

ELM GROVE POLICE DEPARTMENT

April 8, 2021

TO: David DeAngelis, Village Manager
FROM: James P. Gage, Chief of Police
SUBJECT: Request for temporary staffing increase to 19 officers.

Sir:

I request the authority to increase staffing temporarily from 17 to 19 officers, with incremental hiring target dates of July 1, 2021 and October 1, 2021. The reason for the incremental start is to spread out the training, so that we avoid having two officers in field training at the same time.

Beginning June 1, 2021, Officer Patrick Sykes, will begin a year-long deployment with the Army Reserve. Assistant Chief Jason Hennen, has verbally indicated that he will retire in the Fall of 2021, or early 2022. Additionally, I have informed you that I intend to retire in the first quarter of 2022. The hiring of an inexperienced candidate, on average, takes approximately 4 months. The training of an inexperienced new hire, before they are available to independently handle a shift, is an additional 3 month minimum. As you know, our last several hires have been experienced officers. If we are fortunate enough to continue this trend, the recruitment time may be as little as two months, with the possibility of a shortened field training period.

Such temporary staffing requests are supported in the third 2000 Hale follow-up study of the police department and by past board action:

“Staffing levels continue to be a source of concern in the department. **At one time, high attrition rates made it very difficult to field a sufficient number of officers to ensure officer safety and response to citizen demands without incurring a great deal of overtime.** While this problem seems to have been curtailed, the department continues to play catch up whenever a vacancy does occur. In recognition of this fact, the Village Board recently approved the hiring of one additional officer in anticipation of the retirement of the investigator. This was a good move of the Board and will allow the officer who is to be assigned to this position sufficient time to become acquainted with the nature of the job before the incumbent’s retirement.” (Pages 3 &4) [Emphasis added]

“Having set such precedence, the Village Board should consider making such appointments a matter of practice at anytime a retirement becomes a virtual certainty. **Due to the fact that it may take as long as one year to hire and train a new officer, the department can ill-afford to begin this process on the day the retirement takes effect.**” (Page 4) [Emphasis added]

“The Village Board should adopt a policy of filling anticipated vacancies as soon as reasonably certain that they will become vacant rather than wait until after they have become vacant.” (page 4).

Support for this staffing request can be found in reviewing the following studies, previously sanctioned by the Village Board:

- The 1976, *Fire and Police Committee Study of the Police Department*, (Borden, Farrow and Vetter, November 30, 1976).
- The 1994, *Resource Management Associates (known as the Hale study)*, (Hale, 1994).
- The 1996, Hale study revisit.
- The 2000, Hale study revisit.
- The 2003, village staff self-study analysis.
- The 2005, Personnel Committee re-evaluation of police department structure.
- The 2008, Police Officer Position Justification and staffing update.
- The 2009, Request for temporary officer approval.
- The 2017, Request for temporary officer approval.

Accompanying this memo is a spread sheet explaining the financial impact (salary and benefits) of the two additional positions at the starting patrol rate. While the two positions are an added expense, Officer Sykes' salary is not paid while he is on leave and would offset some of the expense.

I look forward to discussing the additional benefits of approving both temporary positions, as it relates to staffing and efficient secession planning. As we have seen in the past, by planning ahead in filling future vacancies, the agency remains strong and agile to deal with the learning curve of staff, in their new positions, and the unpredictable nature of the future challenges that staff may encounter in dealing with the public.

James P. Gage
Police Chief