

FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY MANAGER

This month I would like to review the City Police Department staffing and budget, including our service goals. First, the challenges facing today's police are more numerous and unfortunately more dangerous than what officers faced years ago when I was first a city commissioner. Today drug overdoses and drug trafficking, along with domestic abuse, consist of a large amount of our calls. Traffic patrol and investigating accidents also is a major function of the department. But our officers also perform well checks on our neighbors and friends and often assist when a resident has fallen and needs assistance. The Gallipolis Police Department is here to help!

The department staffing goal is a total of 14 officers including the Chief and Detective. Twelve officers work 10 hour shifts to cover our patrol times. Due to the competitiveness of wage and benefits, the City is challenged in its goal of realizing full staffing. Additionally, it is very difficult to depend on part-time officers. The City Commission implemented salary increases last fall for the department only to see other departments continuing to offer higher starting salaries. Retention of our officers is of the utmost concern to the City Commission and to me. We want to be competitive with other local departments. We want to maintain full time staffing. We want to be able to protect and serve the community to the level you expect.

The cost of providing police coverage and staffing is now over \$1.3 million dollars a year. The City's General Fund, which is largely supported by the municipal income tax, supports in entirety the police budget outside of temporary grants received during COVID. While the City has proposed previously the consideration of an additional 1% income tax designated for the Police Department, these proposals have not been approved by our citizens. The City is putting forth a ballot initiative for a .5% increase which is strictly designated for police department operations and expenses. The total income tax of 1.5% would be equal to what Jackson and Rio Grande pay to work or live in their communities.

While this amount will not entirely fund the Police Department, it will certainly provide a means of yearly revenue and dollars to maintain consistent funding of the department which means maintaining sufficient staffing to provide the protection and service you have expected from the City. The City Commission, in conjunction with the Chief of Police, will continue to strive to offer more competitive compensation to again help the City in realizing our goal of retaining the officers that have served with loyalty and commitment.

Thank you for allowing me to provide an overview of the department, our challenges, and our plan to act on behalf of you the citizens of Gallipolis.

