

Budget Discussion Highlights – Assigned Vehicle Program

Written By: Kenneth Hofmann, Chief of Police

1. **SUBJECT:** Proposed Assigned Vehicle Program
2. **PURPOSE:** To discuss the benefits and costs related to creating an Assigned Vehicle Program within the Police Department; options regarding the acquisition and assigning of uniform patrol vehicles to assist in recruiting and retaining the most qualified police officers for the Town of Surfside Beach.
3. **FACTS:**
 - a. The Police Department is losing qualified Police Officers to area agencies with more competitive compensation and benefits packages. The command staff has identified that existing staff perceives assigned / take home vehicles as an important benefit.
 - b. Many potential candidates inquire about assigned / take-home vehicles when considering employment. Presently, the Surfside Beach Police Department and the Myrtle Beach Police Department are the only agencies along the Grand Strand that do not have this benefit. At this time, the Horry County Police Department, North Myrtle Beach Police Department, Conway Police Department, Horry County Sheriff's Department, Georgetown County Sheriff's Department, and City of Georgetown Police Department all have this benefit for their law enforcement officers.
 - c. While the Myrtle Beach Police Department does not have take-home vehicles as a benefit, their starting salary for police officers is \$44,000, where Surfside Beach starts its officers at \$38,500. The Myrtle Beach Police Department is actively recruiting and hiring certified Police Officers from area agencies at up to \$48,400 starting salary.
 - d. The police department presently has 10 pursuit-rated police vehicles that would be suitable for assignment to the remaining 14 uniform police officer positions.
 - e. The police department is planning to request 2 police vehicles in upcoming FY 2019/20 budget at a total cost of approximately \$80,000.
 - f. The police department would like to increase the requested number of police vehicles to a total of 3 vehicles at a total estimated cost of \$120,000 in the FY 2019/20 budget.
 - g. The proposed Assigned Vehicle Program would result in the following budgetary impacts:
 - i. Increasing the proposed funding request in the FY 2019/20 budget from \$80,000 to \$120,000.
 - ii. A minimal increase in fuel costs related to the additional 14 officers driving their vehicles to their homes at an additional budgetary impact of \$4,300 per year. (Existing proposed eligible staff lives an average of 6.1 driving miles from the Police Department.)
 - iii. An increase in the Town's liability insurance related to additional vehicles on the policy at an estimated rate of \$741.00 per vehicle per year.
 - iv. An increase in annual Information Technology budget of approximately \$2,000 for data access for the additional vehicles.
 - v. A decrease in annual maintenance costs related to improved care and maintenance resulting from single-officer use.

4. REQUEST COUNCIL CONSENSUS ON THE FOLLOWING:

- a. Authorize the Police Chief to prepare and submit budgetary proposals for the purchase of 3 additional police vehicles in the FY2019/20 budget.
- b. Authorize the Police Chief to implement an Assigned Vehicle Program with existing fleet vehicles immediately with available resources.

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5. **SUBJECT:** Proposed Assigned Vehicle Program
6. **PURPOSE:** To discuss the benefits and costs related to creating an Assigned Vehicle Program within the Police Department; options regarding the acquisition and assigning of uniform patrol vehicles to assist in recruiting and retaining the most qualified police officers for the Town of Surfside Beach.
7. **FACTS:**
 - a. Like all area law enforcement agencies, the Surfside Beach Police Department is facing challenges in recruiting and retaining the most qualified police candidates. Agencies are competing for a limited number of police officer candidates.
 - b. The executive members of the Surfside Beach Police Department are constantly evaluating how to best provide a competitive and rewarding compensation and benefits package for employees of the Surfside Beach Police Department. The police officers are the “boots on the ground” and having experienced, loyal Police Officers is essential to maintaining public safety in this community. One method of identifying ways to strengthen the loyalty and commitment to the agency is by asking our employees what they want. Existing Police Officers have identified that having assigned patrol vehicles with take-home benefits would be a beneficial form of compensation for them.
 - c. When working to recruit the best police officers for the department, candidates frequently inquire about having take-home cars. Candidates are aware that the Surfside Beach Police Department and the Myrtle Beach Police Department are the only agencies along the Grand Strand that do not have this benefit. At this time, the Horry County Police Department, North Myrtle Beach Police Department, Conway Police Department, Horry County Sheriff’s Department, Georgetown County Sheriff’s Department, and City of Georgetown Police Department all have this benefit for their law enforcement officers.
 - d. While the Myrtle Beach Police Department does not have take-home vehicles as a benefit, their starting salary for police officers is \$44,000, where Surfside Beach starts its officers at \$38,500. The Myrtle Beach Police Department is actively recruiting and hiring certified Police Officers from area agencies at a minimum of \$48,400. One police supervisor departed the Surfside Beach Police Department in December, 2018 accepting a non-supervisory position with the Myrtle Beach Police Department at a higher rate of pay. Another Surfside Beach Police Officer departed the police department in September 2017, six-months after completing their SCCJA training, to accept a higher paying police officer position with the Myrtle Beach Police Department. The Myrtle Beach Police Department reimbursed the Town for a portion

- k. The proposed Assigned Vehicle Program would result in the following budgetary impacts:
 - i. Increasing the proposed funding request in the FY 2019/20 budget from \$80,000 to \$120,000.
 - ii. A minimal increase in fuel costs related to the additional 14 officers driving their vehicles an average of 12 miles each day, 14 days per month to their homes at an additional budgetary impact of \$4,300 per year. (Existing proposed eligible staff lives an average of 6.1 driving miles from the Police Department.)
 - iii. An increase in the Town's liability insurance related to additional vehicles on the policy at an estimated rate of \$741.00 per vehicle per year.
 - iv. An increase in annual Information Technology budget of approximately \$2,000 for data access for the additional vehicles.
 - v. A decrease in annual maintenance costs related to improved care and maintenance resulting from single-officer use.

8. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- i. Authorize the Police Chief to implement an Assigned Vehicle Program with existing fleet vehicles.
- ii. Authorize the Police Chief to prepare and submit budgetary proposals for the purchase of 3 additional police vehicles in the FY2019/20 budget.

- 9. PROPOSED TOWN COUNCIL ACTION:** Authorize the Police Chief via the Town Administrator to implement an Assigned Vehicle Program immediately to eligible staff members based on available fleet resources. Provide direction to Police Chief via the Town Administrator to allow the Police Chief to work to acquire 3 police vehicles in the upcoming FY 2019/20 budget.