



Date: May 17, 2019
To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.H.W.*
From: Claudia Lewis, Interim Director of Long Beach Airport *CL*
For: Mayor and Members of the City Council
Subject: **Airport Special Services Officers Vacant Positions**

At its April 23, 2019 meeting, the City Council requested information on vacant Special Services Officers (SSOs) positions. This memorandum provides the information requested.

The Long Beach Airport Security Division provides security and public safety services to the Long Beach Airport (Airport). The Airport Security Division is comprised of SSOs who are supervised by the Airport Deputy Director. There are three pay grade levels utilized of SSOs (II, III and IV). Currently, there are 32 budgeted SSO positions and 18 are filled. The current vacancy rate is 44 percent (14 vacant positions). Over the past few years, the Airport has faced difficulties filling SSO vacancies due to a variety of factors. In general, recruitment and selection of qualified public safety personnel is difficult and challenging for the City as well as many similar agencies in the region. The other factors include low unemployment rates; limited pool of qualified candidates; lengthy hiring process; rigorous background check requirements; and, employee turnover.

Budgeted and Filled Positions

The following table summarizes the budgeted and filled SSO positions at the Airport from FY 13 to present:

	SSO II		SSO III		SSO IV		TOTAL		Vacancy Rate
	Budgeted	Filled	Budgeted	Filled	Budgeted	Filled	Budgeted	Filled	
FY 13	4	5	13	13	4	3	21	21	0%
FY 14	4	5	13	12	4	4	21	21	0%
FY 15	4	3	13	12	4	5	21	20	5%
FY 16	4	4	17	13	5	4	26	21	19%
FY 17	4	3	23	14	5	5	32	22	31%
FY 18	4	3	23	13	5	4	32	20	38%
FY 19	4	3	23	11	5	4	32	18	44%

The Airport increased its budgeted positions in FY 16 and FY 17 from 21 to 32 SSOs based on a number of factors including the staffing needs as determined by TSA requirements, the goal to reduce the use of overtime, and to compensate for high attrition and the long recruitment process.

Airport Recruitment Efforts

The following table summarizes the Airport Department's efforts to hire SSOs:

	SSO Recruitment Efforts
2013	Conditional offers were made to 17 candidates – 2 passed background and were hired; 15 failed background or dropped out of the process.
2014	Conditional offers were made to 6 candidates – 4 passed background and were hired; 2 failed background or dropped out of the process.
2015	Airport received list of academy candidates that passed background. Conditional offers were made to 9 candidates - 6 were hired and 3 candidates declined.
2016	Conditional offers were made to 15 candidates – 1 passed background and was hired; 14 failed background or dropped out of the process.
2017	Conditional offers were made to 4 candidates – none hired; all 4 withdrew or did not pass background.
2018	Airport received list of academy candidates that passed background. Conditional offers were made to 5 candidates - hire date(s) pending.

SSO Recruitment and Selection Process

The SSO job classification is used citywide in various departments including: Police, Airport, Marine Patrol, and Harbor. The SSO recruitment process is managed and administered by the Civil Service Department. The SSOs who are placed on the eligible list are then reachable by those departments who have SSO vacancies, including the Airport. SSOs must complete a department selection process, which includes a background investigation that can take six to nine months to complete. During the background process, many candidates are recruited by other agencies or fail to meet the City's high standards for armed positions.

The Airport has partnered with the Police Department to conduct focused recruitment of Police Department academy non-selects who successfully passed the background element of their process. This strategy resulted in selecting qualified SSO candidates who had already completed a rigorous Police Department background check.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (562) 570-2612.

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CC: CHARLES PARKIN, CITY ATTORNEY
TOM MODICA, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
KEVIN JACKSON, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
REBECCA GARNER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY TO THE CITY MANAGER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK (REF. FILE #19-0394)