

# **Request to hire Police Officer positions vacated through resignations, separations and retirements**

**The Police Department is requesting to hire Police Officers to replace vacancies created through resignations, separations and retirements.**

While the Police Department understands the City Council's resolve to increase civilian positions in community programs such as social work and relieve some of the need for police officers in the community, those positions and programs are not fully developed. The need to maintain police officer staffing to adequately respond to community needs, calls for service and emergency response is still paramount for the police department and the City.

*The community deserves excellence, not adequate service and we are not even at adequate.*

The Police Department is experiencing low staffing levels which creates difficulties in providing timely response to calls for service and other community needs. These low staffing levels have created an ever growing concern that, in the event of an emergency, the police department does not have the necessary staffing to respond to basic community safety needs or provide the level of service required to maintain safety in the city. With these low staffing levels there is very little opportunity for patrol to provide proactive policing.

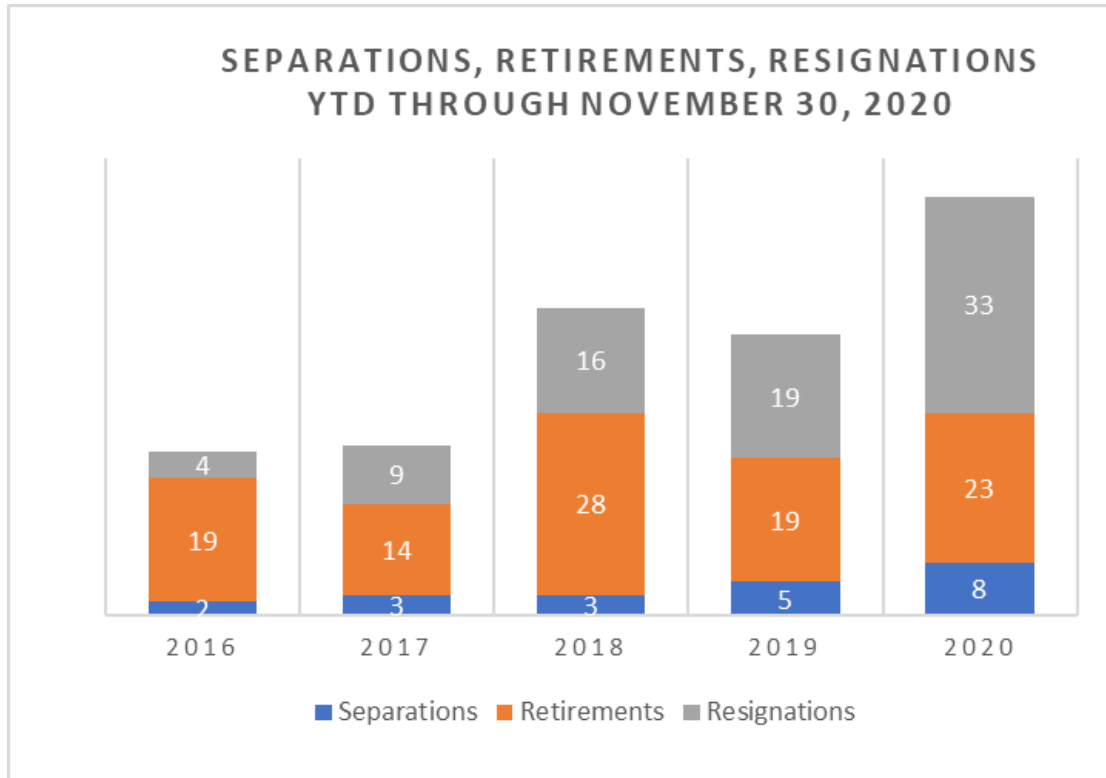
## **Contributing issues to the understaffing of police officers**

### **Resignations, Separations and retirements**

The Police Department is experiencing an unprecedented number of resignations, separations and retirements. From July 1, 2020 to December 20, 2020.

