

September 30, 2020

Staffing Levels Should Be Negotiated, Not Set in City Charter Yes on “E,” Police Minimum Staffing

by Patrick Monette-Shaw

Supervisor Norman Yee was prescient putting Prop. E on the ballot. As he noted, the minimum staffing level requiring 1,971 sworn officers at SFPD should never have been enshrined in the City Charter.

Efforts to right-size SFPD sworn officer staffing levels should not be viewed as “defunding the police,” because Prop. “E” was introduced long before the defund-the-police movement began.

The City Controller’s payroll database for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 revealed SFPD had 2,411 named sworn officers, (including Police Officers, Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Captains), fully 440 more than the minimum staffing of 1,971 mandated by the 1994 changes to City Charter.

However, converting the reported regular hours worked plus the overtime hours worked by all of those 2,411 named officers into so-called “full-time equivalent” (FTE) positions — via dividing the total hours worked across all officers by 2,080 hours (annual hours for one employee) — calculates to 2,605 sworn officer FTE’s on the payroll, 634 more than the 1,971 mandated.

At a cost of \$155,000 annually for each officer’s salary and fringe benefits, the excess 634 sworn officers may cost \$98.3 million more than the Charter requires.

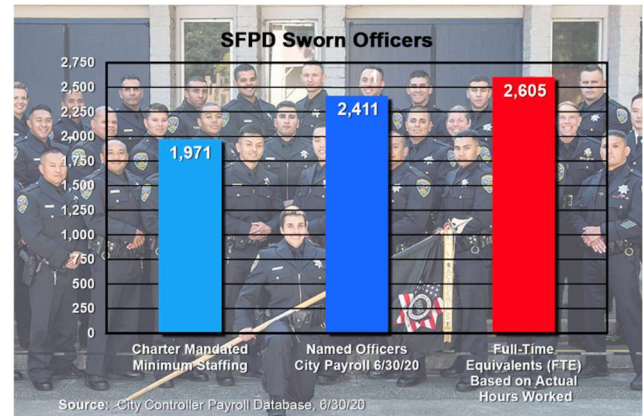
The Police Officers Association’s current three-year contract was ratified in March 2018, two years after the U.S. Department of Justice issued a report in 2016 calling on SFPD to implement 272 recommendations for police reform. The POA has blocked those reforms. Only 69 reforms — 25.4% — have been implemented as of August 2020, four years after DOJ issued its report.

At a pace of implementing only one-quarter of the reforms every four years, will it take another dozen years to implement the remaining 203?

In addition to having more sworn officers than the City Charter mandates, there’s a problem with the increase of Community Police Service Aides, which have nearly doubled over the past decade, even though they are not sworn police officers.

Some time before 2009, Police Officers assigned to San Francisco’s International Airport advocated for hiring community aides, in part to help prevent police officers from performing a variety of tasks that don’t require the training and status of sworn peace officers.

Community Police Services Aides are paraprofessionals who perform a variety of police-related duties for the San Francisco Police Department, including directing traffic, issuing citations for parking violations, processing complaints, completing reports, assisting ill or injured citizens, and entering and retrieving information in computer systems, among other duties.



SFPD “Minimum” Staffing: SFPD currently has 440 to 634 more sworn officers than the 1,971 mandated in the City Charter.

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Table 1: Ten-Year Growth in Community Police Service Aides CY 2009 vs. FY 2010–2011 to FY 2019–2020

FY	Job Code	Job Title	Count	Reg Pay	Overtime Pay	Other Pay	Total Pay
2009	9209	Airport Police Services Aide	145	\$ 7,628,235	\$ 1,121,384	\$ 515,865	\$ 9,265,484
FY 10–11	9209	Community Police Services Aide & 8217 Comm Pol Svcs Aide Supervisor	194	\$ 9,117,183	\$ 788,253	\$ 879,548	\$10,252,628
FY 19–20	9209	Community Police Services Aide & 8217 Comm Pol Svcs Aide Supervisor	286	\$19,653,104	\$ 1,126,737	\$1,406,589	\$22,186,429
Increase 2009 to FY 2019–2020			141	\$12,024,869	\$ 5,353	\$ 890,723	\$12,920,945
% Change Increase 2009 to FY 2019–2020			97.2%				139.5%

Source: City Controller Microsoft Excel Payroll Database for Calendar Year 2009, FY 2010–2011 and FY 2019–2020. (Updated: 8/2/2020.)

Table 1 illustrates:

- There has been a 97.2% change increase in Community Police Services Aides, from 145 in 2009 to 286 in FY 2019–2020, and a 139.5% change increase in total pay (excluding fringe benefits).
- The aides cost \$22.2 million in FY 2019–2020, a 139.5% change increase of \$13 million across the ten-year period.

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Why was there a massive doubling of Police Service Aides across the past decade?

It’s thought the Charter mandates staffing requirements only for sworn police officers. Minimum staffing requirements for other professions — say, nurse-to-patient staffing ratios — are bargained over during labor contract negotiations, not the Charter. Sworn officer staffing levels should be set by the Police Commission in collaboration with the Chief of Police. The Police Commission and the Board of Supervisors shouldn’t be held prisoner to staffing requirements mandated in the Charter based on flawed and outdated 40-year-old data from the 1980’s.

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Vote “Yes” on Prop. E!

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