



CREVE COEUR POLICE DEPARTMENT INTEROFFICE MEMO

DATE: 04/26/2016
TO: Chief Glenn Eidman
FROM: Det. Cory Mueller, DSN 960
SUBJECT: Defined Benefit Memo

At a recent Patrol Committee meeting Mr. Perkins suggested that the committee provide a list of reasons why commissioned police officers feel it is important to have a defined benefit retirement plan. This defined benefit plan would be advantageous for the following reasons:

-The Defined contribution plan creates a level of uncertainty on the part of the employee, whereas the Defined Benefit plan allows the employee to know exactly what their benefit would be upon retirement.

-Years of service are a huge part of this benefit, and most police officers starting their law enforcement career want to call this their home, it is a career, not a job. The Defined benefit allows them the security of a definitive retirement.

-One of the biggest reasons for having a Defined Benefit plan vs. a Defined Contribution is having a robust and vigorous employment package for recruitment and retention. Honestly, in the law enforcement market today, Creve Coeur is a minority in the benefit arena because of the lack of a Defined Benefit and offering a Defined Contribution plan. While we all recognize that it is a very aggressive and generous plan, it does not stand up to the security of a Defined Benefit Plan.

*We are the only department within the city that is routinely scheduled to work nights, weekends, and holidays with a rotating schedule.

-Studies have shown that individuals who work rotating shiftwork have a shortened life expectancy rate. Specifically, police officers have increased health risks as a result of job related stress and the physical demands of the job (fights, foot pursuits, physical fitness tests, etc.). See references 1 and 2 below for supportive data.

-Due to increased health risks associated with a law enforcement career where officers work all hours of a day broken up into shifts which rotate, police have traditionally had a defined benefit retirement plan. These plans offer the officer a set amount of income based on an average of pay after an age requirement is met or a certain amount of time is served to the city for which they are employed.

-Another reason a defined benefit plan best suits the law enforcement profession is an employee retention issue. The police department's hiring standards are high which makes it difficult to find qualified candidates, and within the different city departments, the code of conduct which governs police department is more stringent. For these reasons, it is very important we are able to keep the most qualified officers employed at Creve Coeur. Officers are far less likely to leave when they are vested in a defined benefit type retirement plan as compared to a defined contribution plan.

-When a police department experiences high turnover, the end result is a young inexperienced police department. When younger, less experienced officers fill important roles within a department such as Detective or Sergeant the work product suffers along with the services provided to the community.

-Due to the nature of the job, police see this profession as a career, not a job. Officers are not likely to move from one city to another. It takes years to develop knowledge regarding department policy, sense of community, contacts (good or bad) within the community, layout of the city (streets, businesses, etc.). When officers vest in a defined benefit plan, they tend to stay in one place which moves the job of a supervisor from discipline to training and mentorship; something that will contribute to additional retention and employee job satisfaction.

-Liability for the city increases with the age of its officers. In many cases, when a police department provides a defined contribution retirement plan, officers are forced to work ten years longer or more than those in a defined benefit retirement plan. Instead of leaving the job at 55, we see officers working patrol in their 60's. These men and women endure the same physical demands as someone 30 years younger. Cities see a greater occurrence of on duty injuries, workman's comp claims, and even on duty deaths as a result of having police officers on the department who work patrol past the age of 55.

-The last point deals with the challenges of hiring new qualified police officers to fill vacancies left by retirement and turnover. Due to the turbulent climate in law enforcement, the quantity and quality of applicants has suffered; especially in the St. Louis Metro area. In the past, there were 60 to 100 applicants for one job opening at the CCPD. In 2014 and 2015, we struggle to get 10-30 applicants. Having a "comparable" compensation package will attract "comparable" officer candidates; however, this department and community deserve the best candidates who deserve the best compensation package.

In summary, the police department is grateful to serve the community of Creve Coeur. Our officers are viewed by many as the 'gold standard' in the profession and we are. Our officers work very hard to provide the best work product we can in an effort to serve our communities needs. Residents of Creve Coeur deserve the highest level of professionalism, dedication, and service. Traditionally we have met these expectations. Due to the reasons listed above, having a Defined Benefit Plan, will help assure our community continues to receive the best quality of police work the profession has to offer in the future. Thank you for taking the time to read this memo.

Respectfully,

Det. Cory Mueller, DSN 960

References:

*1. <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/288310.php>

*2. http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/publications/tandi_pdf/tandi196.pdf