



Milford City Hall Council Chambers 201 South Walnut Street Milford DE 19963

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA December 20, 2023

This meeting is also available for viewing by the public by accessing the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/94513235909>

or

<http://www.cityofmilford.com/553/Watch-Public-Meetings>

Members of the public may also dial in by phone using the following number:

Call 301 715 8592 Webinar ID: 945 1323 5909

7:00 P.M.

15-Minute Public Comment Period*

Virtual attendees must register prior to start time of meeting by calling 302-422-1111 Extension 1300 or 1303, or by sending an email to cityclerk@milford-de.gov and providing your name, address, phone number, and item name and/or description you wish to comment on. Persons in attendance wishing to speak must sign up prior to the start of the Council Meeting.

FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Call to Order – Chair Jason James Sr.

Additional Police Personnel

Adjournment

All items on the Meeting Agenda are subject to a potential vote.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE CITY CLERK IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT
NO LATER THAN ONE WEEK PRIOR TO MEETING; NO PAPER DOCUMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED OR DISTRIBUTED
AFTER PACKET HAS BEEN POSTED ON THE CITY OF MILFORD WEBSITE.**



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE
CECILIA E. ASHE
cecilia.ashe@cj.state.de.us



400 NE Front Street
Milford Delaware 19963
302.422.8081 Fax 302.424.2330

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 8, 2023

TO: Mayor & Council
Mark Whitfield, City Manager

FROM: Chief Cecilia E. Ashe

RE: Request for Authorization for additional Communications Personnel and New Crime Analyst Position

The Milford Police Department is requesting authorization to hire additional personnel for the Communication Center and a new Crime Analyst position within the police department. The Communications Center currently has assigned eight (8) full-time personnel, which allows only for two (2) personnel per shift, with four shifts to cover 24-hour operations. Upon my hire, I promised City Council I would conduct a staffing study of all personnel within the Police Department showing priority to those areas that require immediate attention due to operational need and the safety of the citizens of Milford. Upon a preliminary review of staffing, it was glaring that the communications center was understaffed and cost saving measures could be put in place to run this division more efficiently and effectively. The current make up of creates a serious issue if an employee calls out sick or takes vacation as it will only leave one (1) employee to handle all communications center responsibilities. This does not take into account the number of calls that are received and dispatched for other divisions such as the Electric Department if there is a power outage or other storm related events such as flooding, where the Streets Department would need to be notified. In reviewing Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system if one of these events was to take place communications would be fielding on average a hundred calls, while also dispatching and monitoring the police operations on the street. Currently for us to maintain two dispatchers in the communications center at all times requires us to call in another full-time dispatcher on overtime if he/she is available to come in or contact one of the part-time dispatchers, who may or may not be available to work. This also limits the amount of time off that can be granted to employees, as we are in most cases unable to fill shifts with part-time employees due to their schedule or holidays. Finally this does not taking in to consideration if there is an employee out on long term leave such as FMLA or Military. In any of the above examples, this causes us to pay staff overtime or pay additional staff which is not the most cost-efficient way to run this type of Communications Center.

Therefore, I am proposing one (1) additional dispatcher to each shift, totaling four (4) additional personnel. Under this proposal, I would request two (2) of those positions be filled immediately and the other two (2) positions be added within the FY25 budget. I have consulted with the Director of Finance Lou Vitola along with the City Manager Mark Whitfield and the following impact and projections on the

FY24 budget are expected to be neutralized with offsetting O&M savings. The impact on the FY25 budget is provided below, gross of interdepartmental cost sharing:

Police-Civilian	Salary & Wages	Benefits	
Dispatch 1 - FY25	\$ 44,554	\$ 22,623	\$ 67,177
Dispatch 2 - FY25	\$ 44,554	\$ 22,623	\$ 67,177
Dispatch 3 - FY25	\$ 43,576	\$ 22,597	\$ 66,173
Dispatch 4 - FY25	\$ 43,576	\$ 22,597	\$ 66,173
			\$ 266,700

Internal funding through utility cost sharing would be in place permanently to defray a portion of the cost to add dispatchers.

- FY25 cost sharing (\$45k) results in a net impact of \$222k.
- FY26 cost sharing (\$46k) results in a net impact of \$228k.
- FY27 cost sharing (\$48k) results in a net impact of \$235k.
- FY28 cost sharing (\$49k) results in a net impact of \$242k.
- FY29 cost sharing (\$51k) results in a net impact of \$250k.

This request is in line with the Strategic Plan 2023 under the Public Safety and Preparedness Objective 1, Deployment of Police Resources.

