

TO: Personnel Board

FROM: Mike Lipski, Human Resources

DATE: February 6, 2018

SUBJECT: Police Public Records Custodian—Police

The 2018 Adopted Operating Budget for the Police Department includes funding for a new civilian position of Police Public Records Custodian. Police Chief Mike Koval and Police Records Section Manager Sue Fichtel have requested that HR review the proposed position description to determine where this new position should be placed in the City's classification and compensation plans. After talking with Ms. Fichtel and reviewing the submitted position description (attached), I recommend that a new classification of Police Records Custodian be created in CG18, Range 10, and that the new position identified in the 2018 Police Department Operating Budget be classified as a Police Records Custodian.

The Police Department receives over 25,000 public records requests annually. For the past 5 years, a Lieutenant has been responsible for processing these requests. However, because the Police Department rotates Lieutenant assignment regularly, this causes issues with training when a new Lieutenant moves into this position, as the incumbent must complete training on Wisconsin's Open Records Law. The constant turnover in the position also makes consistency in handling requests difficult to manage. In addition, with the opening of the Midtown Police District in 2018, this Lieutenant position is needed for staffing. As a result, the Department sees this as an opportunity to civilianize the records function, which will provide needed consistency in handling the significant volume of records requests.

The proposed position description describes

...responsible supervisory and professional work in the development and implementation of the Police Department's Public Records Unit...The Records Custodian will develop, implement and maintain policies, procedures and systems related to the review and the release of public records. The Records Custodian will research and respond to complex and non-routine requests for information. Such work will require extensive research into the various computer systems within the department, and determining whether this information may be released by applying the balancing test and in accordance with Wisconsin Public Records law. This work requires exercising considerable judgment and discretion in the interpretation and application of department policies and procedures, along with the Wisconsin Public records law. The Records Custodian will maintain the retention schedule for the department and ensure compliance. The employee exercises considerable judgment and discretion in handling extremely sensitive and confidential information and provides leadership to staff. Work is performed within established guidelines and under the general supervision of the Police Records Manager.

In recruiting for the position, the Police Department would be looking for someone with a background in criminal justice, including a criminal justice degree, law degree, or Public Administration, plus at least three years experience in processing records requests, or equivalent related experience. The incumbent would be expected to go through training on Wisconsin's Open Records Law during the first 12 months of employment. The proposed title of Police Records Custodian accurately reflects the work described, so I recommend that this be the new title.

I also reviewed where the Police Records Custodian should be placed in the salary schedule. This position works closely with the Police Public Information Specialist (CG18, Range 10) in determining when and how information is released to the public. The class specification for the Police Public Information Specialist states “This position coordinates all media relations and prepares and disseminates appropriate public information regarding departmental activities, events and operations (e.g., crimes, arrests, statistics, safety precautions, etc.) to both respond to the public interest and promote departmental objectives.” The Public Information Specialist is also required to go through training on Wisconsin’s Open Records Law, similar to the new position. In addition, when the Police Department started to civilianize positions, it was determined that Lieutenants were similar in nature to positions in CG18, Range 10. Looking at both of these classifications, it is appropriate that the new classification of Police Records Custodian also be placed in CG18, Range 10.

We have prepared the necessary Resolution to implement these recommendations.

Editor’s Note:

Compensation Group/Range	2018 Annual Minimum (Step 1)	2018 Annual Maximum (Step 5)	2018 Annual Maximum +12% longevity
18/10	\$ 67,192	\$ 80,753	\$90,443

cc: Police Chief Mike Koval  
Sue Fichtel—Police Records Section Manager