



SAGINAW POLICE DEPARTMENT INFORMATIONAL MEMO

TO: Gabe Reaume, City Manager,
Lee Howell, Asst. City Manager

FROM: Russell Ragsdale, Chief of Police

REF: Salary comparison and step-pay plan adjustments

DATE: January 11, 2023

This memo is intended to provide comparative information related to salaries in the metroplex and to other cities of similar size to Saginaw that fall in other metropolitan areas/regions. We will start with sworn positions, which is our police employees that are licensed through TCOLE and have full arrest powers, and we will then move into comparisons with our non-sworn positions. We will attach a copy of the matrix showing pay and incentives for comparison City's.

Sworn Officer Positions

The pay scale for the police department is a 9-step scale, beginning with a minimum or beginning pay and then progressing Step 1 through 8. On first look, it appears that it was intended to be an 8-year step plan, where the employee would receive a step increase each anniversary until reaching the top of the scale upon completing 8 years of service. Unfortunately, there is no guidance incorporated into the pay scale authorizing step increases or explaining the actual intent of the scale. As such, until two years ago, the city had applied the scale unsystematically. Two years ago, the city allowed departments to begin moving employees towards the step they had earned through tenure. Many employees have been moved, but we still have several that are behind, some as much as two steps.

The below list are officers that are currently behind on their step adjustment, based on tenure:

Name	Tenure in grade	Current Step	Correct Step	Difference
Sergeant	6 yrs	5	6	2576.89
Officer	15 yrs	7	8	2141.99
Corporal	6 yrs	4	6	4387.13
Officer	9 yrs	6	8	4221.60
Officer	9 yrs	6	8	4221.60
Officer	6 yrs	5	6	2019.03
Officer	6 yrs	5	6	2019.03
Officer	5 yrs	4	5	1960.23
Officer	5 yrs	4	5	1960.23
Officer	4 yrs	2	4	3750.84
Officer	3 yrs	2	3	1847.70

Total cost to catch these officers up would be: \$31,106.27 + benefits

On the public safety side of things, when a pay scale is seen that specifically includes steps, it is assumed that steps will be given annually, and when not given, it is seen unfavorably by applicants. They want to know how they progress through the steps, and how long until they reach top out.

With the current recruiting efforts, many, if not all, cities are advertising their step plans with specific emphasis on where an employee will be on the given pay scale in 1, 2 or 3 years and how long it will take to reach top out. Particularly with the lateral transfer efforts that cities are utilizing to draw applicants, an applicant with two years of experience will start at step 2, or five years of experience starting at Step 5, and potentially top out in 3 or 5 years.

If we tried to offer a lateral transfer incentive, typically a 5-year officer would start at Step 5, but my own 5-year employees are only at step 4. This disparity would create a very negative atmosphere and likely result in my 5-year employees feeling unappreciated and increasing the likelihood of them then applying at other agencies, where they would qualify for the hiring bonuses and lateral transfer incentives earning more than they are receiving here.

These discrepancies make it difficult to offer hiring incentives to potential applicants because we have employees that are not on their proper scale. These incentives therefore risk bringing in the same or lessor experienced applicants at rates that are higher than our own experienced employees.

During the FY22/23 budget Council approved budgetary funding giving all employees a 2% pay increase and a 3% step increase, however, with another year of tenure, every employee will be due or eligible for another step increase in FY23/24.

When comparing our pay scale to that of other agencies I looked at 24 agencies ranging in size of population from 4737 (Lake Worth) up to 954,457 (Ft Worth). Thirteen agencies were 35,000 or smaller, seven were 35k-80k, and four were above 100k (Ft Worth, Arlington, Grand Prairie and Garland). The agencies above 100k in population were not utilized for average calculations when comparing our salary to other agencies, but I did include them in the list since they are in our recruiting pool and are offering lucrative incentives that draw potential applicants away from us.

In a base comparison of only salary, utilizing minimums and maximums in the salary range for each given rank the data shows Saginaw to be significantly behind our counterparts, not just in our region, but across other regions where those cities are in similar conditions to Saginaw, being near or within a major metropolitan area. This data is solely based on the average of all agencies, other than the four 100k+ agencies. It is not based on maximums or minimums of any particular agency. The only agency that showed lower salary numbers than Saginaw across all ranks was Richland Hills, with the exception of starting pay in which they started 6% higher than what Saginaw currently offers.

The base data indicates the following:

Recruit pay- Saginaw is 44% behind other agencies. Our pay for recruits attending the academy is \$41,258, where the average of other agencies is \$59,309. This is an immediate impact on our ability to recruit and draw applicants.

Officer Pay- our base pay is 13% behind and max or top out pay is also 13% behind. Saginaw starts at \$58,054 and tops at \$73,541 for a patrol officer, the average for officer base pay is \$65,764 to a max of \$83,161. Again, this has a direct impact on our ability to attract and recruit new officers

As we move up the scale the same holds true. I will show the comparisons but reserve any comment.