In addition, I am requesting authorization to hire a full-time Crime Analyst with the intent to fill this position within the next sixty (60) days. I am requesting this position to be able to move into the next phase of our Strategic Plan as well as the ability to receive grant funding to help offset some of the costs. As you are aware, Milford Police Department is currently applying for grant funding through the Delaware Criminal Justice Council to fund additional personnel within the Behavioral Health Unit. As part of this grant, we are requesting to receive partial funding for a Crime Analyst to track and monitor, with more detail and precision, the success and gaps within our Behavioral Health Unit. This opportunity to offset some of these expenses has presented itself prior to the FY25 fiscal. I have consulted with the Director of Finance Lou Vitola along with the City Manager Mark Whitfield and the following impact and projections on FY25 budget are provided below:

Police-Civilian	Salary & Wages	Benefits	
Crime Analyst - FY25	\$ 72,450	\$ 27,479	\$ 99,929

A portion of a two-year Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) grant is expected to provide temporary support to the crime analyst position, which would partially mitigate costs late in FY24, all of FY25 and most of FY26.

- FY25 grant funding of \$18k results in a net impact of \$81k.
- FY26 grant funding of \$12k results in a net impact of \$91k.
- FY27 cost impact is \$106k
- FY28 cost impact is \$109k
- FY29 cost impact is \$112k

A Property tax increase of 5.3% (3.1 cents per \$100 of AV) instituted in FY26 would carry the cost of the revised operational structure from then onward if we are successful absorbing the net costs associated with the crime analyst and dispatch positions the remainder of FY24 through FY25.

This request is in line with the Strategic Plan 2023 under the Public Safety and Preparedness which will impact six (6) of the seven (7) objectives while also allowing us to implement seventeen (17) of the twenty-one (21) Strategies. The most important of all of the strategies that this position will produce is transparency of accurate crime numbers and transparency of accountability within the Police Department.

It is my belief that prioritizing these areas will provide an enhanced proactive approach to the safety of our community members. This will also provide and foster economic growth and bring new businesses and residents to the City of Milford.

MEMBER LOGIN (<https://secure.counciloncj.org/npc/clients/counciloncj/login.jsp>)

MEDIA INQUIRIES (<mailto:warren@counciloncj.org>) CONTACT US (<mailto:info@counciloncj.org>)

[f](https://www.facebook.com/counciloncj) (<https://www.facebook.com/counciloncj>) [t](https://twitter.com/CouncilonCJ) (<https://twitter.com/CouncilonCJ>)

[l](https://www.linkedin.com/company/counciloncj) (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/counciloncj>) [y](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzCTIOilwQaTWjXlpMo-9w) (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzCTIOilwQaTWjXlpMo-9w>)



(<https://counciloncj.org/>)

Saving Lives: Ten Essential Actions Cities Can Take to Reduce Violence Now

January 12, 2022

PDF of Full Report (<https://counciloncj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/VCWG-Final-Report.pdf>)

Report Summary (https://counciloncj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2-PAGE-SUMMARY_VCWG-1.pdf)

Date: December 20, 2023
To: Mayor and City Council
From: Louis C. Vitola, Finance Director
Re: Crime Analyst Position

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the absence of a specific property tax increase levied in support of a new general fund initiative, a mix of permanent cost reduction, grant revenue, and revenue growth is required to support long-run costs of the new initiative. The following analysis suggests that the combination of a time-sensitive grant opportunity, the permanent reallocation of 1.0 new full-time equivalent unfilled positions, organic property tax growth, and residual “soft benefits” are sufficient to offset or nearly offset the incremental cost of the new position each year over a ten-year outlook from FY25 through FY34.

ANALYSIS

Expansionary costs for certain departments in the general fund¹ must be met entirely through recurring revenue sources in the general fund – chiefly property tax revenue – even when grant funding is available to support initial expenditures. While utility transfers represent recurring revenue in the general fund, the nexus for the magnitude of the transfer is driven by the ongoing needs of the utility as determined through regular cost of service analysis and rate studies – not the needs of the general fund. Further, the use of capital funding sources, however germane to the general fund, are not recurring or sustainable. Therefore, in the absence of a specific property tax increase to support a particular new general fund initiative, a mix of permanent cost reduction, grant revenue, and revenue growth is required to support long-run costs of any new endeavor. The addition of the Crime Analyst position in the Police Department is achievable only through such a combination: FY25 and FY26 grant revenue, potential cost savings through attrition of one or a combination of unfilled growth positions new to the FY24 budget, and through natural property tax revenue growth in the form of organic tax base growth and a “soft benefits” measure of accelerated tax base growth attributable to the efforts of the Crime Analyst position.

The table on the following page exhibits the all-in operating costs associated with the new position net of reallocated, new and unfilled general fund personnel, anticipated grant revenue, property tax revenue growth, and soft benefits² associated with the efforts of the new Crime Analyst position.

RECOMMENDATION

If the City moves forward with the Crime Analyst position, it is recommended that 1.0 new FTE approved in FY24 must be deferred indefinitely if not permanently. The FTE reallocation is critical to the long-term viability of the position’s funding, while the other offsetting measures close the gap.

