



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 21-542, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 12/1/2021

TITLE:

Public Hearing on an Ordinance to Approve County Police and Fire Rescue Sworn and Uniformed Employee Bonuses

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Public hearing to consider the adoption of an ordinance approving County Police and Fire Rescue sworn and uniformed employee bonuses.

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Walker, Kamptner, Birch, Allshouse, Davidson, Coltrane

PRESENTER (S): N/A

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: During the 2021 General Assembly Special Session II, the General Assembly allocated the Commonwealth's Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 22) distribution of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. This funding provided one-time \$3,000 bonus payments to Compensation Board-funded sworn positions in Sheriff's offices, which included Sheriffs and Sheriffs' Deputies in FY 22. The impact to Albemarle County is that it included funding for bonuses for only 11 of the 26 sworn personnel, which are Compensation Board-funded positions. In order to receive the State's ARPA funding for the Sheriffs bonuses, the bonuses are required to be paid out on or before November 30, 2021.

The State also allocated \$98,171 in funding to the Albemarle County Police Department in January 2021. These additional funds are to be used to promote the recruitment and retention of the most qualified local police department sworn personnel and to support the costs associated with criminal justice reform, which could include bonus pay for retention purposes and sign-on bonuses for recruitment purposes.

On May 11, 2021, the United States Treasury provided an allocation of \$21.2 million in federal ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) monies to the County of Albemarle to be deposited in two tranches. On August 4, 2021, the Board approved the spending plan for the County's ARPA allocation to include: \$4 million for FY 22 Economic Vitality (Human Services and Economic Development), \$4.5 million to support Broadband, and the remaining funding would support the FY 23 - FY 27 budget development.

In addition to the identified priorities for ARPA funding in FY 22 as noted above (and consistent with eligible uses for ARPA), workforce stabilization efforts would also be explored as part of the FY 23 budget process. ARPA SLFRF allows for a type of premium pay for "workers that faced or face heightened risks due to the character of their work., which includes frontline public safety workers. Given the timing of the State's use of ARPA funding to support a portion of the County's sworn personnel, a workforce stabilization and internal equity review commenced and supported moving on the recommendations provided in FY 22, rather than waiting until FY 23. The recommendations outlined in the discussion are all eligible expenses for Federal and

State funding.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Mission - To enhance the well-being and quality of life for all community members through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds.

DISCUSSION: Because State funding in FY 22, totaling \$35,525, provided for a one-time \$3,000 bonus payment for on the 11 Compensation Board-funded sworn positions in Sheriff's offices, in order to maintain equity across the sworn employees in the Sheriff's Office, staff recommends the provision of a \$3,000 one-time bonus to the remaining 15 sworn personnel not covered by the Compensation Board funding, using ARPA SLFRF funding.

Staff further recommends utilizing the \$98,171 in recruitment and retention funding provided by the State to the Albemarle County Police Department, as well as ARPA SLFRF funding, to provide a \$3,000 one-time bonus to all full-time sworn employees of Albemarle County Police Department. This is an effort to provide equity with the bonuses to the sworn personnel in the County Sheriff's Office, funded by the State.

Staff recommends providing a \$3,000 one-time bonus to uniformed full-time employees of Albemarle County Fire Rescue to provide equity across all front line sworn and uniformed County employees.

Retention of sworn and uniformed Police and Fire Rescue employees is a priority, as is recruitment. A review of upcoming vacancies, coupled with the trends related to receiving a lower number of qualified individuals applying for positions, is leading to the recommendation for a one-time sign-on bonus of \$3,000 for new recruits, subject to fulfilling certain probationary requirements. Both Police and Fire Rescue will experience a number of known vacancies to recruit for in coming months due to known upcoming retirements and hiring for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) SAFER grant-approved positions. Based on conditions in the current job market, including other peer localities offering higher starting pay and sign-on bonuses, is resulting in a lower number of qualified individuals applying for positions. Due to this, staff is recommending a one-time bonus of \$3,000 for sworn and uniformed recruits in Police and Fire Rescue.

Staff is recommending that this recruitment sign-on bonus program be revisited in one year's time to assess its effectiveness as a recruitment tool for seeking qualified individuals for our sworn and uniformed positions in Police and Fire Rescue. Staff will return to the Board of Supervisors at that time with a recommendation to either extend or end the program.

The attached Ordinance only authorizes bonus payments for County employees who are under the authority of the Board of Supervisors. If adopted, it would authorize a one-time lump sum payment of \$3,000 to each Albemarle County Police and Fire Rescue sworn and uniformed employee with a full time equivalent of 0.7 and above who are active employees as of December 1, 2021, as well as a sign-on payment of \$3,000 to each Albemarle County Police and Fire Rescue sworn and uniformed employee with a full time equivalent of 0.7 and above who are hired between December 1, 2021 and November 30, 2022.

This action will be contingent upon the approval of Appropriation #2022022, which is included in the Appropriations also being presented to the Board for its consideration on December 1, 2021.

BUDGET IMPACT: These initiatives will be funded entirely by State and Federal revenues. The total cost in FY 22, for the one-time bonus program and sign-on bonus program is estimated at \$1,111,000. Of that total, \$133,696 will be covered through funding provided by the State for bonuses for the County Sheriff's Office, and recruitment and retention funding for the Police Department. The remaining cost will be paid for through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds previously received by Albemarle County. A separate appropriation for the use of those funds will be presented to the Board for their approval in December.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the proposed ordinance (Attachment A).

ATTACHMENTS:

A - Proposed Ordinance