



MEMORANDUM

Austin Police Department *Office of the Chief*

TO: Michael McDonald, Assistant City Manager
FROM: Art Acevedo, Chief of Police
SUBJECT: **Reclassification Request**
DATE: February 6, 2008

Our department began an organizational transition in 2007 that started at the top with a new chief and executive team. The executive team was tasked with reviewing our organizational structure, policies and practices and initiate change where needed to insure that we best serve our residents as we continue building trust between police and the community.

Certain areas of the organization require additional management staffing to successfully meet leadership and accountability challenges that will soon face the Department. Our department would like to create three executive staff commander positions which would aid and support the assistant chiefs with the day to day operations as well as performing additional duties by overseeing the Risk Management Division, Community Education and Outreach Division and the "Watch Commanders".

Risk Management

Most large agencies have risk management personnel who review the responsibilities and liabilities encountered by the agency and its employees. This is particularly important in a law enforcement organization where the majority of employees are regularly engaged in direct (sometimes stressful) contacts with the public and where there exist a significant number of individual units with varying duties and functions. A need for a central division that monitors the risk areas within the entire Department, whether it is policy, training, environmental or equipment issues or is connected to the general wellbeing of Department personnel will ultimately enhance the services APD can provide to the community. Our department currently has several employees who have been activated to military service and are slowly returning to our work force. Law enforcement agencies throughout the country are now taking a hard look at how agencies can help returning troops to make the transition back to police work. This new division would be responsible for designing and implementing a re-entry program for our employees.

The Risk Management Division will oversee several existing programs that are not currently organized under one management umbrella and spread throughout the department. These

programs and units include Peer Support, Wellness, Psychological Services and Worker Compensation.

Law enforcement is a high risk occupation which requires management to be vigilant about the welfare of our employees. Over the past 5 years, APD has seen over 3,300 worker compensation claims which has cost the City over 6.3 million dollars. These injuries have resulted in over 12,000 missed work days. Currently the police department is double the city average on pay out per injury: \$173.61 citywide versus \$344.27 at APD. With the creation of centralized management of these programs, the APD Risk Management Division will provide an important missing component of oversight which we believe will lead to increased safety, better health and risk reduction for our employees.

Community Education and Outreach

Over the last decade, the Austin Police Department has phased out several youth programs such as Police Explorers, Police Athletic League and DARE. While the department maintains strong outreach programs such as the Community Liaisons, the volunteer program, Commander's Forums, Boy Scout program, Blue Santa, Eastside Story, and the Citizen's Police Academy, we firmly believe the department must increase opportunities and meaningful interaction with the local youth. A Community Education and Outreach Division would allow for an expansion of community involvement activities, especially with our youth. This division will require a lieutenant position to help initiate and oversee these important efforts. Without a strong, ongoing connection to the youth of our community, we feel any attempts to build trust and cooperation with all residents of Austin would be less than successful.

The Community Education and Outreach Division will start by designing programs like the Police Activities League (PAL), Police Explorers (a form of scouting) and links to activities such as Special Olympics, Inner-city games, and Midnight Basketball. The department also wants to implement Council Member Martinez' suggestion to start a high school Public Safety Academy with a criminal justice component. These programs will help APD:

- To develop a more trusting and understanding relationship between police and our youth.
- To provide additional opportunities for students both in school and after school.
- To give youth some insight into law enforcement career options.
- To provide a safe environment for youth and expose them to a variety of different activities.

Watch Commander

In addition, our department would like to staff our "Watch Commander" positions with five permanently assigned lieutenants. Currently, line lieutenants rotate through this assignment one week at a time. The "Watch Commander" position is staffed 24/7. Since implementing this new assignment the department has seen a increase in positive interaction between sworn and non-sworn personnel in communications. In addition we have noted a decrease in response time for priority one calls and increased coordination on critical incidents. This has been very successful but has required our department to remove lieutenants from their permanent assignment to staff

this rotating position. Because our department is growing rapidly it is important to keep our most senior and experience managers in the field.

Our department will be implementing COMPSTAT towards the end of March 2008 to address crime and hold departmental decision makers accountable. The vision of COMPSTAT is to provide the department divisions with a 28 day analysis of crime and other risk management statistics so that they may develop appropriate action plans. The line lieutenant will assist with operational plans (24 hours) to complement the 28 day strategic goals. The "Watch Commanders" will be monitoring the city as a whole and working with the area commands to provide tactical plans to address situations requiring immediate 2-4 hours redeployment.

In order to accomplish the above our Department proposes 3 Commanders and 6 Lieutenants be considered for this purpose.

The total cost to reclassify these positions will be \$397,408.



ART ACEVEDO

Chief of Police

AA:tg