¹ Public Safety, Parks & Recreation, Streets, Administration, City Clerks, and City Council

² Staff at the University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration kindly assembled research on short notice to support the Finance Department’s efforts to understand and conservatively quantify the economic benefit

Estimated Impact of Crime Analyst Position with Offsetting Cost Reductions and Revenue Growth
Ten Year Period from Fiscal Year 2025 through 2034

Incremental Costs (Savings) by Fiscal Year & Type	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33	FY34
Crime Analyst										
Wages	71,569	75,559	79,772	83,808	88,049	92,504	97,185	102,102	108,320	114,917
Taxes/Benefits	29,312	31,386	33,207	34,805	36,485	38,251	40,016	41,870	44,042	46,343
Crime Analyst Total	100,881	106,945	112,979	118,613	124,534	130,755	137,201	143,973	152,362	161,260
Repurpose GF Vacancy(-ies)										
Wages	(52,042)	(54,944)	(58,007)	(60,942)	(64,025)	(67,265)	(70,669)	(74,245)	(78,766)	(83,563)
Taxes/Benefits	(25,555)	(27,386)	(28,930)	(30,255)	(31,644)	(33,102)	(34,540)	(36,048)	(37,791)	(39,633)
Offset(s) (OT/Temp/PT)	20,000	20,500	21,013	21,538	22,076	22,628	23,194	23,774	24,368	24,977
Total Personnel Offset(s)	(57,597)	(61,830)	(65,925)	(69,659)	(73,593)	(77,739)	(82,015)	(86,519)	(92,189)	(98,219)
Grant Funding	(20,000)	(13,333)								
Share of AV/PT Growth	(3,675)	(51,667)	(17,702)	(17,967)	(18,237)	(18,510)	(18,788)	(19,070)	(19,356)	(19,646)
Soft Benefits - Crime Reduction	-	-	-	-	(33,683)	(34,189)	(34,702)	(35,222)	(35,750)	(36,287)
Annual Net Impact	19,609	(19,884)	29,353	30,987	(980)	317	1,696	3,162	5,067	7,109

UD Institute for Public Administration Research Summary

Crime and Economic Development

The dynamics between crime and economic development are a key social phenomenon that communities would like to better understand. That being said, the relationship is difficult to evaluate for causal impact due to the multitude of social factors that affect these two variables. Instead, the bulk of the studies identify correlations between various economic factors and crime rate, such as various economic development metrics.

Regarding business behavior, there were multiple sources detailing how crime affects businesses. One study found crime and its resulting behavior changes increase the cost of doing business in a locality and ultimately affects the development trajectory of the whole neighborhood (Greenbaum and Tita, 2004). Another study found that theoretical and empirical arguments suggest that the fear of victimization causes consumers, workers and entrepreneurs to alter their routine activities (Wilcox, Land, Hunt, 2018).

There have also been a number of other studies conducted across the globe on the relationship between crime and other economic development output metrics. In a study conducted in India, Raj and Kalluru (2023) find that “a one percent increase in homicide rates leads to 0.25% decrease in economic growth.” Meanwhile, a 2016 study by the World Bank estimates that violent crime cost Mexico 7 percent of GDP. The Center for American Progress found that “on average, a reduction in a given year of one homicide in a zip code causes a 1.5 percent increase in housing values in that same zip code the following year.”

On an individual basis, a 2018 Brookings Study analyzing the relationship between poverty and crime rate finds “only 49 percent of prime-age men are employed, and, when employed, their median earnings were only \$6,250.” In addition, a recent survey commissioned by Redfin finds that about half of homeowners who have moved since the pandemic cited crime and safety as the most important factor in deciding where to move to, according to a new survey of 1,000 consumers.” While not a scientific correlation study, this survey result indicates that consumer perceptions of crime are a motivating factor in the housing market.

Sources

Greenbaum, R. T., & Tita, G. E. (2004). The Impact of Violence Surges on Neighbourhood Business Activity. *Urban Studies* (Edinburgh, Scotland), 41(13), 2495–2514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098042000294538>

Kapstein, E.B. and Tantravahi A. (2021). The Economic Consequences of Criminal Violence. *Political Violence at a Glance*, 11 Oct 2021. <https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2021/10/11/the-economic-consequences-of-criminal-violence/>

Looney, A. and Turner, N. (2018). Work and opportunity before and after incarceration. *Brookings Institution*, 14 March 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/work-and-opportunity-before-and-after-incarceration/>

Raj, P., & Kalluru, S. R. (2023). Does crime impede economic growth? An evidence from India. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2196814>

Shapiro, R.J. and K.A. Hassett (2012). The Economic Benefits of Reducing Violent Crime. *Center for American Progress*, 19 June 2012. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-economic-benefits-of-reducing-violent-crime/>

“Survey: Crime Data Shapes Half of Owner’s Relocation Decisions.” *Realtor Magazine*, 3 Nov 2021. <https://www.nar.realtor/magazine/real-estate-news/survey-crime-data-shapes-half-of-owners-relocation-decisions>

Wilcox, P., Land, K. C., & Hunt, S. A. (2018). *Criminal circumstance : a dynamic multi-contextual criminal opportunity theory* (Rev. ed.). Routledge.