

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: PROCESS FOR REPLACEMENT OF SWORN POLICE OFFICERS IN
FY 2012/13**

BACKGROUND:

Replacing a police officer is a time intensive process. Officers are required by law to attend and successfully complete the 14-week residential training program at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. This training cannot occur until the officer has actually been hired by a Police Department. In addition, new Ames officers need to complete an approximately 13-week field training experience within the department. Field training is a practical learning experience managed by Ames police trainers that orient new officers to police work at the Ames Police Department. The field training experience allows the new officer to demonstrate competency in the job before being allowed to operate independently in the field.

The six month time period between hiring new officers and their ability to operate independently in the field is critical, since it limits our ability to maintain a full complement of officers on the street.

In July of 2010 it was proposed that the department hire new officers as soon as a retirement or resignation date was known so that new officers could get into the training queue as soon as possible. To accomplish that, the City Council temporarily increased the department's authorized staffing level for sworn personnel from 53 to 54. This action allows for the hiring and training of a new officer prior to retirement of the departing officer for a temporary period of time. This strategy assures that the new officer will be available in the field much sooner.

Although the Council's current authorization expires at the end of June 2012, the challenges created by training new officers will continue into the next fiscal year. Therefore, it is appropriate for the Council to extend this authority to temporarily increase authorized strength for FY 2012/13.

This process has been successfully used over the last two years. For example, earlier this year Corporal Jerry Spencer announced his retirement in July of 2012. The department was able to hire a new officer in March, making it possible for the new officer to attend the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy class beginning in April. The new officer will be four months into training by the time of Corporal Spencer's actual retirement.

During the FY 2012/13 budgeting process, provision for this type of temporary position was made in the Crime Prevention and Police Services section of the Budget, carrying forward savings from unspent payroll funds in the amount of \$40,000. It is possible that funding for

this overlap will not be necessary, since salary savings from the retirement or resignation of a more senior officer may be sufficient to cover the additional cost of an early hire. The need for funding will be impacted by the timing of a particular officer leaving and the availability of a qualified replacement.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Authorize a temporary increase in the staffing level in the Police Department for sworn personnel from 53 to 54 for the 2012/13 fiscal year to help us achieve our goal to have a full complement of police officers on the street as soon as possible.
2. Do not authorize a temporary increase in the staffing level in the Police Department.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

A fully trained and staffed police department is clearly desirable and a direct benefit to our citizens. However, training requirements make it difficult to maintain full staffing levels.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby authorizing a temporary increase in the staffing levels for sworn personnel from 53 to 54 for FY 2012/13.