



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON POLICE DEPARTMENT

2 North Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, NY 10550
Phone: 914.665.2519
Fax: 914.665.2585

Roy AJ Hastings
Deputy Chief of Police

May 30, 2017

Roy Hastings
Deputy Chief of Police

For routing to:
Honorable Richard Thomas
Mayor
City Council
City Hall

Dear Council Members:

In February, I prepared a document explaining that the return of unfunded positions would reduce overtime, and give the City substantial savings. The overtime situation that is currently happening, cannot continue at its current pace. Just this weekend, the Police Department was tasked with providing traffic and security for the UniverSoul Circus, details for Con Edison construction, traffic and safety for the Memorial Day Parade, Squad shortages for routine patrols, and Target wanted to hire officers for security. With all these activities, and the fact that overtime is voluntary and cannot be forced upon members, we were not able to fill all the necessary overtime spots. Since the Department is so understaffed, most of the overtime shifts cause officers to do "double" shifts, or work their regular shift either before or after an overtime shift. After several months, most officers complain of fatigue, or "burn out." Members of the Police Department that are experiencing overtime "burn out," are beginning to refuse voluntary assignments. Those that work are concerned for Officer Safety, through a decreased reaction time due to being tired, and an increase in stress. This fact, combined with the recent notification that our overtime budget (\$800,000 for 2017) has been completely expended (currently over budget by \$273,000 as of May 26, 2017), does not bode well for the upcoming summer months. During July and August, vacations drive up Squad overtime. If the officers begin to refuse Squad overtime, public safety will be placed in serious jeopardy with not enough officers to provide basic patrol services. Response time will increase, there will be less officers on the street to be a visual deterrent, and crime will rise.

Again, we are asking, through your office, that the City Council and Comptroller's Office restore funding for the Police officer positions that are currently unfunded in the City budget. Returning to full complement, will allow the Department to assign members at straight time, to cover the assignments that are currently costing the City time and one half. Additionally, we are asking for the funds that were reimbursed to the Department from Consolidated Edison construction details, be returned to the overtime budget, as per previous legislation, to restore the budget line to a level that will support the normal overtime usage that is forecasted for the remainder of the year.

FILED
CITY CLERK
MOUNT VERNON, NY
2017 JUN - 5 A 9 10

The Police Department has always prided itself on "doing more with less," but we now have so much less that the situation is beginning to deteriorate to critical levels. We have re-assigned personnel, have disbanded units, and put every available member of the service out on the street in order to maintain an acceptable level of Public Safety. We can no longer sustain utilizing overtime to fill assignments, when the majority of the Patrol Force has become fatigued, and has begun refusing these voluntary assignments. With only two officers graduating last week, and the fact that we have several openings due to transfers and retirements, staffing is currently at critical levels. A new academy class is scheduled to start in July, and we would like to put as many new officers in this class as possible. Even with this, we will not realize the return of the complement until after field training, which would likely be March of 2018. As you can see, a failure of the Council and Comptroller to act will have dire consequences for years to come. Waiting until a crisis occurs is far too late, as hiring, training and getting new Officers ready to go on the street takes up to seven months. So, by the time a situation arises that motivates the Council to call for hiring new Officers, there will be a half year lag before staffing will return to full compliment. We have fallen behind in the past two years, and the time has come to correct this situation before it is too late.



Roy Hastings
Deputy Chief

CC Comptroller Maureen Walker