



TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Mark Scott, City Manager *MS*

SUBJECT: Transition from Public Safety Officer Program/Termination of Cross-Training

DATE: April 6, 2006

As the City Council is aware, the Public Safety Director and I have made the judgment that we should cease cross-training of our 70+ Public Safety Officers. This will allow police officers to focus fulltime on policing, and will allow us to hire 6 additional fulltime firefighters (i.e., two per shift, for a total of 74). To partially offset the cost of additional firefighters, we will eliminate 3 vacant PSO positions, leaving a total of 126 sworn police. At the same time, we will stop the very costly training of the PSOs, which consists of a initial fire academy training, followed by 4 hours per month of on-the-job fire training. We will also save on purchase and replacement of firefighting equipment and apparel for the 70+ PSOs. Overall, we believe the City's costs will be approximately the same.

The City converted to the PSO concept in 1983, at a time when circumstances were very different. We feel that this program has served Spartanburg well. At this time, however, we feel the community has outgrown the program, as it has in most cities that once operated under this concept.

The professional Fire Service has evolved very meaningfully over the last two decades. Today, we have mutual aid and response agreements with our neighboring departments, and the level of training within those departments is much superior to what it used to be. The same is true of our own department. When a PSO responds to a fire, usually their role is secondary to the actual attack on the fire. If the fire is large enough to require frontline backup, we would typically also be relying on mutual aid. By adding two fulltime, professional firefighters to each shift, Commander Caruso has assured us that our department will be better able to address fire safety needs at the scene of the fire.

The monthly training requirements of the PSO program are a distraction to the work of both our law enforcement and fire personnel. By allowing all of our public safety

Honorable Mayor and City Council  
April 6, 2006  
Page Two

personnel to specialize in their own chosen fields, we will get a better end-product for the public.

In addition to the above, the PSO program has increasingly made it difficult to retain or recruit police officers. On several occasions this last year, departing PSOs have cited their desire to work in an environment where they did not need to do monthly fire training. It has been expensive to replace these officers because of recruitment costs and the investment we have already made in their training.

Please note that this does not restructure the Public Safety Department. Both the police and fire functions still report to the Public Safety Director. The change relates to the cross-training of PSOs, and to the different hiring requirements that will result (e.g., physical agility testing, etc.).

We are currently in the process of hiring the 6 additional firefighters. Once these personnel are available, we will complete the transition away from the PSO program. We expect that to occur no later than July 1.

This report is informational only and does not require City Council action. We do, of course, wish to address any City Council questions or concerns. Staff will be available to discuss at Monday's meeting.

If an agreement cannot be reached with DP3, then the second ranked firm of MBAJ Architecture from Shelby, NC may be considered. He presented the financial data as follows:

Mary Black Foundation Active-Living Grant Award received:

C. C. Woodson Recreation Center Renovation Project

Project #683 – Amount available over four years: \$700,000

The Spartanburg Housing Authority Contribution to the project:

Amount available: \$800,000

City of Spartanburg Capital Projects:

Project # - GP-1211

Account # - 500-8101-490-30-02

Amount Available: \$108,000

*After discussion, Councilmember Reeder made a motion to approve award of contract to DP3 Architects from Greenville, SC to do the overall planning and design for the renovation of the CC Woodson Recreation Center. Councilmember White seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.*

**E. Transition from Public Safety Officer Program/  
Termination of Cross-training**

**Presenter: Mark Scott, City Manager**

Mr. Scott presented the item to City Council as follows:

“As the City Council is aware, the Public Safety Director and I have made the judgment that we should cease cross-training of our 70+Public Safety Officers. This will allow police officers to focus fulltime on policing, and will allow us to hire 6 additional fulltime firefighters (i.e., two per shift, for a total of 74.) To partially offset the cost of additional firefighters, we will eliminate 3 vacant PSO positions, leaving a total of 126 sworn police. At the same time, we will stop the very costly training of the PSOs, which consists of initial fire academy training, followed by 4 hours per month of on-the-job fire training. We will also save on purchase and replacement of firefighting equipment and apparel for the 70+ PSOs. Overall, we believe the City’s costs will be approximately the same.”  
City Council received the report as information.

**F. Spring Fling Festival Update**

**Presenter: Mandy Merck, Special Events and Festival Manager**

Ms. Merck enthusiastically advised City Council of the activities planned for May 5, 6, & 7, 2006 for the Spring Fling Event.

**G. Declaration of Boards and Commissions Vacancies**

**Presenter: Connie Littlejohn, City Clerk**

Ms. Littlejohn advised City Council of 35 vacancies on 12 City Council appointed boards and commissions. She advised that Staff had been notified of vacancies on boards for which they serve as Staff contact and asked to submit their recommendations for reappointments and/or membership by May 17.

**X. Public Comment**

*\*Sign In Sheets are available at the door and should be submitted to the City Clerk.*

Mike Fowler, PO Box 343, Spartanburg, SC expressed his concern that City Council had not made a public statement concerning the recent changes in School District 7.