an already overly burdened force.

**ANALYSIS**

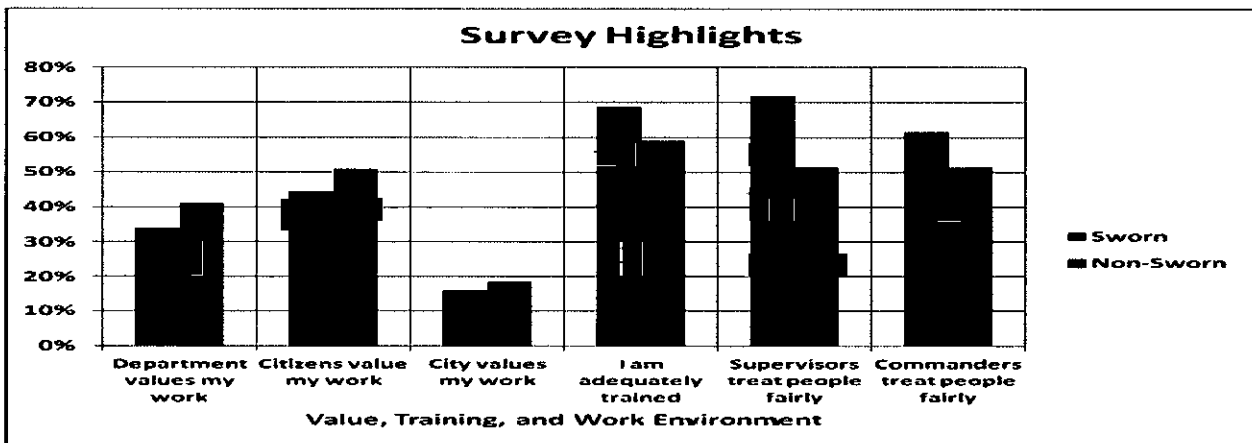
At the current pace, it is unrealistic to believe that the incremental gains in staffing will have a significant positive impact on public safety unless we continue to fund two (2) academies per year.

To understand the needs of OPD an employee feedback survey was completed in October 2013. Employees were allowed to anonymously provide feedback on how to make their jobs easier and how to improve the Department. Implementing some of these recommendations will give employees ownership and accountability in the work place and this engagement will more likely retain employees in OPD.

*Survey Highlights*

Based on feedback from the employees' survey, retention is impacted by issues such as, mandatory overtime, deficient technology and expertise, poor infrastructure, extreme workloads/ conditions caused from high crime rate, making the issue of retaining employees vital.

Below are the key highlights of the Employee Feedback Survey (Value, Training and Work Environment). There were a total of seventeen (17) questions and approximately 599 sworn and 380 non-sworn members that could have participated in the online survey. 337 sworn (56%) and 112 non-sworn (29%) participated. National average for online survey results is approximately 25% and both groups exceeded the average.



The survey summary from the employee feedback survey indicates:

- Less than half of the employees felt that OPD and citizens valued their work;
- Over 80% of the employees felt that the city did not value their work;
- Employees believe they were adequately trained; however they noted they would like to receive training outside their current job assignments such as Microsoft training and enhancing other administrative skill training; and
- More than 50% of employees felt they were being treated fairly by their supervisors; however more than half felt they did not feel that commanders/managers treated employees fairly.

### *Leadership/Management*

The survey provided feedback pertaining to the leadership and management within the Department. Several comments were made regarding lack of training for executive command staff. Some of the recommendations suggested additional leadership and succession training as they advance within the Department. Given the high rate of turnover, stability and command preparation has been challenging in a paramilitary structure. Staff continues to develop and train commanders to meet leadership responsibilities.

One of the recommendations is to ensure all vacant command positions are filled with permanent leaders, as opposed to acting or interim assignments. Providing a strong executive team is the key to stabilizing the Department.

### *Recruitment & Selection Process*

The Recruiting and Background Unit has been operating in dual functions executing a recruitment strategy to attract and hire qualifying individuals into the Police Officer Trainee Academy. What was found to be important to prospective qualified candidates related to retention are the following:

- Recruitment plan to include lateral officers hiring;
- Mentoring candidates/recruits during the selection process, academy, and field training proves to be effective to both attracting and retaining a diverse workforce;
- Ancillary programs to include Reserve, Cadet and/or Explorer Programs, as well as part-time jobs for college students;
- Having a good reputation as a Department that provides a positive work environment, and promoting the Department in a good light;
- Shortening the time required to complete the hiring process; and
- Working conditions including schedules, assignments, etc.

Recognizing the above as positive attributes that candidates deemed to be important, staff recommend and have implemented the following to the recruitment and selection process at the Recruiting and Background Unit.

