



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICES

36 Lynde Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475

Michael A. Spera
Chief of Police

Mr. Frank Keeney
Chairman
Old Saybrook Police Commission
36 Lynde Street
Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475

May 17, 2021

Chairman Keeney:

I respectfully request that the Commission place an item on its agenda to consider supporting a proposal to attract and hire tenured, certified full time police officers.

As you are aware, when hiring new full time law enforcement professionals both uncertified and certified personnel begin their employment earning the same salary and being afforded the same personal leave benefits. While this practice is proper for uncertified personnel, it has proven to be detrimental when attempting to attract and hire tenured, certified full time police officers. Therefore, there are two matters I seek the Commission's support with concerning the recruitment and retention of tenured, certified police officers seeking to transfer to our Agency. They are enhancing compensation and enhancing personal leave benefits.

Compensation

For more than a decade, when seeking per diem police officers to serve as School Resource Officers, we chose to provide compensation equal to the top step salary tier for police officers. This was done to attract tenured, certified law enforcement officers to our Agency to fill these important positions.

The same mindset must now be used when seeking full time law enforcement officers. The practice would be budget neutral, as officers who leave our employ creating a vacancy are often earning a top step police officer salary. Additionally, hiring a certified police officer negates twenty-six (26) weeks of salary required when an uncertified individual attends the Connecticut Police Academy and increases the ability for the new hire to become a true personnel asset. If supported by the Commission, we will alter our current advertising for full time certified police officers by changing the advertised salary of \$63,865 to a salary of \$78,943. Furthermore, if the Commission endorses this concept, I will adjust the salary of the last tenured, full time certified police officer that we hired.

Personal Leave Benefits

The second part of my proposal seeks the Commission's support for me to pursue offering tenured officers personal leave time that is commensurate with their tenure in the law enforcement profession, rather than their tenure with our Agency. Currently a new officer is offered eleven (11) vacation days per year while a tenured officer (five years) is allotted sixteen (16) days. It is difficult to attract a tenured officer to our Agency when joining our employ would result in a reduction in personal leave benefits, they already possess (*and have earned*). To offer a new lateral hire personal leave time that is commensurate with their law enforcement tenure, I believe we will need to work with the police union to create a memorandum of understanding on the matter. This may only occur if the First Selectman is willing to engage the police union on the matter and only if the union chooses to partner with the Town on the issue. The Commission's support would cause me to approach the First Selectman on this issue and engage labor counsel should he agree to move forward.

It is known that the recruitment and retention of law enforcement professionals has become a nationwide issue, and an issue that has negatively impacted our Agency. I believe that making these enhancements would make Old Saybrook more attractive for tenured law enforcement officers who are seeking employment with a new agency which in turn will assist the Department's Operation.

With your permission I look forward to presenting this proposal to the Commission with the hope of receiving unanimous support to implement my ideas.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Spera
Chief of Police