CPD Budget and Personnel Comparison Study 2013

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Why a Study for Public Safety?

“Every society's most basic organizing principle is safety, and it has always been understood that the city's most sacred duty is to protect its citizens” - Steve Benjamin, 2009
Why a Study for CPD?

- Meet city goals for public safety and police services
  - Public Safety: To increase the City's public safety ranking by 5% among similarly sized cities by increasing the City's ability to provide high quality public safety services to residents and visitors of Columbia.
  - "The quality of service delivered by City employees requires that we offer compensation that is equitable and comparable to similar positions in the local job market."
  - "We are experiencing some difficulties filling and retaining technical, skilled and professional positions in all areas of the city and **IN PARTICULAR WITH PUBLIC SAFETY.**"
Issues Facing CPD

• Instability – 4 Police Chiefs since 2010
  o Tandy Carter, Carl Burke (Interim), Randy Scott, Ruben Santiago (current)
  o Current vacancies for Assistant Chief and 2 Deputy Chief positions

• Turnover – 47% of current total department strength has been replaced from January 1, 2010 to August 28, 2013
  o Loss of 178 officers
  o Hired 200 officers in same time period
  o Study in North Carolina in 2003 showed an average turnover rate of 14.2%

• Understaffing – 30 police officer positions unfilled as of August 28, 2013
  o 377 officers employed
  o 407 officers allotted
Methodology

- Examine budgets and starting salaries for peer cities
  - Percentage of total budget allocated to Police Services
  - Amounts budgeted for personnel expenses
  - Non-monetary benefits
  - Starting Salaries
  - Retention plans
PEER CITIES

• 9 Cities identified by city council as peer cities in recent City Manager salary review

• Cities include:
  o Augusta, GA
  o Charlotte, NC
  o Coral Springs, FL
  o Greensboro, NC
  o Greenville, SC
  o Raleigh, NC
  o Savannah, GA
  o Tallahassee, FL
  o Wilmington, NC
Percentage of Budget for Police Services

- Columbia currently provides 24% of its total budget for police services
- Median of the 9 peer cities was 29.2%
- Cities above 30%
  - Wilmington 48%, Greenville 30%, Augusta 40.9%, Charlotte 43.7%
- Outliers
  - Wilmington, NC 48% of total budget
  - Tallahassee, FL 7.5%, Raleigh 7.8%
Budgets for Personnel

- Columbia allocates $56,407 for each police department employee
- 8 of the peer cities averaged $75,508 spent per employee
  - Augusta did not have total employee number published thus was excluded
  - Highest per employee was Tallahassee at $92,676
  - Lowest per employee was Greenville at $65,930
Non-salaried Benefits

• 8 of the 9 peer cities provide standard take home car programs to all sworn personnel; the 9th, Greensboro provides take home vehicles to those subject to call out
  o Take home cars offer quicker response to incidents and allow greater police presence in their respective communities
  o Broward County Sherriff Office values a take home car at $5,441 or $453 per month to officers and compensate those who choose to not have take home cars at that rate
  o Estimates that take home cars can lower fleet maintenance costs by 40%

• Wilmington offers a $2,500 signing bonus to all new employees

• Raleigh offers free medical insurance premiums for all sworn personnel
Starting Salary

- Columbia Police Department starting salary for new hires with a Bachelor’s Degree is $34,368
- Average starting salary for 8 of the peer cities for those with a Bachelor’s Degree is $39,844
  - Greensboro did not post their starting salary
  - Highest starting salary was Coral Springs at $52,553
  - Lowest starting salary was Raleigh at $34,281
Issues with CPD Retention

- CPD has lost 178 officers between January 1, 2010 – August 28, 2013 resulting in a 47% turnover rate for sworn positions
- CPD starting salary is $5,476 below peer cities
- CPD does not have take home cars for all sworn personnel
- Salaries have become compressed as new officers are making more than officers with as many as 7 years of service to the city
- Take home pay has continued to decline as insurance premiums, FICA, and retirement contributions have risen without pay raises to adjust
  - Officers have lost as much as 12% in their take home pay, even after the combined 4% increases of the last 2 years
  - Inflation combined with decreases in take home pay has many officers assuming a loss of approximately 20% in their ability to provide for their families
Columbia Police Department
Sworn Personnel
Monday, October 14, 2013

Breakdown by Tenure

- 149 (39%)
- 65 (17%)
- 75 (20%)
- 40 (11%)
- 19 (5%)
- 28 (7%)
- 4 (1%)

Legend:
- 0 to 2
- 03 to 05
- 06 to 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 to 20
- 21 to 25
- 26 and Over
Retention Plans

• Coral Springs - minimum 5% pay increases every year
• Raleigh - minimum 3% pay increase every year for first 12 years of service, dual state and city retirement
• Tallahassee - guaranteed step raises bringing starting salary from $42,765 to $50,989 by the third year of employment
• Greensboro offers a career development program allowing officers to formally pick career paths and pursue training and mentoring in their chosen path
The Costs of Poor Retention

- CPD has had to hire 200 officers between January 1, 2010 and August 28, 2013 and still has 30 openings to fill

- Cost to train officers
  - National average cost to train a solo police officer is $58,000
  - Cost to city taxpayers of $11.6 million dollars since 2010
  - To reach full staffing CPD would need to hire an additional 30 officers at a cost to taxpayers of $1.74 million assuming a 0% turnover rate

- Who can we promote?
  - A lack of experienced officers has led to a drop in the number of qualified officers for promotion to supervisory positions
  - Command staff has had to relax policy restrictions on time in grade to create a large enough application pool for promotional assessments
Officers in Dire Straits

• CPD officers could qualify for public assistance
  o Using SNAP benefits calculator many CPD officer can qualify for EBT
  o A CPD officer who is a single parent of 2 children in a market average priced apartment could qualify for $450+ in EBT benefits

• 4 year CPD veteran, Master Police Officer, PACE, SWAT Negotiator, father of 4 young children
  o MPO Medlock is forced to rely upon public assistance to feed his family
  o MPO Medlock currently receives $368 a month in EBT benefits due to low pay

• 4 year CPD veteran, Master Police Officer Marc Ryan
  o MPO Ryan tragically lost both of his parents within 6 months of each other
  o MPO Ryan almost lost custody of his 14 year old sister because family court believed he did not have a high enough solo income to provide for her well being; Ryan was only able to retain custody with the financial assistance of his sister
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Columbia Police Department</th>
<th>Charleston Police Department</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 407 sworn officers</td>
<td>• 412 sworn officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 130,591 population</td>
<td>• 122,689 population</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 134.9 sq mi</td>
<td>• 147 sq mi (land)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• $30.8 million budget</td>
<td>• $41 million budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Avg of $56,407 spent per employee</td>
<td>• Avg of $63,302 spent per employee</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No take home car program</td>
<td>• Take home car program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Starting salary with BA $34,368</td>
<td>• Starting salary with BA $39,377</td>
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What Would You Do?
“We must remember that nothing is more important than protecting the lives and property of our citizens. These men and women put their lives on the line for us every day.

It's time we stood up for them.”

Steve Benjamin, 2009
Sources

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