- Centralized Recruiting Unit – Branding and maintaining a consistency in OPD Recruiters as point of contact in categories of community based organizations, religious affiliations, colleges, military branches, etc. Gathering the talent and utilizing internal resources/personnel to represent OPD to effectively recruit and attract qualified candidates;
- Military Transition Program - Designated and identified military bases, established a presence and relationships with the Transitional Coordinator to connect with military personnel to transition them back to civilian life through a career in law enforcement;
- Developed Candidates through Early Outreach – Offering monthly workshops to potential candidates to integrate into the selection process and paramilitary culture. It also calls for outreach to high school and college students to inform them about a career in law enforcement and encourage them to avoid activities that could disqualify them;
- Cultural Outreach – Continued building relationships with diverse groups is important for recruitment, but also for the broader community policing perspective that they have as part of the community. To be effective means partnering with these groups to address crime and quality of life issues. The Background and Recruiting Unit also facilitates on a quarterly basis informational career workshops held throughout the City; and
- More Efficient Hiring Process – The Recruiting Office has been working on making the hiring process more efficient, therefore shorter. Some of the testing phases are being combined and reorganized in an attempt to save time and money. The Personal History Statement will be available online shortly to improve the collection of background information.

### *Academy Training*

The OPD Academy training is the foundation for building a successful and productive employee through continuous training and mentoring program. The curriculum built into the 27 weeks of training is Police Officers Standard Testing (POST) certified for every Academy class. The Academy not only focuses on teaching the trainees about technical knowledge and skills, but includes during the Academy experience critical blocks of instruction in integrity, decision-making, problem-solving and critical thinking.

In an attempt to improve Police Officer Trainee retention rates during the Basic Academy, the Training Section has introduced a "Stress Management Course" into the Basic Academy. The course is designed to teach students how to develop skills that will assist them in reducing their

level of fear and panic, both in the Academy and during actual street encounters. In addition, the Training staff has doubled the remedial training for each failed skills test and changed the format; allowing ample time before retesting. The Recruit Training Sergeant observes every remediation test in order to ensure fairness and consistency in the testing process.

The last funded academy for fiscal year FY14-15 is the 170<sup>th</sup> Police Officer Training Academy scheduled for April 28, 2014. There are no other academies funded in the current fiscal budget. However, the Administration is proposing \$350K funds FY14-15 for next year to either conduct a smaller size academy or procure slots in an external academy for the sole purpose of addressing potential future attrition levels. In addition, it is critical to expand the Field Training Program to accommodate future sworn personnel. The Field Training Officers allow newly academy graduated officers an opportunity to shadow and be mentored.

### *Succession Planning*

Part of the strategy to proactively contain the potential issue of mass exits from the police department, based on the five (5) year projection of current staff eligible for service retirement, is succession planning at all staff levels.

Areas to focus on to initiate a succession plan would be:

- Update the agency's strategic plan to include future staffing levels
  - Incorporate the hiring of laterals and post academy graduates into the recruitment plan to address the monthly attrition of 5 officers.
- Conduct analysis to identify core competencies for sworn and civilian classifications, including future needs identified in the strategic plan.
  - The Department of Human Resources Management must readily provide eligibility lists for civilian positions
- Conduct employee skill assessments to ascertain current skill levels
- Plan and communicate methods to close the gaps between required competencies and current employee skills levels to manage human capital.
  - Develop and offer front line leadership and supervisory training to promote employee development/skill enhancements.
- Continue to fund the Police Cadet/Student Internship Program – a direct feeder class to the academy and other non-sworn positions

Other strategies to consider as part of succession planning should include:

*Develop Staff* - Staff development will provide multiple opportunities for career growth, in both promotional and professional growth. There are several ways to address career development.

- Establish Mentor Program to keep veteran employees engaged
- Attendance at National Police Academies (Federal Bureau of Investigation/Senior Management Institution for Police)

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- More flexibility to attend college courses
- Attendance at recognized Law Enforcement training
- Educational/Vocational leave
- Tuition reimbursement for recognized training

*Mentor Program* – a robust mentor program will keep employees engaged and develop a broader perspective of how the agency operates, creates movement, and ultimately enhances skills. The agency will utilize seasoned employees to take on mentor role for new employees with the primary objective of being a resource to help make a successful transition into their new work environment. The program will provide support and encouragement to the new hire and promote career growth. One avenue is to assign a member to every new hire as a mentor beginning during their Field Training Program. The member would touch base with the employee during their training and provide valuable support.

*Recruitment Incentive Program* – to increase both recruitment and retention, in 2007 the department implemented a program that paid officers and civilians up to a \$1,000 for recruiting and mentoring a new recruit through the hiring process and the successfully completing the academy and field training program that netted a total of 260 referrals with 10% success rate. This program cost approximately \$50k

#### *Promote Work/Life Balance Environment*

Proactively seek grants and exercise fiscal investments to purchase new equipment for staff to improve productivity and efficiency.

- Flex Work Schedule - Civilian
  - Researching alternative work schedules whenever possible to promote work life balance.
  - Rotational work assignments to be offered to pre-identified classifications that are prone to sustain high risk of work related injuries.
- Wellness Program
  - Offer self help information that deals with stress in personal and professional setting. Increase awareness and promote a culture to seek professional advice and assistance whenever needed.
  - The MHN insurance substance abuse program rider takes effect January 15, 2014 and the approximate cost is \$84k annually. Funding will need to be included in the next fiscal year.
  - By expanding the Peer Support team and adding a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) to the Agency will cost approximately \$50k in O&M.

