



OFFICE OF POLICE
OMBUDSMAN COMMISSION
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November 13, 2018

City of Spokane City Council
Spokane City Hall
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, Washington 99201

RE: Full-time Administrative Specialist position

Dear City Council Members,

As decisions on the 2019 budget are being finalized in the coming days, we, the Office of the Police Ombudsman Commission (OPOC), request your continued support of the Police Ombudsman's highest budget priority – establish the Administrative Specialist position as a full-time position. The position currently exists as a part-time employee (.6). The Police Ombudsman has requested \$23,693.00 from the Administration in his 2019 Budget Allocation Request to make the position a full-time position.

Our governing ordinance provides, "the City Council shall maintain necessary funding to appropriately staff the Office of the Police Ombudsman and the Commission, including adequate staff to enable the Police Ombudsman to perform the required duties and responsibilities of the office as well as providing staff assistance to the Police Ombudsman Commission." See Spokane Municipal Code §04.32.160. A year ago, you amended the budget ordinance to secure the funding necessary to create the Administrative Specialist position. See Ordinance Number C35512 (passed on June 26, 2017). Through this action, we believe you are in agreement that this position functions to ensure the OPOC receives timely logistical and administrative support, while providing staff support to the Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPO). This position also helps reduce the burden placed upon the OPO. This past year, Internal Affairs (IA) has generally complied with the Police Ombudsman's request to include him in every citizen and officer interview of complaints filed by citizens. Increased IA interviews, coupled with watching body worn camera videos, and more thorough investigations have greatly impacted the Police Ombudsman's ability to fulfill the requirements of SMC 04.32 outside of the complaint process. The Police Ombudsman and members of the OPO staff regularly work deep into the evening hours to fulfill their responsibilities in a diligent manner.

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Currently, the Administrative Specialist provides support to our Commission and is the primary point of contact for complaint intake and processing in the OPO. Complaints have more than doubled in 2018. Providing citizens with an empathetic listening ear combined with the increased volume of complaints has made complaint intake a much larger portion of the job. However, the Administrative Specialist also performs administrative reporting functions for the OPOC, case management, managing social media, participate in community outreach, and other administrative functions. The workload would be difficult even for a full-time employee, but the OPO is only allotted a twenty-four (24) hours a week to complete it.

The Police Ombudsman continues to experience a shortfall in administrative support for the office. Due to the continuously evolving and increasing work load in providing police oversight, we believe that the City Council should strongly consider converting the Administrative Specialist from a part-time employee (.6) to a full-time position. This would begin to solve the Police Ombudsman's current concerns with a lack of administrative support for the office.

The OPO's successes in meeting its staffing goals are largely a result of the budgetary commitment provided by the City Council. While we have not yet achieved all of our desires, you have provided a path forward for the difficult work in front of us; ensuring the OPO is properly established and funded for oversight in Spokane. It is of the utmost importance to retain the current staffing levels in the OPO. Thank you for your consideration on this very important matter.

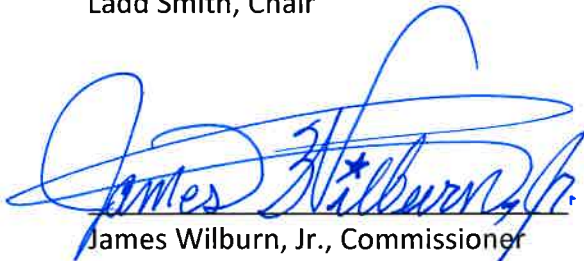
Sincerely,



Ladd Smith, Chair

ABSENT

Jenny Rose, Commissioner



James Wilburn, Jr., Commissioner



Elizabeth Kelley, Commissioner

cc: Bart Logue, Police Ombudsman