



How Natchez Elected Officials Have Failed the Public: Law Enforcement is a Basic Government Service

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Generally. Law Enforcement is underfunded by the City. The City has not made sufficient funding a priority. Planning has been poor. Concerns include pay, vehicles, radios, protective equipment/vests, facilities, K9 officers, attrition and retention.

Training Does Not Lead to Retention. Training per City police officer candidate is involved with tuition, salary during the 12 weeks at the Academy, followed by another 10-12 weeks of Field Training, which includes riding with a training officer. Other expenses include advertising and recruitment, testing administration, background checks, vehicle travel expense, uniforms, safety and operations equipment. Generally, testing of a candidate occurs 3 months prior to hire. When hired, the new officer needs another 6-7 months for on-the-job training. Once trained, the City has a history of problems retaining trained officers due to employment incentives such as better pay and work conditions elsewhere (e.g., Adams County Sheriff's Office; Louisiana communities). A Mississippi agency which hires away a newly trained officer within a specific period of time

after training, "shall reimburse the governmental entity from which the officer resigned or was terminated a proportionate share of the officer's law enforcement training expenses".¹ Accounting for this reimbursement is most likely helpful.

Shortage of Personnel. Law enforcement faces serious concerns about the effects of personnel shortage with limited patrol units (4) per shift. When a shift unit is called out for extended time, other shift units may not have sufficient back-up, thus endangering law enforcement and public safety.

Pay. While pay has recently modestly increased for law enforcement, there was no justifiable reason for the continued fight for the pay increase. Still, there was a shortfall between the requested monies² and the monies approved. Had City public elected officials cut their own unnecessary travel and discretionary "feel good" budgets, which had increased in recent years, the City would have had monies to meet the request.

K9 (Police Dog) Officer.³ The City used to have 2 K9 Officers (Police Dog)—1 for each night shift. The City now has an aging and sick K9

¹ Miss.Code § 45-5-11, 45-6-13, per Mississippi Legal Counsel and Mississippi law enforcement.

² \$200,000.00.

³ "Fundraiser underway to help Natchez get new K9 officer" April 7, 2019

<https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/04/07/fundraiser-underway-to-help-natchez-get-new-k9-officer/>;

"Case made for consolidation" April 7, 2019
[https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/04/07/case-](https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/04/07/case-made-for-consolidation/)

[made-for-consolidation/#disqus_thread](https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/04/03/euro-fest-car-show-set-for-saturday/);

"Euro Fest Car Show set for Saturday" April 3, 2019

<https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/04/03/euro-fest-car-show-set-for-saturday/>;

'Harmony in the Park' event set for April 20" April 5, 2019

<https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/04/05/harmony-in-the-park-event-set-for-april-20/>; "Fees for City Auditorium waived



Officer, which has been a very effective addition to the Police force. Law Enforcement says the current K9 Officer needs to retire by December 2019. Law Enforcement’s goal is to “find a replacement for him at least a month before he is finished working in order to train the new animal and allow him to grow accustomed to his master.” According to the Natchez Democrat, there is no funding for the K-9 Officer replacement in the City’s budget and therefore the City has pushed its obligation onto community to fundraise for the \$15,000.00 needed. City elected officials are apparently clueless about the millions of dollars that come in seizures and forfeitures through the work of K9 Officers. It is unconscionable that the City cannot come up with \$15,000.00 for a fundamental government responsibility in the way of public safety and protection of Law Enforcement who put their lives on the line for the community and shift to the private sector to raise funds for fundamental City obligations. Rather, the City does not hesitate to approve expenditures from the Mayor’s Discretionary Fund for community parties and tourism-related events that should draw from marketing and assistance for grants through or with the assistance of the tourism program under the Natchez Convention Promotion Commission.

Vehicles. The City has not made sufficient commitment, nor has it sufficiently planned, for vehicle replacement. OneBoard is available to further discuss this matter.

Note: Multiple credible sources assisted in the content of this document, which is illustrative and by no means all-inclusive.

for Natchez Festival of Music” March 27, 2019
[https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/03/27/fees-for-city-auditorium-waived-for-natchez-festival-of-](https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/03/27/fees-for-city-auditorium-waived-for-natchez-festival-of-music/)

[music/](https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/03/20/city-of-natchez-agrees-to-finance-police-squad-cars/); “City of Natchez agrees to finance police squad cars” March 20, 2019
<https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2019/03/20/city-of-natchez-agrees-to-finance-police-squad-cars/>