- Recognition Award/ Ceremony Programs
  - Offer timely and appropriate recognition when employee demonstrate exceptional performance and exceed set objectives.
  - To celebrate and recognize employee good work. Create a forum to allow peers to recognize and share success story and appreciation of team work.
  - The projected cost is \$10k.
- Employee Survey
  - Implement an annual confidential employee survey to collect and analyze data. The information will assist with the analysis and provide indicators of what are the priorities for OPD employees.
  - The projected cost to secure a vendor to develop, administer and provide an analysis report is estimated at \$5k.
- Job Class Assessment
  - Complete an assessment of each non-sworn position and duties to determine if classifications match the job responsibilities.
  - Explore the possibility of some job classifications being allowed to be shared/part-time.
- Salary Assessment
  - Request the Department of Human Resources Management to review and possibly implement a salary increase for civilian positions depending on the outcome of the class study.
- Technology/Training
  - Update all technical equipment to allow staff to be competitive in the industry.
  - Offer CPT and on-the-job training for field civilian positions.
  - Employees identified a need to receive additional training outside of law enforcement training such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook.
  - Request Department of Human Resources Management to activate the city-wide training program to address these needs.
- Scheduling - Civilian
  - Provide options for work schedules and off days.
  - Reduction in mandatory overtime or give employees options who do not want to work overtime - for sworn and non-sworn.
- Advancement
  - Increase opportunities in growth and promotional development through special project/assignments



*Preventive Plan*

As a large number of employees reach the retirement age, this will result in a significant institutional knowledge loss. One way of instilling workforce planning is to create ways to encourage staff to delay retirement and when they do retire, provide options for them to stay engaged such as an annuitant/volunteer programs.

Table 3

Year	Attrition (retirement only)
2014	24
2015	35
2016	31
2017	22

Age Projection

- \* 176 members are between the age of 40-45 years of age
- \* 227 members are between the age of 30-39 years age
- \* 35 members are between the age of 29 and under

Service Projection:

- \* 141 members have 20+ years of service
- \* 234 members have 11 to 19 years of service
- \* 126 members have 6 to 10 years of service
- \* 110 members have 5 or less years of service

Clearly, the more employees we can retain, the sooner our staffing numbers increase. In addition, the department will not have to devote as much time, effort, and expense on continually training newer officers and instead can focus training resources on officer effectiveness, skill enhancement and other initiatives.

To retain younger employees who are not of retirement age, we need to continue to address some of the major challenges which were identified in the exit interviews. Monetarily, some benefits for staying should include increased longevity pay, perhaps using a percentage such as other agencies have done. Increases to uniform allowance and tuition reimbursement may also entice more employees to stay with the Agency.

In addition, the plan includes looking for ways to improve organizational communication to ensure that employees feel both listened to and informed. The Agency needs to be proactive and strive to get employees engaged, stimulate a sense of ownership and valuing employees' expertise and perspectives. The career development section above identifies some of the ways to address this issue.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**

The Department continues to actively recruit qualified candidates for its vacancies. Special emphasis is placed on attracting and hiring Oakland residents and selective language candidates that are committed to the City for the long-term. We continue to expand our workshop venues throughout the city in order to actively search out the most qualified people.

**COORDINATION**

The Budget Office, the Department of Human Resources Management, the Compliance Director, the Oakland Police Officers Association and the City Attorney’s Office were consulted in the preparation of this report.

**COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

Retention Programs Cost Appropriation

<b>Proposed Programs</b>	<b>Projected Annual Costs</b>
Recruitment Incentive	\$50,000
Substance Abuse Program	\$84,000
Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)	\$50,000
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$184,000</b>

Note: The \$84,000 for this program is already funded for this calendar year.

Many of the recommended actions identified in the retention plan can be implemented with existing budgetary resources. However, the items listed in the chart above, which total \$184,000, cannot be implemented with existing resources. Council action will be required to establish an appropriation for these activities. Also, the human resources to implement some of the retention plan would have to be adjusted in order to properly implement some of the programs proposed.

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**SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

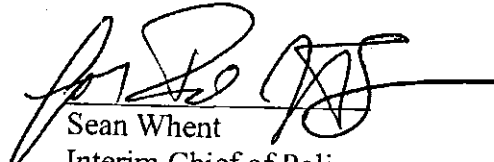
**Economic:** There are no economic opportunities associated with this report.

**Environmental:** There are no environment opportunities associated with this report.

**Social Equity:** Retaining current employees within the Agency will provide stability to our workforce and enhance public safety efforts.

For questions concerning the contents of this report, please contact Donna Hoppenhauer, Acting Captain of Police at 238-3552.

Respectfully submitted,



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Oakland Police Department

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