

October 10, 2023**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**

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SUBJECT: PRIORITY FOR FILLING POLICE VACANCIES

The purpose of this report is to provide information on how the Fort Worth Police Department fills officer vacancies.

Applicable Orders

General Order 401.02, In-House Vacancy Selection of Sworn Personnel, sets the general guidelines by which vacancies for sworn officers are filled. "Patrol Services Vacancies" and "Specialized Services Vacancies" are handled differently. The designation "Patrol Services" generally refers to sworn positions that respond to calls for service and includes patrol officers, NPOs, patrol division detectives, and patrol sergeants. The designation "Specialized Services" applies to all assignments, excluding Patrol Services assignments, that require certain knowledge, skills, and abilities in order to accomplish the mission of the division or section. Lieutenant and Captain vacancies to be filled are chosen and approved by the Command Staff based on need.

General Order 401.02 C explains "Patrol Services Vacancies." Division commanders, or their designee, are approved to seek to fill their vacancy for sergeant or below from within the patrol division first. If no eligible officers are found within the patrol division, they may then seek to fill the vacancy in the following order: patrol command, patrol bureau, and then department-wide. In most cases, seniority is the determining factor for filling vacancies. All probationary officers must serve six months in an assigned patrol division before being able to transfer to another patrol bureau vacancy, but they may transfer to another shift or team within the patrol division with approval from the commander.

General Order 401.02 D explains "Specialized Services Vacancies." Once assigned to a specialized assignment, the officer must remain in that assignment for at least one year before he or she is eligible for a voluntary transfer. All vacancies announcements for the rank of sergeant or below for a specialized unit must be posted department-wide. All Specialized Services Vacancies must follow the Standardized Selection Process (letter of intent, time and attendance for prior twelve months, performance appraisal for prior twelve months, internal affairs records for prior twelve months, any special applicable special skills, and a board interview), unless only one person applies. At the end of the process, applicants will not be ranked, but will either be deemed "qualified" or "not qualified." The chain of command shall consider the needs of the community, specific crime-based problems, and other specific needs of the section/unit experiencing the vacancy when choosing an applicant for the position. Unless otherwise stated in the vacancy announcement, the list will be valid for 180 days.

Command Decision to Fill Vacancies Based on Need

The Fort Worth Police Department (FWPD), like many major police agencies, is experiencing low staffing levels at the present time. In an attempt to boost sworn police levels, the City Council authorized 69 new sworn positions in FY23 and 63 new sworn positions in FY24. At the present time, the FWPD academy is running two regular academy classes and one lateral academy class in an attempt to boost our numbers. We already have academy classes projected through January 2026. By January 2026, we are projecting to be at only 33 vacancies.

As stated above, when any vacancy occurs under normal circumstances, it is filled according to General Order 401.02 (In-House Vacancy Selection of Sworn Personnel). However, due to our diminished staffing levels, we are filling vacancies based on the greatest need. First, the reduction of violent crime is a major

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goal for FWPD; thus, we have decided to keep the enforcement units that are part of our Violent Crime Initiative (the six Directed Response Units and the two Gang Enforcement Units) fully staffed. We also need recruiters and instructors to fill and train academy classes; therefore, we try to maintain appropriate levels at the Academy. Furthermore, the patrol functions of answering calls for service and doing preventive patrol remain the primary roles of any police agency; hence, it is of chief importance that FWPD has an adequate number of patrol officers answering calls.

All other vacancies are filled based on the standard of greatest need. Since we have been critically short, approximately one-half of the positions of every other academy class is given to the Support Bureau and the Finance/Personnel Bureau to fill the positions that have the greatest needs. All other officers are assigned to fill patrol positions.

Departmental Shortage Summary

Although the Support Bureau is carrying many vacancies, the more essential part of the police function is answering calls for service. Our citizens should expect a patrol officer to respond when they call for police service.

The following table displays the itemized FWPD sworn shortages as of 09/25/2023. "Unassigned" refers to blocked out positions put in place to ensure greater equity among divisions. The positions will be assigned when we have personnel to fill them. These vacancies do not include the positions allotted in FY24.

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Bureau	Command Division	Section	Unit		
Patrol			Unassigned 8		
	South	Central 19			
		East 10			
		South 18			
	Traffic		Enforcement	Motors 3	
				CVE 1	
			Investigations	DWI 1	
			Patrol Support	Tac Medic 1	
				Air Support 1	
	North	North 11			
		Northwest 4			
		West 4			
				West 7th Team 2 1	
			Directed Response	South Team 5 1	
		Community Alliance		HOPE 6	
				CIT 5	
	Support			NPO 1	
			Unassigned 2		
Tactical		Tac Investigations	Narc 16		
			Vice 3		
			K9 1		
			Gang	Intervention/Prevention 1	
			Tac Operations	Mounted 2	
				SWAT 3	
				Criminal Tracking 2	
				Special Operations	Mounted 2
			Tac Intelligence	Intelligence Exchange	Electronic Surveillance 3
					RTCC 1
Invest & Support		Criminal Invest Support	Forensics	Crim Intel/Fusion 1	
			Youth	Crime Scene 1	
				School Resource 3	
				Youth 1	
Finance/Personnel		Operational	Criminal Investigations	Homicide 3	
			Training	Backgrounds/Recruiting	Backgrounds 1
				Enhanced Skills	Weapons 1
				Reality Based Training 1	
	Professional Standards		Internal Affairs	Special Investigation 1	

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This second table shows FWPD sworn medical and light-duty totals as of September 25, 2023.

Report as of: 9/25/2023

	Total Count	Civilian	Trainee	Total Sworn	Officer	Corporal	Sergeant	Lieutenant	Captain	Commander	DC	AC	Chief	Patrol Bureau	Support Bureau	F/P Bureau
Occupational Leave	36	0	0	36	34	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	29	5	1
Non-Occ Med Leave	18	0	0	18	15	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	1	0
Off Duty Totals:	54	0	0	54	49	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	46	6	1
Occ Light Duty	33	0	0	33	32	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	4	1
Non-Occ Light Duty	18	0	0	18	11	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	2	1
Light Duty Totals:	51	0	0	51	43	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	32	6	2
Totals	105	0	0	105	92	8	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	78	12	3

As of September 25, FWPD was experiencing 145 officer vacancies. The great majority of those vacancies, 95, are from the Patrol Bureau. A significant but smaller number, 46, are from the Support Bureau, and 16 of those are from the Narcotics section. The other four are from the Personnel/Finance Bureau. Furthermore, the Patrol Bureau is currently 78 additional officers short due to medical issues.

Each time an officer is promoted to any rank, it creates a trickle-down effect that ultimately affects the officer rank, which mainly decreases the number of patrol officers. The more specialized unit positions we fill, the lower the number of available patrol officers to answer calls. Therefore, as long as our numbers are at critical levels, we are very selective in prioritizing which positions from call-answering functions we fill. Each position to be filled is looked at on a case-by-case basis. All positions and units that make up FWPD are important, and they all add to our success in reducing crime and the fear of crime. When resources are limited, however, we have to prioritize our choices.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact Assistant Chief Joseph Sparrow at joseph.sparrow@fortworthtexas.gov or 817-392-4231.

David Cooke
City Manager