



Police Department

DATE: May 14, 2024

FROM: Dave Draovitch, Police Chief

ITEM: Police Department Recruitment and Retention Presentation

REQUEST:

Receive a presentation about current recruitment and retention issues the police department is facing.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

For several years, the police department has struggled to become fully staffed and fully trained. The Deputy Chiefs and I feel we have done internally pretty much everything we can do, so we are now seeking to inform the Board of City Commissioners of the actions we have taken and to offer some solutions for the Board to consider during the 2025 budget discussions.

RECOMMENDED CITY COMMISSION ACTION:

Receive the presentation and consider the information during the 2025 budget discussions.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION:

Dave Draovitch, Police Chief, 701-355-1866, ddraovitch@bismarcknd.gov

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Police Presentation - Recruitment and Retention

Bismarck Police Department

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

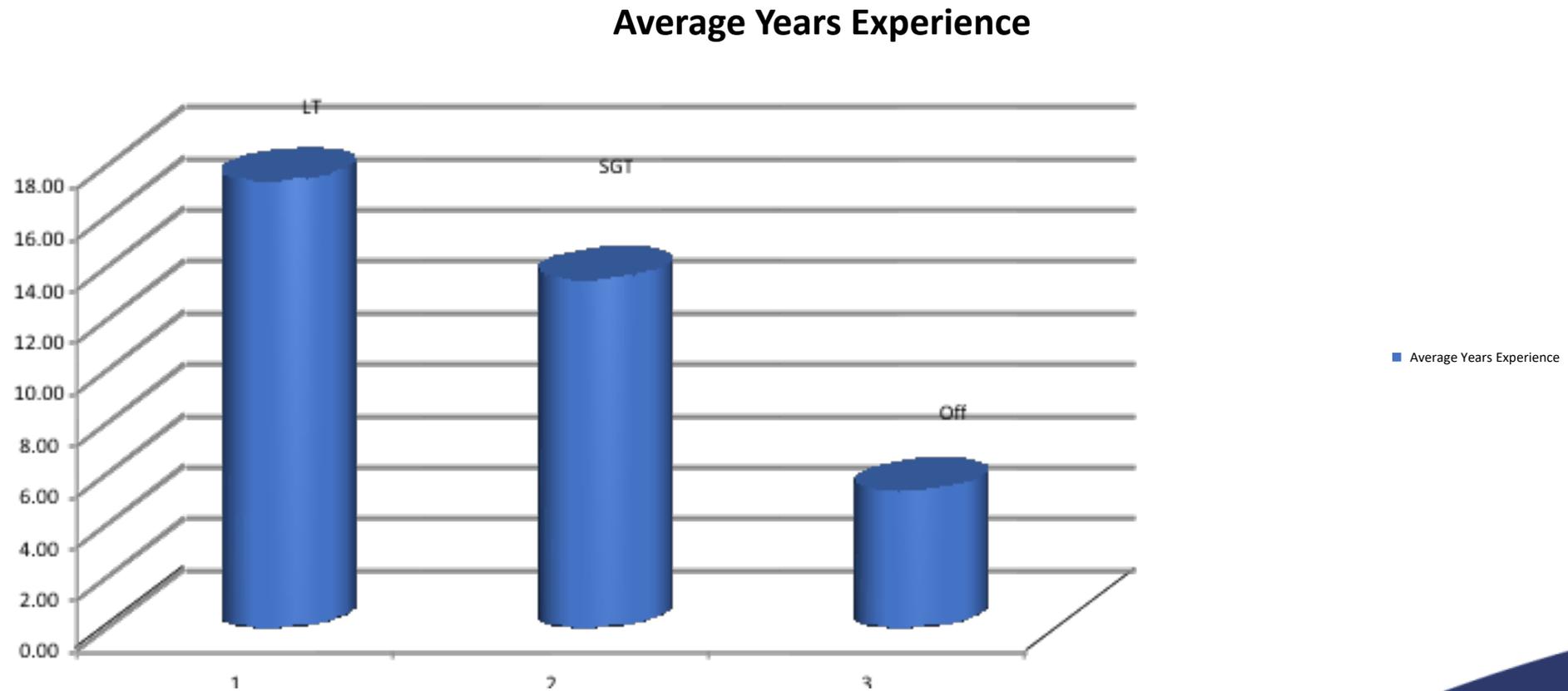
Police Department Current Status

- Currently 137 sworn officers authorized
 - Standard sized force for community this size
- Why we have and need 137 positions
- Turnover rate averages just over 10 officers per year the last six years
 - During the last six years seven officers returned
 - 2023 – 16 officers left with three returning
- We are down 12 positions currently.
- Explain length of time to train officer to be functional that hasn't been through the academy

