



Agenda Item Report

Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

DATE: January 25, 2023
TO: Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Personnel and Finance Committee
FROM: Sheriff John Matz
RE: Special Pay Increase for Casual Call Dispatcher

Background:

Angela Viergutz has been a Dispatcher with the Winnebago County 911 Communications Center since 2013. In 2021 she transitioned from full-time to casual call employment status. This arrangement has been beneficial for her as it provides the flexibility she needs to meet her family commitments. Winnebago County has also benefitted in this relationship by retaining a highly skilled and trained employee in a position that is extremely difficult to staff.

As a casual call employee, Dispatcher Viergutz has no guarantee of work and does not qualify for traditional fringe benefits. She only works in the 911 Communications Center when staffing levels fall below the minimum requirements. In 2022 Dispatcher Viergutz worked 729 hours. In addition to overtime cost savings, the hours she works helps reduce the fatigue and burnout that full-time dispatchers would otherwise experience by having to absorb these compelled overtime shifts.

Since being employed with Winnebago County, Dispatcher Viergutz has received annual performance reviews. For the 2021 Merit Pay evaluation period, she received a pay increase based on her performance rating and current pay range. For the 2022 Merit Pay evaluation period, a performance evaluation was completed and indicated Dispatcher Viergutz would receive five shares based on her performance rating and current pay range. However, Human Resources Director Mark Habeck subsequently advised that as a casual call employee, Dispatcher Viergutz did not qualify for a pay increase under the Merit Pay system.

Policy Discussion:

Winnebago County compensation policies allow the Personnel and Finance Committee to grant special pay increases for certain purposes, one of which is employee retention, at the request of the Director of Human Resources with approval of the County Executive.

The lack of a pay mechanism to provide a wage increase to an employee classified as a casual call dispatcher was recently discovered. For recruitment and retention purposes, it is important to compensate an employee commensurate with their job performance. Human Resources Director Mark Habeck recognizes this policy deficiency and plans to correct it when enacting new procedures under the current wage study provisions.

Dispatcher Viergutz is a long-tenured and highly trained employee with the 911 Communications Center who possesses a valuable and portable skill set. Based on her performance evaluation, she earned five merit shares in 2022 which would be applied to her 2023 wage. With a merit value of .9864 per share, Dispatcher Viergutz would have received a 4.9320% increase adjusting her pay rate from \$27.53 to \$28.89 per hour.

The Sheriff's Office included projected wage increases in their 2023 labor budget and no additional funding is required to enact this request. Human Resources Director Habeck concurs that this special pay increase is both appropriate and warranted. The potential of losing Dispatcher Viergutz as a casual call employee would have a detrimental impact on the operations of the 911 Communications Center. It may also hinder the likelihood that she transfers back to full-time status once her family commitments have been met.

Requested Action:

Approve a special pay increase of 4.9320% from \$27.53 to \$28.89 per hour for Dispatcher Angela Viergutz effective January 1, 2023.

Committee Action:

No further action is needed following approval by the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee and the Personnel and Finance Committee.

Attachments:

None