



May 24, 2016

NORTH CAROLINA POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

A Division of Southern States Police Benevolent Association, Inc.
2155 Highway 42 S
McDonough, GA 30252-7636
(770) 389-5391 • (800) 233-3506
Fax: (770) 389-4572 • (866) 337-7722
www.sspba.org

Raleigh City Council
222 West Hargett Street
Raleigh, NC 27602

Dear Mayor McFarlane and Raleigh City Council Members:

As many of you know, the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association, a division of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association, has been representing the interests of North Carolina law enforcement officers for more than 30 years. We engage in various activities including conducting scientific studies and surveys, publishing, training, legislative lobbying at the local and state level as well as litigation in both state and federal trial and appellate courts.

Our form of advocacy has led us to become the largest association of law enforcement professionals in our state. Our Raleigh Chapter has been representing Raleigh police officer members since 1986.

The purpose of this letter is to shed light on critical issues as it pertains to Raleigh officers and hopefully create dialogue between you and our association. These issues are adequate pay (to include raising the starting pay), retention and support.

Adequate Pay

On Tuesday, May 17, 2016, City Manager Ruffin Hall presented the proposed budget for 2016-2017. This budget does nothing to address a critical issue as it relates to pay for Raleigh police officers. According to the city manager, the city is currently in the middle of a pay study that is scheduled to take **two years** to complete. We respectfully submit that it should not take two years to see that Raleigh police officers are underpaid. A brief look at American cities that rank 40th - 43rd in population shows that Raleigh is alarmingly behind cities of similar size.

Cities comparable in population to Raleigh according to America's top 50 cities

Virginia Beach, VA (40th) vbgov.com

- Starting recruit salary - \$42,290
- Police officer salary - \$44,432 - \$64,426
- Sergeant salary - \$59,755 - \$86,645
- Paid overtime

Omaha, NE (41st) opd.ci.omaha.ne.us

- Starting recruit salary - \$41,537
- Police officer salary after one year - \$49,400
- Police officer top pay - \$72,883

- Speciality assignment premium pay (1.5% - 3%)
- Shift differential pay
- Overtime pay

Colarado Springs, CO (42nd) cspd.coloradosprings.gov

- Starting recruit salary - \$46,758
- Police Officer upon completion of academy - \$50,520
- Police Officer pay max - \$70,968

Raleigh, NC (43rd) joinraleighpd.org

- Starting recruit salary - \$34,281 - \$35,310 upon completion of the academy
- Police Officer salary to include all three ranks- \$36,777 - \$65,948
- Detective salary range - \$38,447- \$67,596
- Sergeant salary range - \$44,376 - \$76,216
- No longer offers longevity pay

Wichita, KS (49th) wichita.gov

- Starting recruit salary - \$20.55/hr for 24 weeks(\$19,778); (\$42,744 if it were paid full year)
- Police officer range - \$44,761 - \$63,232
- Shift differential pay (extra \$0.75)
- Paid overtime
- Longevity Pay

The proposed Raleigh city budget includes a 3.0 - 3.5 percent merit increase. The proposed budget also includes increased costs for employees regarding their health insurance. The increased costs are higher premiums, higher out of pocket expenses and surcharges for spouses who decline their employer coverage.

A three percent merit increase is different for every employee depending on their salary. What remains the same is the amount of the increased cost for healthcare. The higher your salary, the less of an effect the higher premiums will affect your take home pay.

Retention

According to information received from a public records request, the Raleigh Police Department currently has 799 authorized sworn positions. As of May 19, 2016, there were 37 sworn vacancies. There are currently 40 recruits in the academy which in reality means that there are currently 77 sworn vacancies in the department. The majority of the these vacancies are within the Field Operations Division which handles 911 calls for service and also combat crime. These numbers show that the department is operating with a deficiency of nearly 10 percent of its workforce while demand is increasing as evident in the increased revenue from, an ever increasing population as noted in the proposed budget.

