



## **Item No. 8**

### **Town of Atherton**

#### **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – CONSENT AGENDA**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER**

**FROM: STEVE D. MCCULLEY, CHIEF OF POLICE**

**DATE: JUNE 21, 2023**

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL FOR ACCEPTANCE OF A \$195,000 ANONYMOUS  
DONATION FOR A MUTLI POLICE AGENCY ONE YEAR FULL  
TIME POLICE WELLNESS PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve and accept the \$195,000 anonymous donation for a one-year full time police wellness program coordinator to be shared by the Atherton, East Palo Alto, and Menlo Park Police Departments, and authorize the City Manager to execute a collaborative agreement for the program.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The daily tasks of first responders, which involve solving community problems, maintaining order, protecting life and property, and enforcing laws are all substantial responsibilities. Officers complete these duties despite exposure to numerous and varied traumatic incidents and growing skepticism and negativity in their various communities. The combination of work stressors and the repercussions of traumatic events on officers emphasizes the need to better care for those who work within the law enforcement community.

A regionally supported wellness initiative gives employees the confidence that their department cares for their well-being. This helps reduce employee turnover and demonstrates a department's intention of retaining the talent in which it has invested. Although a significant investment, other departments that have promoted officer/employee wellness have been shown to have decreased sick leave and injuries as well as an increased rate of department morale. The return on investment by contributing to the well-being of employees and contributing to their overall health is an expenditure that has proven to be well worth the cost in many other departments.

#### **ANALYSIS**

Wellness is a subject that is receiving more attention due to the high risk of negative health outcomes for police officers. These negative outcomes can be displayed in a variety of ways including injury, illness, cardiovascular incidents, obesity, and sleep disorders as well as negative

mental health outcomes such as addiction, depression, incidents of PTSI, and suicide. The idea of sharing resources and creating a regional wellness program seeks to alleviate the risk of the many negative outcomes associated with working in law enforcement by promoting an overall healthier lifestyle and encouraging employees to seek out healthy alternatives. Working together, local chiefs have the unique opportunity to provide a foundation of wellness to the employees of their respective departments by contracting with service provider Wellness Solutions. With efforts focused on the Atherton, East Palo Alto, and Menlo Park Police Departments, Wellness Solutions will implement a health promotion program for the employees of each participating agency, thereby providing the benefit of a wellness plan that targets the risk factors of law enforcement personnel. This will be accomplished by embedding a wellness coordinator that will rotate to each of the participating agencies on a weekly basis.

Due to department size, it is not feasible or reasonable for each to have a designated wellness coordinator. Coordinating efforts offer each agency a suitable amount of time allotted to the employees of each department and result in an appropriate amount of responsibility performed by a single wellness coordinator. A wellness coordinator will work to manage screenings, one-on-one consultations, and wellness programming for each of the collaborating departments. The familiarity cultivated by working directly with an embedded wellness coordinator, contributes to a positive relationship between that coordinator and agency employees which encourages participation in such a program, and develops awareness and understanding concerning personal health-related topics.

An annual fee of approximately \$195,000 has been proposed by Wellness Solutions for the total cost of all screenings, one-on-one consultations, and wellness programming for participating departments. The anonymous donor has agreed to fund this program on an annual basis after an analysis of the program success and effectiveness at the end of the first program year.

A breakdown of services includes the following:

- Workplace health assessments including onsite health screenings and fitness assessments (blood, biometric, ECG)
- Yearly review of health screening findings allowing for tracking improvements or potential risks
- Personalized fitness programs, nutrition guidance, work/life balance strategies

A more comprehensive breakdown of associated costs is provided as an attachment to this staff report.

General fitness and well-being are a high priority to leaders in the policing profession. However, as public entities, police organizations are subject to stringent budget constraints in balancing department projects, equipment upgrades, and running various initiatives and programs to fulfill community safety obligations. Our prioritization of serving the needs of our public often impedes our ability to serve those who keep it safe. Happy, healthy, and fit public safety personnel make for a more effective team serving the community.

This collaborative solution presents an opportunity to prevent some of the risks that are elevated in the profession of public safety and makes wellness available to a regional segment of first responders. By collaborating in this way, command staff initiates a change in culture by offering support to their officers amid an ever-changing law enforcement environment.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact to the Town.

### **GOAL ALIGNMENT**

This Report and its contents are in alignment with the following Council Policy Goals:

- Goal Area F –Be Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, and Well-Planned

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders –to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

### **COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL**

This item has not been before a Town Committee or Commission

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Wellness Solutions regional wellness program proposal