



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Councilors

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager

DATE: June 4, 2015

RE: Consideration – Application for COPS Grant to Fund Additional Police Officer Position

BACKGROUND:

The Elizabeth City Police Department is continually seeking grant funding opportunities from outside sources that will enhance operations and further the department's mission of the pursuit of excellence. In keeping with this practice of seeking grant funding opportunities, the Elizabeth City Police Department wishes to submit an application to the COPS (Community Policing Oriented Services) Office, a division of the Department of Justice, in order to fund one additional police officer position. The COPS Office recently announced its FY2015 CHP grant program, which is a competitive open solicitation that funds 75 percent of a police officer's salary and fringe benefits for a period of thirty-six months. The City of Elizabeth City would be responsible for funding the remaining 25 percent and the police officer position would have to be in addition to approved positions in the FY15-16 budget; the extra position would have to be retained for a period of twelve months following the completion of grant funding. Total grant funding for the thirty-six month period cannot exceed \$125,000 per police officer position. If funding is approved, the Elizabeth City Police Department could increase its total sworn positions from 60 to 61 utilizing COPS funding up to \$125,000 for a thirty-six month period.

ANALYSIS:

Eligible applicants to receive funding through the COPS Office include all local, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies that have primary law enforcement authority. This nationwide program is designed to advance public safety through community policing by addressing specific problems, such as public trust, through the hiring of full-time sworn officer positions. In 2009, the Elizabeth City Police Department applied for, and was approved, three additional police officer positions for a thirty-six month period of time. If granted permission to apply for this year's funding, the Elizabeth City Police Department will select a "Building Trust" focus area as part of the "Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing" for the purpose of enhancing fair and impartial policing and improving transparency as part of our overall community policing strategy. Specifically, the additional police officer position will

supplement the Department's existing Community Policing Unit from a two-person to a three-person unit, with the additional position being used to oversee community activities that build trust and increase rapport, as well as work in conjunction with the Administration and Support Services Division to enhance the overall efficient and effective operations of the Department.

The entry level salary for a Police Officer I is \$36,551 plus total fringe benefit package of \$12,542 equals to \$49,093 annually, times three years totals \$147,279 over a thirty-six month period of time. Total federal funding is \$125,000 per police officer position and local government must match at least 25 percent of total salary/fringe benefit package. Therefore, if COPS grant funding is approved, the City of Elizabeth City will have to match a total of \$36,819.75 in salary and fringe benefits over a three year period of time to fund one additional police officer. City staff believes there is justification in the number of calls for service yearly in the City to increase the total sworn police officer positions from 60 to 61. Staff recommends retaining the position permanently following the 12-month retention period required by the COPS Office in an effort to improve overall operations and provide greater service to the citizens of Elizabeth City. Furthermore, utilization of COPS grant funding will allow the position to be phased in over the three year period of time at a minimal costs to the City due to the \$125,000 in grant funding available to off-set the costs of this additional position.

FINANCIAL:

The Finance Committee discussed this matter during their meeting of June 4, 2015. Upon motion made by Councilman Horton, seconded by Councilman Donnelly, the committee unanimously recommended approval by the City Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, approve the Elizabeth City Police Department's submission of a grant application for the FY2015 COPS Grant Hiring Program.