



SMITHFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Chief P. R. Hedrick

Smithfield Police Department finds itself at a very critical time for its future. We are currently down 13 positions. We have suspended our Narcotics unit and currently have only 3 officers assigned to detectives' duties. This places most of the workload on our road patrol officers, who are already running short-handed. Cases that should be assigned to detectives for follow up are being worked by patrol. While we see some light at the end of the tunnel, we currently have 4 officers awaiting completion of BLET or approval from the State. If these officers successfully complete our FTO program, which is not a guarantee, we will still be 9 positions down.

We simply cannot afford to lose any personnel at this pivotal juncture. The remaining staff members have been struggling with this staffing shortage, and to their credit have remained with the Town. The profession of law enforcement is filled with stressors, being shorthanded is a major contributor to job dissatisfaction and burnout. Over the last several years the Officers and civilian staff have been tasked to do more with less. The competition for law enforcement officers has never been higher. Officers now have many more options when looking for employment.

I have studied the hiring landscape for law enforcement officers in North Carolina and have seen that Hiring Incentives are now commonplace. They range from \$2000 to \$12000. To become competitive with other law enforcement agencies I suggest that we offer a \$5000 signing bonus to new employees that are currently BLET certified.

A look at how State and Federal governments are attempting to retain employees shows that they commonly pay a retention bonus to people in hard to fill positions. The range is between 15-50% of the employee's annual salary. I had our Towns finance director provide me the average salary of the police departments employees, \$64,173.12 and calculated that 15% was \$9625.13. I suggest that we pay our police officers a one-time \$7500 retention incentive. Which will send the message we desperately need them to hear, that they are valued, and we need and want them to stay here. The support staff that allows our office to function effectively and efficiently should also be paid with ranges between \$2000 and \$5000 depending on their job. These incentives, when paid out over a one-year time span, will also help stabilize our workforce during this critical rebuilding phase.

Thank you for your consideration concerning this matter.
Police Chief Pete Hedrick