



*People sleep peacefully in their beds at night
only because their officers
are ready and willing
to face violence on their behalf.*

Friday, February 07, 2014
Meet and Confer Issues

Margrace Buckler
Director of Human Resources
City of Columbia
600 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO 65205

Dear Ms. Buckler,

On behalf of the members of the Columbia Police Officers Association, F.O.P. #26, and pursuant to Section 19-25 (Employee Relations) of the City of Columbia Code of Ordinances, I am pleased to provide the following list of issues our Association would like to address during the upcoming Meet and Confer process.

1. Conversion to an 80-hour work/pay period. We are compiling data from the city and will supplement this issue as needed. However, subject to check, it is our understanding and belief that,
 - a. An 80-hour work period will provide a more accurate and a more equitable pay system for Columbia's Police Officers,
 - b. Conversion to an 80-hour work period will bring the Police Department into compliance with the payroll and pay period practices of virtually every other city department,
 - c. An 80-hour work period will allow the Columbia Police Department, and thus the City of Columbia, to more closely follow, and comply with, state and federal labor provisions, and
 - d. Perhaps the most important for both Columbia's Police Officers as well as Columbia's HR and Payroll employees is the fact an 80-hour work period will;
 - simplify the pay system thus making the entire process more accurate and more efficient, and
 - by removing the complexity of the current system and converting to a more efficient system, we will see a significant savings for the department as well as the city.
2. Shift Differential. Shift Differential is the federally recognized provision of increased pay for work performed when the majority of an employee's regularly scheduled non-overtime hours fall between 3 p.m. and 8 a.m. It is computed as a percentage of the Officer's rate of basic pay.

#2. Shift Differential – continued

- a. Neither our citizens nor our Police Department can adequately appraise or recognize either the value or the cost associated with shift work under the current system.
 - b. Our citizens, through the most recent survey conducted by the city, have clearly stated public safety is their “#1 priority.”
 - c. In recognition of the level of service demanded by the citizens of Columbia, the Chief of Police, Columbia’s Mayor, our City Manager, the City Council and the CPOA, have all agreed Columbia has an immediate need for between 35 and 40 additional officers.
 - d. In recognition of the number of needed officers, the City Manager, the Chief of Police, and I as the Executive Director of CPOA, have already had several conversations about how to best fund those officers.
 - e. We cannot go forward with a plan to bring our department to full force without an accurate appraisal of the real costs of the service(s) the citizens demand.
3. Physical Fitness facilities access. CPOA is requesting access to the city’s physical fitness facility to accommodate CPOA members and the grueling shifts they work. This will provide a meaningful and substantive wellness benefit to our police officers and requires *no cost* to the city. In fact, it will result in a significant *savings* to the city as evidenced by the city’s pre-existing emphasis on employee wellness and the savings that come from such a program.
- a. The City of Columbia promotes the Wellness Program as one of the many benefits of city employment.¹
 - b. The City of Columbia maintains a fitness center in the ground level of the city building as an integral part of the city’s Wellness Program.
 - c. This facility is already available to city employees such as Police Officers.
 - d. However, access to this facility is limited to the hours from 5 AM to 10 PM and requires prior authorization² from the city’s Wellness office within the Human Resources offices of the city.
 - e. While the hours of 5 AM to 10 PM make sense for most city employees, those hours fall far short of making any accommodation for the vast majority of our Police Officers.
 - f. The City of Columbia tells us “*A goal of Employee Wellness is to create preventative and corrective wellness opportunities for City employees*”³ and the city promotes wellness in every city-employee newsletter for obvious reasons. Wellness programs

¹ www.gocolumbianmo.com/HR/benefit.php

² CPOA has no reservation with the need for prior authorization. We endorse and fully support the security policies of the city, as we are the very city employees routinely called upon to enforce such matters.

³ www.gocolumbianmo.com/Public_Comm/Public_Information/City_Insider/documents/Aug12.pdf

#3 Physical Fitness facilities access – continued

- are uniformly recognized for their value in;
 - Lowering health care costs,
 - Reducing absenteeism,
 - Achieving higher employee productivity,
 - Reducing workers' compensation and disability-related costs,
 - Reducing injuries, and
 - Improving employee morale and loyalty.⁴
 - g. These benefits were designed by the city to produce significant savings *for the city*.
 - h. We see no reason to deny reasonable access to the very employees whose job duties make the wellness program most relevant and crucial.
 - i. We are confident the current policy did not intend to create a disparate and detrimental impact on our officers, or upon the city's own effort to promote wellness, and can be instantly corrected.
4. Police Staffing Needs Study: CPOA is calling for a joint City of Columbia-CPOA study of staffing needs within the Columbia Police Department. The rationale in support of such a study has already, largely, been stated in issue #2, *supra*.
- a. Our citizens, through the most recent survey conducted by the city, have clearly stated public safety is their "#1" priority.
 - b. While everyone agrees we need 35 – 40 additional police officers just to get back to "status adequate," our citizens seem hesitant to pay for the services they demand.
 - c. We cannot go forward with a plan to bring our department to full force without an accurate appraisal of the real needs and accurate costs of the service(s) for which the city will bill the citizens,
 - d. We have significant anecdotal information about staffing in terms of,
 - What was the level of overall staffing 10, 20, 30 and 40 years ago,
 - What the distribution and ration of Officers, Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Captains,
 - what level of non-commissioned support was available for the workload of 1970, 1980, 1990, and so on,
 - what the distribution of staffing was on different shifts in comparison to the quantity of calls per shift, and so on.
 - e. CPOA recognizes how readily citizens or the media criticize "the (generic) police," the Chief, "the officers," or "the city administration" and although we know what we need to address the problem, we have no substantive or quantitative response for the public criticism we encounter.

⁴ www.shrm.org/templatestools/hrqa/pages/wellnessprogramscontributingtotheemployer%E2%80%99sbottomline.aspx

5. Pay Compression. Last but certainly not least, the Columbia Police Officers' Association looks forward to the city's ongoing commitment from last year's meet and confer process to continue addressing and correcting the problem our officers suffer because of Pay Compression.

There are numerous other issues our members would like to see resolved. However, once again as we did last year, we present a modest list of issues that are reasonable, necessary, and affordable. Each of these issues will have a real and direct impact of the quality of services our officers provide to their community.

We have not sought, nor will we seek, pecuniary benefits that simply increase our personal wealth and provide no public safety benefit. For example, one of our concerns is the *distribution* of pay but not an outright increase in pay. The terms and conditions we pursue directly address our on-the-job safety, welfare, security and the ongoing welfare of our Department. By pursuing and ensuring these conditions, we are better able to continue providing a level of public safety services that makes us proud to be Columbia Police Officers.

The citizens of our community have demanded enhanced public safety services, our citizens deserve those optimal public safety services and we are fully qualified and individually prepared to provide the level of public safety services that make Columbia a safe and attractive community in which to live. We ask the city to help us in our effort to do so.

On behalf of our members, the women and men who place themselves in harm's way to protect our citizens from evil, I am sincerely yours,



Dale Hardy Roberts, J.D., Executive Director
The Columbia Police Officers' Association, FOP Lodge #26

cc: All CPOA members.
Chief Kenneth Burton