

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Ordinance (1) accepting \$115,000 from the Bellevue Police Foundation to support recruiting efforts; (2) amending Ordinance 6698, adopted November 21, 2022, as previously amended, to increase the appropriation to the 2023-2024 Operating Grants, Donations, and Special Reserves Fund in the amount of \$115,000; (3) appropriating the unanticipated grant revenues to that fund; and (4) authorizing expenditures of said grant funds for recruiting services.

Wendell J. Shirley, Police Chief, 452-4177

Beverly Ni, Fiscal Manager, 452-4296

Police Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Ordinance authorizes the acceptance of \$115,000 from the Bellevue Police Foundation to support recruiting efforts.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Ordinance No. 6706

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

There is a national crisis in police recruitment and hiring. A Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) study published in March of 2022 shows that the total number of police officers and the hiring rate for officers have both decreased since 2019. The study also shows that resignations and retirements have increased over the same period. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has produced studies showing similar trends. This is due to a sharp decrease in the number of qualified applicants, coupled with an increase in the number of experienced officers who are choosing to leave law enforcement altogether.

The Bellevue Police Department's numbers are consistent with these trends as there has been a drastic decrease in the number of qualified applicants. As an example, Bellevue Police received 485 and 525 entry level applicants during 2017 and 2018, respectively. Through August of 2022, Bellevue received only 103 entry level applications. At this pace, the Police Department will receive a total of 154 entry level applicants for the entire year, which represents a 71 percent decrease from 2018.

Bellevue community members have come to expect a high level of service from their police department, and each day Bellevue Police officers strive to accomplish the department mission of reducing crime and reducing the fear of crime. Therefore, it is critical that the Department reaches a qualified group of applicants who have diverse backgrounds and experiences while being able to represent the Department and the City of Bellevue in a professional manner.

Epic Productions of Phoenix, LLC was selected to help the Department reach qualified candidates, increase applications received, and fill the large number of vacancies among sworn and professional staff. Epic provides a complete package of recruitment services with a specific focus on law enforcement. Other agencies that have used Epic's services have seen consistent increases in

applicants and diversity across their hiring. One agency saw a 685 percent increase in applications in its first month after implementing Epic’s services. Another agency had an increase in website traffic from 274 clicks (2019 – Q4) to 26,450 clicks (2021 – Q1).

If approved, staff from Epic will meet with Department leadership and discuss recruiting mission and goals. They will conduct research on market trends and develop a department brand, messaging, and call to action tag lines based on the culture and goals of the Department. They will then conduct on-site video and photo production to be used in recruitment videos to be posted on various social media platforms for advertising and engagement. Epic will simultaneously design and build a Bellevue Police recruitment website that will assist in providing a streamlined process for potential applicants to find out additional information about the Department, ask questions, and apply. Epic will also provide two years of hosting and technical support for the recruitment website and facilitate content changes when needed.

Finally, Epic will provide a 12-month online recruitment campaign where it will evaluate online platforms for optimum candidate exposure, select geographic target locations and opportunities for campaign exposure, conduct search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM), track and re-target visitors to the recruiting website, and analyze the analytical data and provide monthly performance reports to evaluate success.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Bellevue City Code 4.28.200: Council approval is required to accept grants in excess of \$90,000.

Fiscal Impact

Adoption of this Ordinance would authorize acceptance of \$115,000 from the Bellevue Police Foundation to support recruiting efforts. There are no matching fund requirements to accept these funds.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Ordinance (1) accepting \$115,000 from the Bellevue Police Foundation to support recruiting efforts; (2) amending Ordinance 6698, adopted November 21, 2022, as previously amended, to increase the appropriation to the 2023-2024 Operating Grants, Donations, and Special Reserves Fund in the amount of \$115,000; (3) appropriating the unanticipated grant revenues to that fund; and (4) authorizing expenditures of said grant funds for recruiting services.
2. Do not adopt the Ordinance and provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

Proposed Ordinance No. 6706

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Proposed Professional Services Contract with Epic Productions of Phoenix, LLC
Bellevue Police Foundation Grant Letter