MEMORANDUM

October 2, 2013

TO: Teresia Zadroga-Haase, Human Resources Director
    Human Resources Department

FROM: Eric Jones, Chief of Police
      Police Department

SUBJECT: RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

This memorandum presents the Stockton Police Department's recruitment strategy. The goal of this strategy is to achieve a diverse, highly-qualified workforce that best reflects the community we serve.

BACKGROUND

Challenges

The Stockton Police Department faced many challenges in recent years. The sudden exodus of experienced police officers, as the result of the City of Stockton’s financial crisis, has significantly affected both the overall experience level of the Department and its diversity.

In an effort to replenish its diminishing ranks, the Department first focused its recruiting efforts toward certified police academies throughout the State, to recruit both cadets still attending and those who had already successfully graduated. This strategy proved successful, as we hired over 95 officers within the first year - an unprecedented rate of hiring. However, despite this rate of hiring, we remained unable to keep pace with the high number of senior officers continuing to leave because of retirement or resignation to work for other law enforcement agencies. Soon, other law enforcement agencies throughout the State began actively recruiting for the same limited pool of police officer candidates, creating an extremely competitive market for qualified police officer applicants. Even many of our own officers were recruited by and left for other police departments, including Oceanside PD, Redding PD, Monterey PD, Lodi PD, and BART PD.

As the pool of academy recruits became smaller and competition increased, we opened up the “trainee” position. Trainees are hired without any law enforcement training and sent to a police academy at the expense of the City. Trainee applicants must take a written test and an agility test. Upon successful completion of both, they are ranked on a hiring list and processed through the
required background investigation in rank order. The background process includes a psychological evaluation, polygraph or computer voice stress analyzer test, criminal history check, and medical evaluation. These are the same standards that academy graduates and recruits must pass before being hired. This process alone can take up to four months to complete. If the candidate successfully passes the background process, she or he is provided a job offer as a paid recruit to attend a police academy.

There exists the potential for additional funded police officer positions in the near future. We recognize this will provide even more opportunity to build a diverse, qualified workforce reflective of the community we serve. We also recognize that we are currently underrepresented with regard to African-American employees and Asian employees. We value and desire a workforce that is reflective of our community.

Current Strategy

Our recruiting efforts are led by a dedicated recruiting team comprising a diverse group of both male and female officers. This team targets academies, job fairs, and colleges for potential applicants. We also advertise job openings on our City website www.stocktongov.com. We have two new recruitment videos playing multiple times each day on over 50 Regal Cinemas across San Joaquin County for the summer months. Recruiters will also be present at these theatres at least once a month during peak days and hours. The estimated exposure is 600,000 moviegoers. These videos are also posted on the Department's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

In developing a fresh recruitment strategy, a great deal of research was conducted. This included discussions with other police agencies, such as Oakland PD, who have been successful in hiring a diverse, qualified workforce reflective of their community. Several meetings were also conducted with members of our local African-American community to discuss recruiting strategies and solicit input. Additional meetings were held with the SPD Recruiting Team, the entire SPD management team, City officials, Human Resources staff, and the recently-formed Chief's Community Advisory Board.

It should be noted that the current underrepresentation within the Department will not be corrected overnight; the hiring requirements and complexity of the process demands considerable time and effort. The minimum standards required to become a police officer are high, both to guard against graft and abuses of power, as well as ensure the citizens of Stockton receive the highest quality of police service possible. Although no one is suggesting our standards be lowered, our overall hiring process must be examined and modified, if necessary, to ensure we remain competitive in the marketplace and attract qualified, local candidates. Additionally, it is important that we develop a recruiting strategy that
Involves immediate steps to positively impact Departmental hiring, coupled with a more long-term, methodical approach leveraging key partnerships. SPD should be just one of many community partners committed to providing a highly-qualified, diverse police workforce.

IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES

- Explore changes to the internal hiring process

The current process for hiring trainees may limit our ability to process each candidate on the applicant list in a timely manner. Some agencies, such as Oakland PD and San Jose PD, have hiring processes that allow for candidate selection outside of a rigidly-ranked list. Perhaps the testing process could be modified to a pass/fail system as opposed to a ranked order. This could allow the Department to more efficiently triage the entire list of applicants in order to more quickly identify the most-qualified applicants. The current process of merging new candidates onto existing lists occasionally allows for previously-disqualified candidates to be reconsidered before other first-time candidates ranked lower on the list are considered. However, changes such as these will require additional legal consideration to ensure they are appropriate and allowable.

- Provide an online interest application for upcoming testing

Currently, if a person wants to apply for the trainee position, they can only do so if there is an upcoming examination scheduled. In order to give potential candidates a place to express their interest, an online interest application was just set up on the City’s website to receive information from potential trainee candidates before an examination is scheduled and to inform them of upcoming hiring events. The website also now contains answers to frequently-asked questions regarding the hiring process. This allows for our recruiters to begin communicating with candidates in an effort to keep them interested and help them prepare for the testing/hiring process. Developing more personal and regular contact with interested applicants is expected to improve the number and preparedness of those who show up on test day.