| <b>Sworn count by FY</b> |           |           |           |           |           |             |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
|                          | FY17      | FY18      | FY19      | FY20      | FY21      | Grand Total |
| 1 July                   | 2         | 1         | 7         | 9         | 11        | 30          |
| 2 August                 | 2         | 3         | 5         | 1         | 4         | 15          |
| 3 September              | 2         | 2         | 1         | 4         | 10        | 19          |
| 4 October                | 4         | 4         | 6         | 1         | 17        | 32          |
| 5 November               | 3         | 2         | 5         | 2         | 4         | 16          |
| 6 December               | 3         | 4         | 6         | 2         | 7         | 22          |
| 7 January                | 2         | 8         | 1         | 3         | 1         | 15          |
| 8 February               | 4         | 4         | 4         | 2         |           | 14          |
| 9 March                  | 4         | 2         | 6         | 1         |           | 13          |
| 10 April                 | 2         | 4         | 3         | 2         |           | 11          |
| 11 May                   | 1         | 4         | 8         | 4         |           | 17          |
| 12 June                  |           | 3         | 6         | 6         |           | 15          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>       | <b>29</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>58</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>54</b> | <b>219</b>  |

THIS CHART IS CALENDAR YEAR – FOR COMPARISON to Fiscal Year above

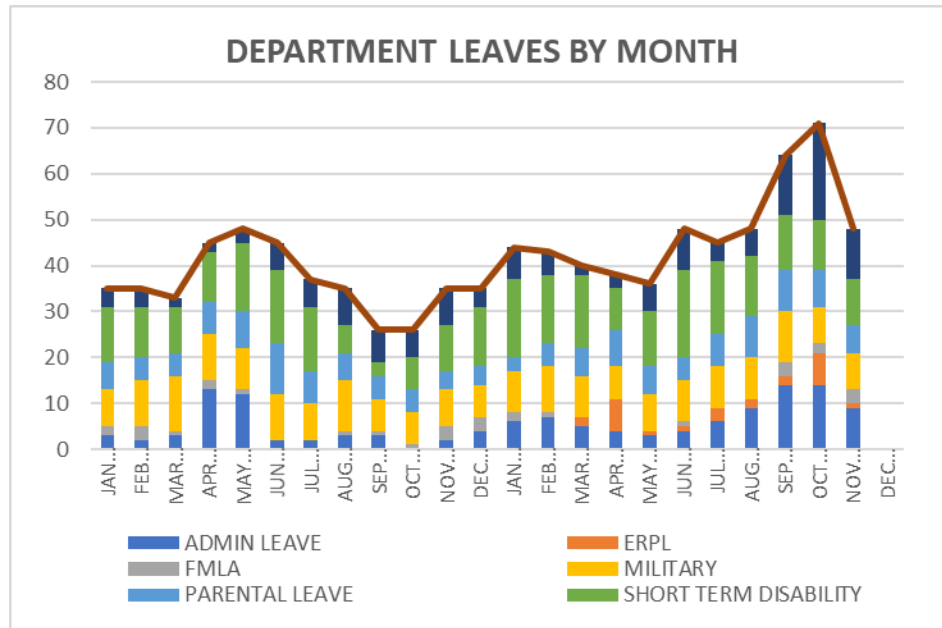


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The Police Department will have 53 vacant funded (including attrition positions) sworn and 20 vacant unfunded sworn positions with the announced retirements and resignations through December 2020. There are also 3 pending vacancies for January.

## Departmental Leaves

The number of Officers on leaves from the Police Department, including Short term disability, Workers Compensation, FMLA, ERPL, Administrative Leave, Parental Leave and Military Leave has fluctuated from 45 leaves in July to a high of 70 leaves in October.



These numbers do not include accrued leave time available and taken to include Vacation, Personal Leave, Compensatory Time, Holiday and Funeral Leave. Other factors that affect officer availability include court time and training time.

