

CITY COUNCIL REPORT



Meeting Date: October 21, 2025

Charter Provision: *Provide for the orderly government and administration of the affairs of the City*

Objective: *Administer Classification and Compensation Programs*

ACTION

Adopt Resolution No. 13533 supporting the City Manager's compensation enhancements to address chronic vacancies in police communications and water operations and maintenance. Compensation adjustments will include market-based salary grade changes for Police Communications Dispatcher; Police Communications Supervisor; Police Communications Assistant Manager; Police Communication Manager; Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Apprentice; Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator I, II, III; Water/Wastewater Electrician I, II, III; and Water/Wastewater Maintenance Technician I, II, III. The recommendation also establishes the new classification of Police Communications Trainer. All associated changes will be effective November 2, 2025.

BACKGROUND

CRITICAL POLICE COMMUNICATIONS POSITIONS

Prompt and strategic action is required to remedy the chronically high number of vacancies that Police Communications has had over the last few years. Currently there are fifteen (15) vacancies out of forty (40) full-time positions in the Police Communications Dispatch role and two (2) vacancies at the Police Communications Supervisor level. While all communication centers across the country have similar vacancy rates, there is a proven remedy for this problem and Gilbert Police Department has led the way. Gilbert had sixteen (16) vacant dispatcher positions in fiscal year 2022/23 until they took progressive approaches to establish the market for their dispatch positions, which included expanding their comparable benchmark positions. Upon implementation of their updated pay range, they filled all sixteen (16) of their vacancies. Five dispatchers joined them from ranks of Scottsdale Police Department who left for a significantly higher salary due to the Gilbert salary practices for experienced dispatchers within their new pay system. The first two dispatchers that left Scottsdale for Gilbert reported that they received a \$10,000 to \$12,000 raise which promptly made three others leave for Gilbert shortly thereafter taking our total losses to five (5) seasoned dispatchers.

Scottsdale has worked to keep up with the local market factors by adjusting our pay practices for the Police Communications classification series in FY23/24 and again in FY24/25 through the

Action Taken _____

citywide classification and compensation study. Despite our efforts, we remain below the market pay range when compared to Gilbert Police Department and other valley agencies. At present time the vacancies have grown to approximately 36% within the Police Communications team.

Based on our review and analysis, we must adjust the compensation of the Police Communications Dispatcher job series, including the supervisors, and the manager (to avoid compression at those ranks), to the competitive Gilbert Police Communications pay model. The City Manager's plan establishes the following salary grade changes for the Police Communications job series:

- Police Communications Dispatcher, adjust from salary grade 15 to 18
- Police Communications Trainer, establish at salary grade 20
- Police Supervisor, adjust from salary grade 20 to 22
- Police Communications Assistant Manager, adjust from salary grade 23 to 24
- Police Communications Manager, adjust from grade salary 26 to 27

CRITICAL WATER SERVICES OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE POSITIONS

Scottsdale Water operates and maintains a substantial operation that serves nearly 250,000 residents, managing a 24/7 infrastructure across 185 square miles. Chronic vacancies in the highly skilled trades of Water Operators, Electricians, and Maintenance Workers have led to ongoing operational challenges, with 32 out of 229 positions being consistently unfilled resulting in an ongoing 14% vacancy rate. The high workload demand requires significant overtime to ensure water treatment plants remain operational, which results in a significant cost impact and the potential burnout of the existing staff.

The challenge of recruiting and retaining utility trades employees is multifaceted. Water operators are required to have various Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) certifications, which place them in high demand in the local water industry. Another significant challenge that we face is compensation among private industry and some other cities who offer higher salaries compared to Scottsdale. We have come to understand that many of the department's trade employees do not live in Scottsdale. Other agencies attract our current staff, and potential candidates, with an opportunity to earn more with less of a commute time. Specifically, the west valley cities such as Surprise pay more for comparable positions and some of our skilled employees have left to join their team. Our review and analysis focused on Surprise as a benchmark for the compensation review.

Scottsdale has worked to keep up with the local market factors by adjusting our pay practices for the various Water Services classifications in FY23/24 and again in FY24/25 through the citywide classification and compensation study. Despite our efforts, we remain below the market pay range when compared to Surprise and other valley agencies. At present time the vacancies continue to be chronic and have grown to approximately 14% across the various operations and maintenance positions. The City Manager's plan establishes the following salary grade changes for the following critical Water Services Department job series:

- W/WW Electrician I, adjust from grade salary 16 to 17
- W/WW Electrician II, adjust from grade salary 18 to 19
- W/WW Electrician III, adjust from grade salary 20 to 21
- W/WW Treatment Plant Operator Apprentice, adjust from grade salary 6 to 10
- W/WW Treatment Plant Operator I, adjust from grade salary 13 to 15
- W/WW Treatment Plant Operator II, adjust from grade salary 15 to 17
- W/WW Treatment Plant Operator III, adjust from grade salary 17 to 19
- W/WW Maintenance Technician I, adjust from grade salary 12 to 13
- W/WW Maintenance Technician II, adjust from grade salary 14 to 16
- W/WW Maintenance Technician III, adjust from grade salary 16 to 19

ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT

CRITICAL POLICE COMMUNICATIONS POSITIONS

The Police Department currently utilizes a staffing agency contract focused on hiring experienced law enforcement dispatchers to supplement staffing in the Communications Center. Currently the Communications Center has fifteen (15) vacant dispatchers and two (2) Supervisors. With the degree of vacancies and the overtime demand on existing employees, the Scottsdale Police Department has creatively worked to supplement staffing by hiring temporary dispatchers. Contracted dispatchers are scheduled for an assigned shift, to include weekends, holidays, and overnights. The estimated contract expense for this current fiscal year is \$350,000. In fiscal year 2025/2026 overtime related to the police communications operations is projected at \$640,000. Overtime usage is primarily utilized to cover for critical staffing shortages. Given the length and thoroughness of the training program that's approximately eight (8) months the impact of a new hire in staffing coverage is limited during their first year.