Imagine, if you will for a moment, that the police department was a factory that built an item and it had 799 workers with extreme demand. Now imagine that nearly 10 percent of the workers are gone, with

most of them gone from the assembly line, but the demand on the item is increasing everyday. Soon the person who only had one responsibility on the assembly line is doing more and more. Eventually the quality of the item goes down and more workers are lost because they decide they are going to go to another factory that is not as busy and pays more.

The analogy above represents the reality that is occurring within the Raleigh police department. The Raleigh Police Department has lost 125 officers since 2010. This does not include officers who retired or were terminated. Some of the officers got out of the law enforcement profession, some moved out of state to pursue law enforcement careers, but the majority continued in law enforcement within Wake County at departments for better compensation while answering significantly fewer calls for service and unlike the factory workers in the analogy, it takes almost a year of training before a new Raleigh police recruit is released to the street.

Some of the officers went to the below agencies within Wake County:

Wake Forest *wakeforestnc.gov*

- Starting salary- \$39,891 no prior law enforcement experience
- \$40,888 with two years experience; \$41,885 with five years of experience
- Police Officer I- \$39,891 - \$64,979
- Police Officer II - \$41,886- \$68,228
- Corporal - \$48,488 - \$78,982
- Sergeant - \$53,458 - \$87,078
- 2.5% - two year degree; 5% - four year degree
- 5% - spanish
- 2.5% - officers who hold Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate
- Paid Overtime
- Longevity after 5 years

Holly Springs *hollyspringsnc.us*

- Starting salary for Police Officer - \$42,523 - \$68,036
- Senior Police Officer - \$44,649 - \$71,439
- Sergeant - \$51,687 - \$82,700

Cary *townofcary.org*

- Police Officer - \$40,456 - \$72,592

The City of Raleigh has its own academy and pays the recruits while they attend to obtain their basic law enforcement training. In addition, the City of Raleigh invests money in these recruits as they receive top notch training. Of the officers who have left recently, most have been with the City of Raleigh for five years or less before leaving to go to another municipality that in turn gets a highly trained, high quality police officer without investing any money on them. The City of Raleigh gets no return on the investment from these employees and the other department banks the reward.

Support

Currently, police professionals are under intense pressure as never before in our nations history. The pressure is a result of the profession being under scrutiny from many sources. We live in a time where the actions of officers are tried in the court of public opinion with little, if any, attempt to seek the truth. Officers are more afraid of the actions and decisions of politicians and command staff than they are of chasing an armed suspect. Compensation is how an employer demonstrates the value of a position in terms of the amount and quality of work performed for an organization. A lot of police professionals feel as if they are not valued. One reason they feel that they are not valued within the City of Raleigh is due to the lack of pay increases for rank and file employees of the city.

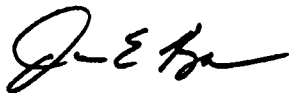
Conversely, according to a report published by Indyweek.com, our city attorney received an 11 percent pay increase, the city manager received a 3.5 percent increase, two assistant city managers received a 6 percent increase, and the Chief of Police received an 11.5 percent increase last year while all other city employees received on average a 2.9 percent increase.

Another example of value of profession is illustrated by the pay within other municipalities. In Wake Forest, the annual salary for the Town Manager is \$145,000 while the salary for the Raleigh City Manager is \$231,000. The town of Wake Forest is smaller than Raleigh so one would agree that the town manager should be paid less than the city manager. Using that logic, what is the reason why a Raleigh officer starts at an annual salary of \$34,281 when Wake Forest starts at \$39,891?

We therefore, respectfully request that you please work with us to consider pay adjustments to accurately reflect the value, volume, and quality of work that Raleigh police officers provide our citizens and our great city. Our members and the citizens they risk their lives every day to serve and protect deserve nothing less.

We look forward to your consideration.

Respectfully,



Jamie Rigsbee
NCPBA Raleigh Chapter President
jrigsbee@sspba.org
800-233-3506 ext. 457