	<u>Saginaw</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Corporal	\$64,005	\$70,015	9%
	\$81,079	\$90,283	11%
Sergeant	\$74,094	\$85,208	15%
	\$93,861	\$100,555	7%
Lieutenant	\$77,798	\$98,644	27%
	\$98,553	\$106,681	8%
Assistant Chief	\$90,062	\$108,790	21%
	\$114,088	\$144,231	26%
Chief	\$109,471	\$117,023	7%
	\$138,675	\$174,021	25%

Many of the agencies across our region have begun adding hiring incentives and lateral transfer incentives. In addition, they are offering a list of benefits to include full paid memberships to fitness clubs, very lucrative incentive pay for TCOLE certificates and educational degrees, take home units, dry cleaning for uniforms and one out of state agency is now advertising life time medical insurance upon retirement.

Burleson advertises on their brochures that they have had a 40% increase in pay over the last 3 years. They also specifically mention that they have Community and City Council support. This is a huge statement to today's applicants. They want to know that they are accepted and supported and that the council is dedicated to ensuring public safety remains progressive and market compatible.

We are currently at the bottom of the list compared to the 24 agencies used in our comparison. Even with a proposed 5% salary increase, Saginaw will remain in the last position for all ranks of sworn officer pay.

Non-sworn Positions

When looking at our non-sworn positions, which include Dispatch, Records, Public Safety Officer (Jailers) and Dispatch/Record Supervisor we see very similar findings. Especially in the dispatch and dispatch supervisor arena. As our council knows, we have struggled getting dispatchers hired for over a year now. The same holds true with all the other agencies, resulting in a similar pay war going on for these positions.

During our salary comparisons, we had 13 agencies return pay information for dispatch and dispatch supervisor. Of those, four were the large agencies and their pay was excluded from the average. Of the remaining agencies, Saginaw was the lowest paid.

	Saginaw	Average	Difference
Dispatcher	\$41,258	\$50,351	18%
	\$52,265	\$67,468	39%
Dispatch Supervisor	\$47,761	\$61,220	22%
	\$60,502	\$82,970	42%

Agencies are not offering the same lateral incentives as they are for police officers, but pay has increased significantly, surpassing \$25/hour for several agencies as they try to entice applicants to apply. The majority of the Blue Mound dispatchers were hired by agencies that offered close to or exceeded \$25/hr. Just for reference, Saginaw starts at \$18.84/hr.

Incentives being offered to non-sworn personnel are typically seen as lump sum payments for years of service. Typically, \$1200 for year one, \$1800 for year two, and then \$2400 for year three and each year thereafter.

For the supervisory position, we are way behind as well. It is important to note that our dispatch supervisor also supervises the records unit. Of all the cities that returned pay information, their dispatch supervisor position only supervised dispatch, with many typically only supervising a shift, more like our police sergeants. None of the responding agencies had their dispatch supervisor being responsible for records. It should be noted that the police records unit handles more record requests associated with the Freedom of Information Act than any other city department in our city.

Our dispatch supervisor currently makes \$50,670, which is barely over the minimum average for what other cities pay their standard dispatcher without any supervisory responsibilities. If dispatcher Gomez is also adjusted to his correct tenure step, he will be making \$1,595 more than his supervisor and not have any of the supervisory responsibilities.

No agency returned information related to records or PSO's, however, it seems fairly commonplace that PSO and dispatch share a pay grade, like they do here. Therefore, their pay discrepancies would be similar to that of dispatcher. I do not have any comparative data for the records position.

Our non-sworn ranks also have a couple of employees that are out of their step based on tenure. They are listed below:

Dispatcher	15 yrs	6	8	3000.26
Public Service Officer	6 yrs	4	6	2828.04

Total cost to catch these officers up would be: \$5,828.30 + benefits

To get all police employees caught up on the step plan for the current fiscal year, it would cost the city roughly \$36,934.57 plus benefits.

Step Plan Modification

In addition to adjustments that need to be made throughout the step plan, we would also recommend removing steps from the plan as rank increases. We have noted that many cities may start with an 8 or 10 step plan for the officer rank, as that rank increases the number of steps reduces, for example, Corporal might be 6 steps, sergeant might be 4 steps and Lieutenant and assistant chief might be 3 steps. Most city's that returned salary information did not show steps for the chief position, so this might be handled based on evaluation or agreed upon terms at time of hire.

In conclusion, we have included a spreadsheet that shows salary ranges and number of steps in those plans for agencies used in our comparison. The first 12 agencies provided a full range of their salaries for each rank, if that rank was available in their agency. The remaining agencies only provided the salary ranges for their patrol officer rank, and a few with dispatch or dispatch supervisor pay ranges.