Current Status Continued

- No end in sight, if no one resigned it would take 2+ years to get caught back up with the number of qualified applicants we have. This is based on applicant pool from recent interview processes and predicted length of time to make recruits functional.
- Leadership retirements in the next few years.
 - Chief position
 - Deputy Chief Position
 - 3 Lieutenants
 - 1 Sergeant

Current Longevity - Patrol



Recruitment Challenges

- Nationwide LE issues
 - Explain last two hiring processes (include civilian positions that are easy to fill)
 - Lack of applicants and qualified applicants
 - Radio ads – didn't help
 - Job fairs don't help
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Recruitment Challenges

- Bismarck Police Department Standards
 - We will not lower standards!
 - Some new officers realize the job is not for them
 - Some don't meet the standards and expectations
 - 19% washout rate for new recruits in last 9 years
 - Nationwide the washout rate is between 20% to 25%

Hiring History

- I started in March of 1989 – My number is 123
- 15 years later we were at number 210
 - Hired 87 officers during that period
- The last 15 years we have hired 206 officers
 - 136.78% increase from first 15 years to last 15 years of my career

Retention Challenges

- Competition that we have never experienced with agencies in the area including state and federal agencies.
 - Federal Agencies are targeting the best local officers and offering them positions locally
 - ND Highway Patrol is doing the same thing
 - ND BCI increased salary and pension to attract larger agencies investigators
 - Most exit interviews – it comes down to salary in most cases
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Retention Challenges

- National Narrative
 - Job satisfaction – sense of purpose (are we making a difference), offenders are not being held accountable
 - Officer Safety issues dealing with repeat offenders, some with firearms.
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Who left and why

- Detective 1 – 10 years experience
 - ND BCI
- Detective 2 – 8 years experience
 - ND BCI
- Officers 1&2 – 4-6 years of experience
 - DEA

Consequences

- Less experienced and trained police force = Higher city liability more negative press and less public confidence
- Increased citizen complaints (Response time slows, etc.)
- Burnout – not able to take comp time, always operating at minimum manpower, unable to staff power shift, increased response time.
- Training denied due to lack of personnel – need them for minimum manpower
- Possibility of specialized team reductions
- Decreased officer safety
- OT funds used - see next slide

2023 OT Expense

- \$541,767

Which services would we be willing to cut and what are the consequences of doing that?

- Law enforcement has had to expand beyond just going to related police calls. This is to provide better community relationships and a trusted police force
 - Crime Prevention/Community Engagement – 2 officers
 - School Resource Officers – 9 officers
 - Airport – 5 Officers
 - Etc.
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Solutions – What we are doing

- We are as accommodating as we can be
 - Adjusting schedules and shifts
 - While being available 24/7/365
 - Making officer wellness a priority
 - Peer support program
 - Wellness grant applied for and awarded
 - Sanford Power
 - Meeting with Prosecutors and Judges about offender accountability
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Solutions

- Potentially add more non-sworn community service officers to relieve the pressure on patrol.
 - Easier to hire, lower employment costs
 - **will have to research on how much authority they can have and do to alleviate duties from patrol.
- Develop a Career Path
 - We currently have a Master Police Officer Position
 - Need to consider this a promotion instead of just a change in grade
 - Research with HR possible other steps
 - Field Training Officer, Investigator, Crash Reconstructionist etc.
- Research technology that can assist in addressing staffing issues
 - Drones?
 - Real Time Crime Center?

Solutions - Compensation

- We need to be more competitive with our competition regarding salary.
- We are competitive with our benefit package
- Consider a 5% raise after successful six months of service to avoid compression issues
 - This was in effect when I started here but I don't know when or why the City quit this practice.
- Signing bonus for new employee, recruitment bonus for employee who refers a successful candidate
- Goal is to allow a performing officer to achieve the top of the pay scale in 12 years.