

*City Clerk Renata McLeod's minutes:*

## **AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT APPLICATION FOR 3 OFFICERS THROUGH THE COPS HIRING GRANT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**STAFF REPORT:** Police Chief White explained that he was seeking approval to apply for and accept grant funding for a percentage of three officers wages and benefits through the COPS Hiring Grant, U.S. Department of Justice. He further explained that the department is still 12 officers below what they should be based on crime rates and calls for service. Last year the department submitted for this grant and was not awarded, but they would like to try again. Chief White stated that the grant would fund up to 75% of an officer's wages and benefits, up to \$125,000 per officer. The application and acceptance of this grant will allow the department to increase the overall personnel allocation by three officers. These positions would supplement the patrol staffing and help lower crime rates. This is a three year grant, and the City would be required to maintain the additional officers for at least four years (three years during the grant cycle and one additional year).

**DISCUSSION:** Councilmember Gookin asked what federal strings would be attached to this grant. Chief White stated that the City would be responsible for the unfunded amount of costs, the full fourth year of funding for the positions, and must give preference to veterans. He further explained that this funding would provide a team of folks that could do more community outreach and he does not see any big hurdles. Councilmember Adams stated that one question he had at the General Services Committee meeting was what if the grant is not awarded and there was no alternative. Chief White explained that these would be unbudgeted positions and it would mean that there would be three patrol officers that they would not get if they do not get the grant. Councilmember Adams read an article from the Boise Idaho Reporter regarding his comments at the previous General Services Committee meeting. Councilmember Adams stated that the COPs program exists to proactively fight conditions that give rise to public safety issues, but GAO data suggests that it does not lower crime rates. He referenced additional articles mirroring his position and concerns about grant conditions. His main concern is that the federal government is at least \$19 trillion in debt and he cannot in good conscience vote for the use of these funds and increasing the federal debt. Councilmember Gookin asked Chief White if the Mesa Police Department accepted these grants. Chief White said that the Mesa Police Department was able to save 25 officer positions through the COP grant funding and lowered their crime rate by a minimum of 5% per year. Chief White clarified that this is not militarization of the department but, rather, more community outreach. The department is stretched thin and they are doing what they can to reduce crime rates with the only other option of determining that they will not respond to certain calls. Councilmember Gookin asked Finance Director Troy Tymesen what the impact would be to pay these positions out of the Fund Balance. Mr. Tymesen explained that the Fund Balance is a savings account and does not have a revenue source; therefore, it would deplete it over time. Councilmember Edinger asked for clarification regarding the costs after the third year. Chief White explained that the City would have to pay the cost fully for the fourth year. Thereafter, he believes that retirements would be used to cover costs or, potentially, lay-offs could occur.

**MOTION:** Motion by Edinger, seconded by McEvers, to authorize a grant application for three (3) officers through the COPS Hiring Grant, U.S. Department of Justice. **Motion carried with Adams voting No.**