

Lompoc City Council Agenda Item



City Council Meeting Date: July 16, 2013

TO: Laurel M. Barcelona, City Administrator

FROM: Larry A. Ralston, Chief of Police
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SUBJECT: Funding of Victim's Advocate Position at the Lompoc Police Department

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council discuss whether to fund an in-house Victim's Advocate Position at the Lompoc Police Department.

Background:

The Lompoc Police Department has had the benefit of a Victim's Advocate assigned exclusively to the Department since 1998. This position was funded by federal monies provided by the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and staffed under contract with the North County Rape Crisis and Child Protection Center (NCRCCPC). The Department's advocate has, over the years, provided counseling and support to victims in our community, to help them navigate the legal process, and obtain services to help them recover from their victimization.

Discussion:

The Lompoc Police Department has been fortunate to receive grant funding for this position since 1998. In 2010, the Department again applied for funding under the VAWA grant, but was, unfortunately, denied. As a result, the City Council voted to allocate General Fund monies to staff this position through June 30, 2013.

The Department has utilized the in-house Victim's Advocate to provide counseling and support to victims of crime in Lompoc. The Lompoc Police Department is the only law enforcement agency in Santa Barbara County to staff a dedicated full-time advocate. This has allowed the Department to provide services to victims of crimes, even those not generally supported by NCRCCPC. As a result, this position has become a significant component of the Department's service delivery to victims of crime. If the Council funds the position at this time, then the Department will continue to deliver these services, as has been done in the past.

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In the event the Council chooses not to continue funding this position, the Lompoc Police Department (LPD) has already made the following provisions to adjust to our new situation:

- a. The NCRCCPC will continue to provide services to victims of abuse as they have done so well in their years of existence. Our commitment to them will not be affected.
- b. Domestic Violence Solutions continues to function in Lompoc and provides the Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) services to victims of domestic abuse.
- c. The Santa Barbara County Victim Assistance program has a staff person in Lompoc. This person works closely with the LPD detectives to ensure our victims receive the care necessary to work through difficult paths.

While the Department would lose the in-house advocate, the LPD will continue to refer victims as described above until the Department is able to secure another grant for victim services.

Fiscal Impact:

A continued contract with NCRCCPC would cost the City of Lompoc \$50,148, annually. This total includes salary/benefits (\$40,448), administration costs (\$4,440), federal taxes (\$3,080) and overtime (\$2,180). Reinstating this program would require the use of General Fund Reserves for the FY 2013-14 period in the amount of \$50,148, and a similar amount in FY 2014-15.

Conclusion:

Funding this position would allow the Lompoc Police Department to provide enhanced services to victims of crime in our community. If the position is not funded, then the Department will continue to refer victims to NCRCCPC for support and services.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry A. Ralston, Chief of Police

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

Laurel M. Barcelona, City Administrator