CRITICAL WATER SERVICES OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE POSITIONS

The Water Services Department utilizes existing staff and overtime to address the critical shortage in their operations and maintenance positions. Coverage is required continuously 24/7 in order adequately and safely perform all operations. An analysis of overtime over the last three fiscal years shows the impact on the department's overall costs as follows: fiscal year 2022/23 overtime expenditures were \$597,122; fiscal year 2023/24 overtime expenditures were \$655,384; and fiscal year 2024/25 overtime expenditures were \$785,187.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

CRITICAL POLICE COMMUNICATIONS POSITIONS

The associated salary grade changes for the five Police Communications classifications will result in an increased personnel cost estimated at \$395,636 for the remainder of the fiscal year due to employees receiving experience-based salary adjustments. The increase will be covered by a combination of salary savings and managing the overtime and contractual services outlined in the previous section. This estimate includes vacancies, which when filled under the

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proposed compensation structure, will have a budgetary impact due to the adjustment to the new pay rates. This plan is within the budgeted amount for fiscal year 2025/26 and furthermore we are looking for ways to minimize the impacts in future years.

CRITICAL WATER SERVICES OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE POSITIONS

The associated salary grade changes for the Water Services Department classifications will result in an increased personnel cost estimated at \$312,119 for the remainder of fiscal year due to employees receiving experience-based salary adjustments. The increase will be covered by a combination of salary savings and managing the overtime outlined in the previous section. This estimate includes vacancies, which when filled under the proposed compensation structure, will have a budgetary impact due to the adjustment to the new pay rates. This plan is within the budgeted amount for fiscal year 2025/26 and furthermore we are looking for ways to minimize the impact in future years.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Support of the City Manager's plan for compensation enhancements to address chronic vacancies in the Police Department and Water Services Department. Conducting salary studies and making associated salary grade changes are within the City Manager's authority, but we wanted to bring this plan before City Council in the spirit of transparency.

All associated changes will be effective November 2, 2025.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT(S)

City Manager's Office, Police Department, Water Services Department, and Human Resources Department.

STAFF CONTACT

Greg Caton, City Manager

APPROVED BY

Greg Caton

Greg Caton, City Manager

480-312-7759, GCaton@Scottsdaleaz.gov

10/8/25

Date

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution No. 13533

RESOLUTION NO. 13533

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SCOTTSDALE, MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA, MAKING MARKET-BASED SALARY GRADE CHANGES FOR CERTAIN POSITIONS WITHIN POLICE COMMUNICATIONS AND WATER RESOURCES OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE AND ESTABLISHING THE NEW CLASSIFICATION OF POLICE COMMUNICATIONS TRAINER.

WHEREAS, consistent with local and national trends, the Scottsdale Police Department and Water Resources Department face challenges in recruitment and retention in critical operations and maintenance positions; and

WHEREAS, a recent study by the Human Resources Department recommended salary grade changes for five Police Department classifications and ten Water Resources Department classifications based upon highly competitive market factors; and

WHEREAS, having a more competitive pay structure for the specified personnel will give the City an opportunity to recruit and retain critical personnel; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Scottsdale, Maricopa County, Arizona, as follows:

Section 1. Effective November 2, 2025, the following compensation adjustments are made for positions within the Police Department: Police Communications Dispatcher from salary grade 15 to 18, Police Communications Supervisor from salary grade 20 to 22, Police Communications Assistant Manager from salary grade 23 to 24, Police Communications Manager from salary grade 26 to 27; and the new classification of Police Communications Trainer at salary grade 20 is created.

Section 2. Effective November 2, 2025, the following compensation adjustments for positions within Water Resources are made: Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Apprentice from salary grade 6 to 10, Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator I from salary grade 13 to 15, Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator II from salary grade 15 to 17, Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator III from salary grade 17 to 19, Water/Wastewater Electrician I from salary grade 16 to 17, Water/Wastewater Electrician II from salary grade 18 to 19, Water/Wastewater Electrician III from salary grade 20 to 21, Water/Wastewater Maintenance Technician I from salary grade 12 to 13, Water/Wastewater Maintenance Technician II from salary grade 14 to 16, and Water/Wastewater Maintenance Technician III from salary grade 16 to 19.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Scottsdale, Maricopa County, Arizona this ____ day of _____, 2025.

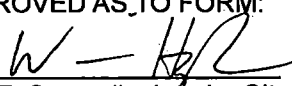
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE, an Arizona
municipal corporation

ATTEST:

Ben Lane, City Clerk

Lisa Borowsky, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Luis E. Santaella, Interim City Attorney
By: William Hylen, Deputy City Attorney

ATTACHMENT 1