- Hold orientations and practice physical agility courses

In order to build relationships with potential candidates and help them to succeed, orientations will be offered to assist them in preparing for the hiring process. This will include practice agility courses. Information will be given about academies, the written examination, and volunteer programs such as the Sentinels.
• Engage applicants more regularly throughout the hiring process

Recent statistics reveal that approximately 11% of trainee applications received are from African-American candidates. That number is reasonably reflective of the diversity of our community. However, African-American applicants have a slightly lower rate of attendance on test day (40% versus 50% for other ethnicities). Engaging these applicants more effectively and offering practice exams prior to the testing date is expected to improve attendance rates on the day of the examination, thereby increasing our pool of qualified applicants.

When a job-seeker signs up for a police trainee test or completes an online interest application, we will regularly engage that applicant through emails and phone calls. Members of the SPD Recruiting team and/or the City’s Human Resource Department will remain in communication with these applicants to keep them up to date on the steps involved in the hiring process. Staff will answer questions, explain each step, invite applicants to attend practice exams, and recruit for participation in volunteer programs while waiting for the testing process to begin. Building a more personal relationship in this way is intended to maintain the candidate’s interest and improve their likelihood of showing up on test day.

• Community partnerships

The Department will leverage existing and develop new partnerships to enhance our local qualified applicant pool. These partnerships will include local schools/colleges, the business community, the faith-based community, and other community-based organizations. This effort is already underway and is how some of the strategies outlined here were developed. However, we now need to build a stronger recruiting presence at community functions and events, such as Cinco de Mayo, Juneteenth, and Asian New Year. Not only should our recruiters attend these events, but event organizers must become actively involved in sharing our message and encouraging the development of local, qualified police applicants. It is through strong partnerships that we will become most effective in this area.

• Recruit nationally

We will contact career centers from various colleges across the nation, specifically colleges which are culturally diverse. When possible, recruiters will attend conferences and events such as the annual National Black Police Association conference. Additionally, we will advertise in diverse national publications across the country. For example, www.discoverpolicing.org is a national website managed by the
International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) that will be used for the national recruitment of candidates.

- Troops to Cops

Vince Kilmartin, CDR, USCG (Retired) has developed a program called Troops to Teachers. He targets troops exiting all branches of the military within a five-county region of Northern California. He has agreed to incorporate Police Recruitment, specifically Stockton PD, into his program.

Immediate Strategies – Six-Month Benchmarks

In an effort to measure the effectiveness of these immediate strategy changes, we will look at the following over each six-month time period:

- Hold three or more orientations for persons completing online interest applications
- Recommend the Human Resources Department conduct at least one entry-level trainee test after orientations have been completed (unless the existing list is deemed to have sufficient numbers of qualified candidates)
- Improve the attendance rate on test dates by 15%
- Increase the percentages of culturally-diverse applicants where the Department is underrepresented, such as African-American and Asian, by 5%
- Report on business/community partnerships formed and the impact to date on PD recruitment activities
- Report progress on national recruitment efforts to date

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

- Storefront recruiting station

A storefront recruiting station, similar to a military recruiting office, could be located in a strip mall or other highly-visible area which is easier to access and less intimidating for potential candidates. Staff could assist with getting applications completed online, explain the hiring process, and coordinate workshops for practice written and physical agility examinations. There are unknown costs associated with this strategy at this time.

- Expand volunteer programs to mentor and prepare individuals
Expand SPD volunteer programs such as the Sentinels to mentor and prepare potential applicants. This approach will build strong relationships with candidates, keeping them engaged and interested in the Stockton Police Department. Personal relationships are a key to building a diverse and qualified work force.

- Target local schools

Identify students who may have potential and engage and mentor them. Career assessment surveys given to students between grades 7 and 12 can be used to identify interested potential candidates. High school and college athletic directors and coaches can be contacted to help identify qualified individuals. Research has shown that athletes are more likely to be qualified candidates for police work, due to their dedicated, disciplined, team-oriented approach to achieving common goals. Once students have been identified, they need to be mentored and possibly recruited for volunteer programs, such as Jr. Cadets and Sentinels, until they are old enough to apply for full-time police positions. Mentoring can be accomplished by police officers as well as police volunteers (Cadets, Sentinels, Police Chaplains, etc.).

- Hire an outside consultant

Other agencies, such as Oakland PD, have hired outside consultants who specialize in law enforcement services to provide insight into the recruitment of highly-qualified and diverse employees for entry-level positions. This strategy would require additional funding.

Long-Term Strategies – Six-Month Benchmarks

The following benchmarks will be used to gauge our progress in this area.

- Research cost/feasibility of a Storefront Recruiting Station
- Complete at least one career survey at local schools to identify students interested in law enforcement
- Begin to target identified students and young adults for mentoring with the use of the Sentinels, Jr. Cadets, Police Chaplains (in the schools), and Stockton Police Recruiting Team
- Examine cost and need of hiring outside consultant

CONCLUSION

The Department is committed to providing the best possible police service to the citizens of Stockton. To meet that commitment, we recognize the need for a qualified, diverse workforce that best reflects our community. To meet this need,
both immediate and long-term recruiting strategies have been identified and will be implemented. While each approach has unique benefits, the Department believes that, combined, this overarching strategy will prove greater than the sum of its individual components. For example, having a more-efficient testing process alone would allow us to better compete for qualified candidates. However, combining this with the mentoring of students and recruitment of volunteers produces an even more-dramatic effect: an expanded pool of local, qualified candidates who can be processed through the hiring system more efficiently. All of these approaches, once implemented, will complement each other and help our Department reach our desired goal.

ERIC JONES
CHIEF OF POLICE

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