



## City of Alexandria, Virginia Sheriff's Office



### MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 13, 2018

TO: SHAWNDA HOWARD, CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

FROM: DANA LAWHORNE, SHERIFF

SUBJECT: IMPROVING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CAPABILITIES

The Public Safety Work Group (PSWG) was designed to address public safety pay practices. The Sheriff's Office PSWG members consist of Undersheriff Tim Gleeson, Lieutenant Bob Gilmore, Sergeant Valarie Wright, and HR Director Bernard Baldwin. This year's focus of the work group are grade reallocations and modifying the deputy sheriffs to a 25-year retirement plan as required by Virginia law. The modifications that are proposed are necessary changes that will improve the Alexandria Sheriff's Office recruitment and retention capabilities.

#### **Grade Reallocations:**

I recommend that Deputy I (D-1) and Deputy II (D-II) are reallocated to from grade 9 to grade 10, the lieutenants are reallocated from grade 16 to 18, and the captains are reallocated from grade 20 to 21. All reallocations would move these employees straight down in grade on the pay scale, which is consistent with the City's current pay philosophy. All proposed costs reflect the cost of the salary increase plus additional benefits costs calculated at 41%.

The Sheriff's Office starting salary at grade 9 step 0 is \$45,841.38. Arlington County Sheriff's Office advertise their starting salary at \$50,419 with evening shifts earning an extra \$1.00 per hour, Fairfax County Sheriff's Office has a starting salary of \$48,973, and Prince William County Sheriff's Office's starting salary is \$47,777. Currently, D-I start 5.35% below comparators salaries and our D-II's are below the comparators for average Min/Mid/Max salaries by 13.96%/9.56%/7.07%.

Due to this disparity and to remain competitive for recruitment, over the past three years, I selected to start our deputies at grade 9 step 1, which is \$48,134.58. Moving forward, I would I would recommend that D-I start at a Grade 10 step 0 (\$48,138.74). This increase would place us in line with our comparator jurisdictions starting salaries for entry level deputy sheriffs. It would also provide the new deputy greater earnings during the first five years of their career than they currently receive now. This change would also present a cost savings of over \$30,000 for each new D-1 hired because they are starting at the 0 step as opposed to the 1 step.

The Sheriff's Office currently has 44 D-Is and 22 D-IIs. The cost to move all the D-Is to grade 10 is \$159,274.50 and the cost to move the DIIs is \$81,968.83. The total cost for the DI and DII grade reallocations is \$241,243.33.

Our lieutenant's salaries are below the comparators salaries average Min/Mid/Max by 16.73%/12.09%/9.48%. The Sheriff's Office currently has six lieutenants with two at the max salary. Our lieutenants need to be moved down two grades, which equates to a 10% raise, to be aligned with our comparators. The total cost to move six lieutenants is \$91,318.34.

The current comparator average shows our captains salaries are below the average comparators Min/Mid/Max salaries by 12.74%/9.16%/7.14%. Moving down one grade to increase their salaries by 5% would move them closer to the comparators. We currently have four captains. The total cost to move the four captains is \$39,082.72.

The total cost to relocate the current DIs, DIIIs, lieutenants and captains to the recommended grades is \$371,644.39.

### **Retirement Plan Modifications:**

As of July 1, 2008, the Code of Virginia § 51.1-138 requires all deputy sheriffs in the state of Virginia to enter the VRS Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) retirement plan with the Hazardous Duty Supplement. The VRS LEOs plan allows deputy sheriffs to retire with 25 years of service at age 50 with an unreduced benefit or begin to receive an unreduced benefit at 60 years of age with five years of service. This plan also provides a supplemental benefit each year of retirement of \$13,584 until social security age.

Currently, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office deputies are not in the LEOs plan and they do not receive the Hazardous Duty Supplement. They are part of VRS plan 1 or 2 and the City Supplement Retirement Plan. In these VRS plans, to receive an unreduced retirement benefit they must be at least 50 years of age and have completed 30 years of service or completed 5 years of service and be at least age 65 without a reduced benefit. To receive an unreduced benefit from the City Supplement they must have at least 25 years of service and be 50 years of age or 65 years of age with 5 years of service.

