

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: April 6, 2009

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 09-14 - Authorizing the Chief of Police to Apply for COPS Grant Funds from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 to employ a Community Youth and Family Resource Officer

REPORT BY: Mike McQuiston, Chief of Police

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Adopt Resolution No. 09-14 - authorizing the Chief of Police to apply for COPS grant funds to fund a Community Youth and Family Resource Officer position in an amount of \$341,428.00.

BACKGROUND

The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 (ARRA) allocates funds to many different and diverse programs, including those affecting public safety, with the intent to create or retain jobs and to stimulate the economy. The US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) is one of many federal agencies that have received ARRA funds for distribution. The COPS Office has established the COPS Hiring Recovery Program (CHRP) to provide funding to assist the personnel needs of local law enforcement. The CHRP program is a competitive grant program that provides funding directly to law enforcement agencies to create and preserve jobs and to increase their community policing capacity and crime-prevention efforts. The proposal before Council is to apply for CHRP funding to employ a full-time Community Youth and Family Resource Officer.

DISCUSSION

The Albany Police Department currently employs a School Resource Officer (SRO) under a joint agreement with the Albany Unified School District to provide police resources to Albany's two public high schools, middle school and three elementary schools. The SRO frequently encounters local youth who are "on the threshold" of becoming involved in crime or, in some cases, have embarked on their first ventures into criminal activity. In cases involving youth offenders, this officer's role may include: attempting to counsel the offender, referring the offender to an appropriate juvenile diversion program, ensuring criminal prosecution, etc. These young members of our community have come under the jurisdiction of the law and options are clear and

unambiguous. *"In determining which disposition of the minor to make, the officer shall prefer the alternative which least restricts the minor's freedom of movement, provided that alternative is compatible with the best interests of the minor and the community."*¹

The SRO needs only to avail him/herself of the spirit of juvenile law and take an appropriate action.

ANALYSIS

In the matter of troubled youth, youth experiencing behavioral problems that are bringing them in conflict with authority (school administration, police, employers, family members, etc.), or those who are experiencing home situations that are causational to other destructive behaviors, the police are often the first and most involved, yet the least equipped to effectively assist. While police officers may use their role to produce a positive experience/image, or serve as a role model for our youth, they rarely have the opportunity to address the root causes of the troubling behavior. Police, and the SRO in particular, simply do not have the time, training, and resources, to perform "case management" of troubled youth. These cases typically involve parents/guardians asking for help from police and simply receiving a referral to a social service provider.

The proposed grant-funded position may include the following responsibilities:

- Making appropriate referrals to other public or private agencies
- Receive complaints and referrals from schools, probation officers and law enforcement concerning troubled youths
- Identifies needs and problems of pre-delinquent youth
- Contacts youths and their families to investigate complaints
- Assist in maintaining citizen involvement in juvenile delinquency prevention
- Perform outreach and act as police liaison to local non-profit organizations and/or community groups (including the business community)
- Investigate complaints and allegations of delinquency and unruly behavior
- Locate, counsel, offer assistance, and provide intervention and to troubled youth
- Focus efforts on dysfunctional individuals and families with emphasis on crisis intervention with youth identified as "high risk" for drug usage, gang involvement and problematic behavior
- Develop brochures and other educational materials
- Perform as primary police department employee in youth outreach efforts such as the Police Activities League and Youth Police Academy.
- Assist in expanding community service orientation organization of police department by providing briefings and training to all police staff

Several years ago the police department employed a full-time DARE/PAL officer who performed some of the tasks identified in this staff report. This position, originally taken from existing staff in the detective bureau, was returned to its original position in the organization in order to more effectively investigate and prosecute adult criminal

¹ §626 California Welfare & Institutions Code

offenses. Unfortunately, a consequence of this decision was the void created in youth services.

General police incidents involving juveniles have jumped 34% during the three-year time period 1/1/2006 through 1/1/2009. Juvenile arrests have also increased during the same time period, rising to a 2008 level 21% higher than 2006. A pilot program (begun in 2006) in which juvenile offenders are being referred to a local youth court diversion program has also seen an increase of referrals during that time frame.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

CHRP grants provide 100 percent funding for entry-level salaries and benefits for 3 years (36 months) for newly hired, full-time sworn officer positions. The hiring agency must agree to retain the position for at least 12 months following the conclusion of the 36-month grant period. There is no limitation against holding another position vacant as a means of covering the City's costs for the subsequent 12 months.

Applications for CHRP grants will only be accepted from March 16, 2009 through April 14, 2009. Police staff would like to apply for CHRP funding to support the addition of a Community Youth and Family Services Officer to the police department.

There is no local match requirement for CHRP, but grant funding will be based on current entry-level salary and benefits packages and therefore any additional costs for higher salaries or benefits for particular individuals hired are the responsibility of the grantee agency.

Attachments:

Resolution No. 09-14

