

## Council Approves 14% Salary Raise for Police

BY SAMUEL BRASLOW



BHPD police officers will see a 14% raise in their base salary over the next three years under a new contract Photo by Samuel Braslow

The Beverly Hills City Council unanimously passed a 14% base salary raise over the next three years for the city's police department at a meeting on May 24, making the city's officers the highest paid in Southern California.

The city negotiated the raise as a part of

a new memorandum of understanding with the two unions that represent rank and file officers and the top brass in the Beverly Hills Police Department (BHPD).

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### NEWS



The new contracts will cost the city a total of \$11.2 million. Photo by Samuel Braslow

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The existing contracts were set to expire on April 7, 2023. Most recently, officers saw a salary increase of 2% in October 2021.

While City Manager George Chavez received acknowledgement for his role in negotiating the new contracts, Chavez indicated that Mayor Lili Bosse had first raised the issue of the police salaries in December amid renewed concerns of rising crime. Bosse explained that she pushed the matter after discovering that the city's police force

ranked third in the region for base salary.

"I thank our police men and women who have worked so incredibly hard for our community these last few years, especially when there were so many obstacles placed in their way," Bosse said. "I hope that they have felt appreciated and embraced by this community and appreciated and embraced by this Council."

Sgt. David Leber, Vice President of the Police Officers Association, said it was "frankly unheard of for a City Council to

open up contract negotiations with a year remaining on a contract."

"It is truly a testament to City Manager Chavez, the Mayor, the Council and Chief Stainbrook's commitment to the public safety of Beverly Hills. This contract will enable us to compete for the best people to fill officer positions and meet the expectations of this community for policing," Leber said. "We will not let you down. We will hold the line."

Captain Max Subin spoke on behalf of the Police Management Association, which represents police captains and lieutenants.

"Our association fully supports the proposed MOU and would like to publicly thank the City Council for your continued support of the police department and police employees," Subin said. "The partnership we hold with council and the Beverly Hills community is unprecedented."

The pay bump would translate to an additional cost of \$4.5 million to the city, according to a fiscal analysis conducted by an outside firm. The total cost for both contracts over the next three years comes out to \$11.2 million.

Under the previous contract, salaries currently ranged between \$94,000 to \$150,000 for police officers and sergeants in the Beverly Hills Police Department, placing Beverly Hills third out of 14 in Southern California for police base salaries. Orange County and Santa Monica claimed first and second, respectively.

In terms of overall compensation, which includes benefits and overtime, the city ranked the highest in the area even before the raise. "But with this move," Councilmember Robert Wunderlich said, "we unambiguously will be the best paid police force in Southern California."

Chief Mark Stainbrook also noted that the raise would rectify a pay disparity between police and firefighters, who made about 10% more than police officers—an uncommon arrangement, according to Stainbrook.

"Typically, they're either close to the same or the police make more in most cities," Stainbrook said.

The new contract also offers new flexibility to staffing certain positions with civilians that were previously filled by sworn officers.

The Council pointed to the difficulty in recruiting new officers to justify the raise.

"Recruitment is going to be very competitive in LA County, clearly, and we have to provide every incentive possible to have the best of the best," Bosse said.

"It should send a message to our community that we are doing more than talk about public safety. This Council has done everything humanly possible to support this community and to create and improve public safety," said Vice Mayor Julian Gold. "As far as I'm concerned, this is like the icing on the cake. I don't know that there's anything else that we can do."●