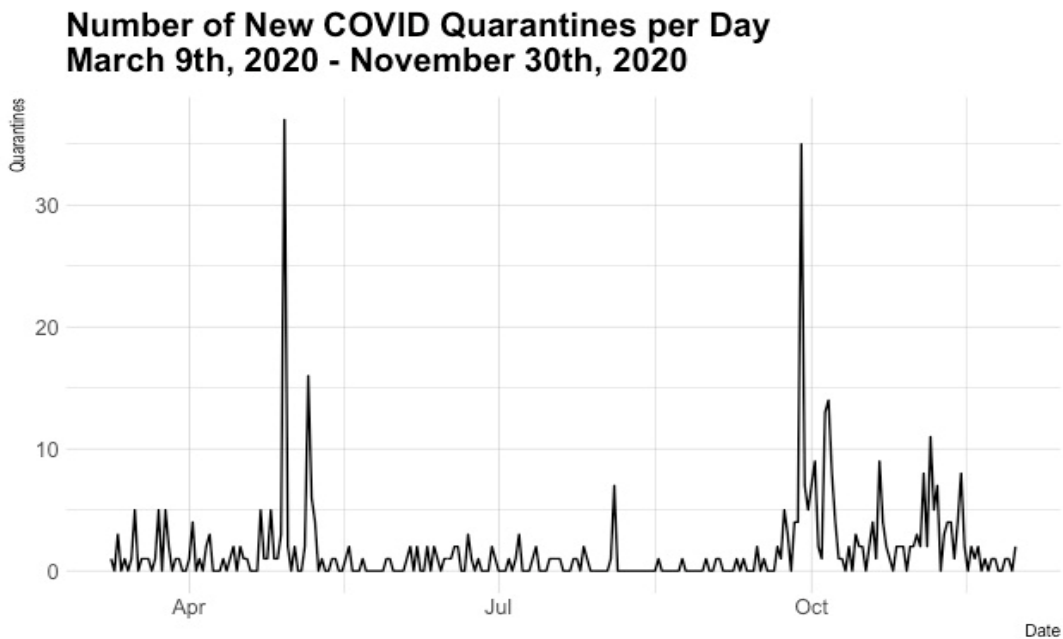
## Quarantines

The nature of police work lends itself to exposure risk of the COVID 19 virus.

The Police Department has worked diligently to reduce the risk from COVID by implementing training, PPE requirements and contact tracing. Along with all other precautionary measures taken, quarantines have been necessary to reduce spread of the virus within the department and the community.

## COViD Quarantines

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This chart represents persons placed into quarantine. Quarantines last between 4 and 14 days in most cases. \*\*The data in this chart are preliminary figures due to changing protocols throughout the time of the data collection, some data may be missing and/or incomplete.

The chart above reflects the number of employees that entered quarantine per day. Quarantined employees are assigned to work telephonic but are not available for patrol response.

The culmination of resignations, separations, retirements, leaves, quarantines and training creates a huge gap in staffing. The Police Department is now staffing at a level that does not provide adequate call response or timely case resolution for the community we serve.

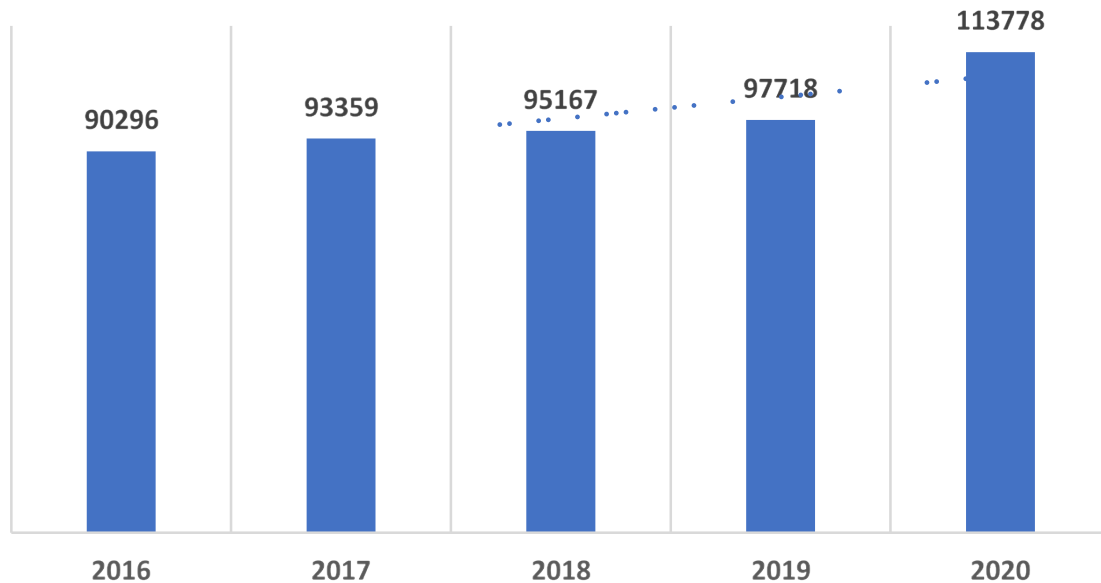
## Other issues affecting staffing

The city continues to see an increase year to year in calls for service

## Calls for Service

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### January - November Each Year



Call time response has increased due to many factors including the increased number of calls for service and the reduced number of officers available.