Over the past 12 years certain steps have been taken to meet the requirements of the law. For example, it was determined that the City Supplemental is a better benefit then the Hazardous Duty Supplement. As a result, in 2009, city representatives successfully petitioned the state legislature to amend 51.1-138 (see section G) so that Alexandria deputies sheriff's would be exempt from having to receive the Hazardous Duty Supplement, allowing them to remain with the City Supplemental.

Unfortunately, further steps to remedy this situation have not occurred, leaving us as **the only Sheriff's Office in Virginia that does not have a 25-year unreduced benefit retirement plan.** This presents a possible legal problem for the city and a recruitment and retention issue for the Alexandria Sheriff's Office.

The attached chart developed by the Ad Hoc Retirement Committee in 2011 outlines how our retirement benefits at 25 years are significantly below multiple comparator jurisdictions. Not to mention, if a new deputy, who has completed their two years of contractually obligated service, leaves our office for any of the comparators found on the chart they will only have, at most, 25 years until full retirement, as opposed to 28 years if they remain with the Sheriff's Office.

To further illustrate how much of a penalty an Alexandria Sheriff's Office deputy suffers in retirement for not being part of VRS LEOs, as the law requires, please refer to the below table. This table reflects the retirement benefit for a topped-out Master Deputy (DIV) earning \$91,890.76 per year who retires after 25 years of service at 50 years of age.

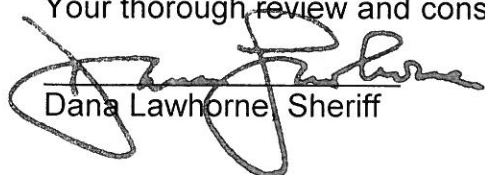
Retiree	VRS Multiplier	VRS Yearly	City Suppl Multiplier	City Suppl Yearly	Total Yearly	If had LEOs w/Haz	If had LEOs w/o Haz w/City Suppl
Age 65	42.5%	\$39,054	22%	\$20,216	\$59,270	\$52,638	\$59,270
Age 60	29.75%	\$27,338	22%	\$20,216	<b>\$47,554</b>	\$52,638	\$59,270
Age 50	19%	\$17,460	22%	\$20,216	<b>\$37,676</b>	\$52,638	\$59,270

During the Ad Hoc Retirement Committee, it was determined that for the Sheriff's Office to be competitive in retirement benefits we needed to participate in VRS LEOs *without the Hazardous Duty Supplement*. In 2012, a cost analysis was done through VRS to see how much it would cost to implement this change. The cost was \$1,326,305, but that included the medics and fire marshals, who are not able to move into the LEOs Plan *without Hazardous Duty Supplement* under the current law. The cost of just deputies should have been around 75% of that for approximately \$1,000,000. Further, discussion and analysis need to be completed to obtain an accurate cost figure and potential funding location for the retirement modification. It has been discussed that funding for the retirement modification could be funded by money already marked for retirement funding.

To resolve these issues with the retirement program, I would request that city place all Alexandria Sheriff's Office sworn personnel into the VRS LEOs program without the Hazardous Duty Supplement and modify the City Supplemental to allow deputies to receive an unreduced retirement benefit at 60 years of age with a minimum of 5 years of service. This modification would ensure we are inline with our comparators retirement plans, assist with recruitment and retention, and remedy any possible legal issues that could arise in the future.

In closing, both recommended pay and benefit recommendations are of utmost importance to the Alexandria Sheriff's Office. In the current job market, it is extremely difficult to recruit and retain high quality and caliber deputy sheriffs. Due to our location in the DC Metropolitan area, we are competing for applicants with numerous high paying law enforcement related jobs with excellent benefits. We must ensure that we are doing everything possible to stay relevant and competitive with our comparator jurisdictions pay and benefits. I feel that these two recommendations will provide my office with great incentives to entice the best and the brightest to work at the Alexandria Sheriff's Office.

Your thorough review and consideration in this matter is greatly appreciated.



Dana Lawhorne, Sheriff