



# The Times

## City looks to increase size of police department

Palmer working on proposal to pay for more officers

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BY EVA LOAYZA

TRENTON -- The city council recently introduced an ordinance that if approved will increase the number of police officers who can be hired from a range of 20 to a range of 60.

The current ordinance calls for a range of 270 to 290 officers. If the new ordinance is approved, it would change the range to 280 to 340. The ordinance would also increase the range for sergeants, which is 47 to 52, to 48 to 56.

The increase is in line with Mayor Douglas H. Palmer's plan to add an additional 50 police officers to the department within the next two years. Palmer has said the administration will lay out its plan to fund the additional officers during its budget presentation to the council in early December. Palmer has said Police Director Joseph Santiago, who will go before the council Nov. 27, has figured out how it can be done and reduce overtime.

The council also introduced an ordinance that would provide the police director and fire director with \$25,000 in addition to their annual base salaries.

As it reads now, the ordinance makes the police director and the fire director eligible to receive an annual stipend of no more than \$25,000, but it is at the mayor's discretion. The stipends, according to the ordinance, may be paid to the police and fire directors "to compensate him/her for responsibilities related to public safety requirements of the City."

If the new ordinance is adopted, the \$25,000 will be awarded to the directors in addition to their annual salaries.

In other meeting news, the council voted to table an ordinance for a \$10.7 million bond to help pay for capital improvements after a council member objected to one of the planned purchases in the capital budget.

The budget includes the purchase of 30 unmarked vehicles for the detectives' bureau and other specialized units, and 10 unmarked vehicles for the patrol unit. At-large Councilman Manny Segura argued the purchase should be split evenly. Segura said there are not enough patrol cars, which is why there is such a bad criminal element in the city.

Trenton detective bureau Capt. Joseph Juniak said the fleet they have is "deplorable," and that is why the department is requesting the new vehicles.

Some council members felt it was not the place of council to decide what the department needs or doesn't need.

But Segura said, "I may not be a cop or director, but I know what citizens need."

Chief of Staff Renee Haynes said the administration will not negotiate what the department needs without input from the director. Council will have a chance to ask Santiago directly when he makes his appearance on Nov. 27.

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