## Protest and free speech events

The City continues to experience protest and free speech events on a regular basis. For the period of March to November the city has had over 270 protests or free speech events. These events all require research and analysis. When safety concerns are identified for any event staffing for safety and investigation are also required. It also required deployment or standby of motors and public order units to mitigate potential or experienced civil unrest.

## Homeless Encampment cleanups

The Police Department has been integral in working with the Department of Health on all encampment cleanups. This has put a strain on both on-duty and overtime resources.

## COVID mitigation

Salt Lake County and DNR have funded overtime resources for COVID mitigation in parks and open areas of city. Working these overtime shifts have also strained the ability to staff departmental overtime patrol coverage shifts.

## Use of on-duty resources

The Police Department continues to utilize on-duty resources for large events such as the Vice-Presidential Debate, protests, free speech events and public safety response such as homeless encampment cleanups and COVID 19 mitigation whenever possible. Use of on-duty resources is necessary to reduce the budget impacts that would occur with the use of overtime as well as the inability to fill overtime rosters with voluntary signup by officers.

## **Inability to fill overtime shifts**

The police department is experiencing low rates of voluntary overtime shift signups including patrol coverage signups. This is seemingly due to many factors including morale and the increased stress that they are experiencing related to their positions.

All factors mentioned above are damaging to the ability of the police department to maintain an adequate response but in totality they are detrimental to public safety, the city and the communities we serve.

## **Budgetary Impacts of low staffing numbers**

The police department is experiencing multiple impacts related to the inability to retain and maintain adequate staffing.

Overtime

Call outs

Backfill

Officer mental health and wellness (workers compensation)

Retirements, separations, resignations

Cost of retirement, separation and resignation payouts

Retention vs replacement

Required attrition savings – the retirements that are providing these savings are also creating costs related to retirement payouts and overtime.

Overtime needs and associated costs will continue to increase as the number of officers on staff decrease. Overtime costs will not decrease at the time officer vacancies are filled but approximately one year after the hiring process of a new officer begins. We currently have officers in the background process that could be hired in February and placed into service in January of 2022.

Cyclical issues - Low staffing in an environment with increasing calls for service creates backlogs in calls for service and longer response times. The mental stress from running from call to call and never catching up creates additional stress. When officers are under additional stress that they cannot mitigate we see additional mental health and physical illness. These stress related issues have multiple costs which includes medical visits, workers compensation and leaves. When officers go out on leave, it again lowers staffing which increases the workload and stress on the other officers.

# **Police Department efforts to improve community response times**

The police department has been proactive in efforts to mitigate the staffing issues presented above, but these efforts are not sustainable long term.

## **Redeployment of resources**

The police department recently made a temporary reallocation of resources from investigative and special response areas of the department to patrol. This temporary redeployment will help manage calls for service in the short term but puts extreme limitations on the resources available to investigate crime, respond and investigate increasing gang related violence and criminal activity, it reduces school resource officer availability as schools return to on-site learning, reduces focused enforcement of drive by shootings, narcotics, auto theft, property crimes, reduces motor deployment availability and creates issues related to delays in solving criminal cases and taking the criminal element off the street in a timely manner. Bike squads are not currently affected, but daily needs to cover calls for service may require us to reallocate bike squad resources on a daily basis.

## **Use of available overtime funding**

The police department has been utilizing available funding for overtime related to COVID from outside agencies such as Salt Lake County and the Division of Natural Resources. This funding has been temporary in nature and most of it has ended. Grant funding for overtime has been utilized when it is applicable to the grant objectives.

## **Ongoing evaluation of community needs and the most effective ways to meet those needs**



# **Preparing to meet the long term needs of the community**

## **Hiring**

The police department has been working towards a hiring class to fill vacant officer positions. A hiring class can be implemented as early as February of 2021. Officers from this class will not be available to handle calls for service for 10 months which would put them in service in January of 2022. This is an extremely long time to improve staffing and calls for service response. In order to proceed with this hiring class in February of 2021, the police department would need approval to hire no later than January 12, 2021 to meet post requirements for an academy.

It is paramount to maintain a consistent hiring process in order to mitigate large swings in staffing. Redeploying resources on a regular basis incurs costs in multiple areas. Consistent small academy classes are more manageable in budget and curriculum scheduling then fluctuating hiring processes.

## **Training**

The police department also supports the administration, city council and the community to provide increasing training within the department. Training would need to be dynamic to meet the needs of the community and to provide training in a timely manner additional time availability for officers or overtime would be needed to accomplish additional training.