



Legislation Text

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Police Staffing for Downtown Gainesville (B)

The City Commission referred the issue of downtown staffing to the Public Safety Committee on June 9, 2003. The Public Safety Committee held four public meetings concerning the original Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Board referral regarding funding options to provide police services specific to the downtown area. Current staffing of officers requires that the police department pull resources from many other areas of the city in order to manage downtown crowds and the issues that come with that, including concerns of residents in other neighborhoods who expect that same level of service.

During these meetings, several options were discussed including voluntary contributions by downtown businesses to help offset the current overtime of officers, primarily assigned on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. The original \$50,000 department proposal was for the assignment of a five officer and one sergeant overtime team assigned on those days. In addition, a downtown subcommittee was assigned from the CRA referral that met separate from the Public Safety Committee to consider the downtown owners' recommendations and options.

In September 2003, the City was awarded a Federal COPS grant authorizing up to twenty police officer positions. During FY2004 budget discussions, the City Commission also authorized the addition of two police officer positions in the police department's general budget. As part of the Public Safety Committee's assignments, the City Manager was tasked with reviewing authorizations to utilize law enforcement contraband forfeiture trust funds as an additional funding option.

The City Manager and Police Chief presented to the Public Safety Committee a proposal for funding a permanent downtown detail of five police officers and one sergeant with the sergeant position coming from a current sergeant position and not requiring additional funding. This proposal is based on a partnership that includes voluntary contributions on behalf of the downtown businesses and recognizes the shared responsibility of an area of the community that has benefited from substantial financial commitments on the part of the City. The proposed program extends over four years in order to take advantage of the COPS grant during the first three years and to comply with the grant requirements that the positions be maintained for at least one year after the grant expires. The proposal provides for a four-year funding program that can be considered for viability/need at the end of the fourth year by the City.

First year costs = \$241,845

COPS grant	150,000
General Fund	92,652
LECFTF	201,103 (one time expenditure for vehicles/equipment)
Surplus	807

Second year costs = \$238,570

COPS grant	125,000
General Fund	92,652
Deficit	20,918 (Request downtown businesses contribute this cost.)

Third year costs = \$245,480

COPS grant 100,000

General Fund 92,652

Deficit 52,828 (Request downtown businesses contribute half cost -\$26,414. Additional City cost would be \$26,414.)

Fourth year costs = \$252,607

COPS Grant - 0- (eliminated after 3rd year)

General Fund 92,652

Deficit 159,955 (Request downtown businesses contribute \$33,282 which represents a 26% increase over third year cost. Additional City cost would be \$126,673.)

Possible city funding sources for additional costs in the third and fourth years would include tax increment, general fund, UDAG repayment funds, or pursuing the creation of a downtown special taxing district.

The City Commission approve the Public Safety Committee's recommendation to fund a four year downtown police officer detail program of five officers and one sergeant, utilizing COPS grant, law enforcement contraband forfeiture funds, previously appropriated general funds, and downtown business contributions; and pursue other funding sources as necessary prior to the third and fourth program years.