



Nags Head Police Department

5401 S. Croatan Hwy.
Post Office Box 99
Nags Head, North Carolina 27959
Telephone (252) 441-6386
Fax (252) 441-7335
www.nagsheadnc.gov

Service - Professionalism - Integrity - Strength

J. Phillip Webster
Chief of Police

Perry L. Hale
Deputy Chief of Police

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor & Board of Commissioners

FROM: Phil Webster, Chief of Police & Greg L Sparks, Interim Town Manager

DATE: May 14, 2021

RE: Police Officer Recruit Program

The Town of Nags Head recruits from a shrinking pool of police candidates. Challenges of hiring staff include fewer Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) graduates, lack of interest in law enforcement as a career, increased cost of living in the Outer Banks, and competition with local agencies. Offering a police recruit program allows the Town to hire an officer who is not certified through a BLET program. It expands our pool of candidates thereby giving us the ability to be more selective, attract diversity, and give an opportunity to individuals who cannot afford to acquire a certification on their own. For current Town employees the program opens a chance to explore a new career and demonstrates our commitment to their continued professional development.

This program will allow the Town to hire an officer that will fill an open police position(s) as a police recruit. The recruit will be hired within a month of the first available (local) BLET program. In this program the recruit will gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to become a successful police officer and once graduated become a full-time police officer. Recruits who do not complete the BLET course due to unanticipated circumstance, i.e., illness, injury, family emergency, may be retained and sent back through BLET at the discretion of the Police Department.

A police recruit will be hired at a grade 4 and receive the minimum salary in that range while attending the BLET program. The department will cover the cost of books and supplies for the recruit. The average fees are currently \$2,274.50 which includes an already budgeted amount of \$700.00 for new hire medical and physical.

Upon graduation from the BLET program (including passing the state exam) the recruit will be promoted to grade 7, Police Officer I and his or her one-year probation will begin.

After one year the employee will be eligible for an in-grade increase based on the prior year performance. Current Town employees interested in a law enforcement career will forfeit their current position to become a police recruit. They will receive the minimum in the police recruit salary range.

The candidate must go through a competitive hiring process including an interview panel. If selected a candidate would be subject to the same hiring process of a certified officer, including a background investigation, drug screening, psychological and medical exam, as well as the police officer physical abilities test (popat). As a condition of hiring the recruit would then apply and need to be accepted into the nearest available BLET class.

When a recruit is hired into this program, their primary job assignment will be to complete the mandatory 640 hours of BLET and pass the state exam. While in BLET the recruit must:

- Check in with the training officer daily
- Attend all class training dates
- Provide weekly progress updates
- Be responsive to calls or emails from the department
- The recruit is not eligible for LEO 401K or LEO NC Retirement contribution until becoming a certified police officer
- They would be eligible for all Nags Head Town benefits offered to any fulltime employee
- Minimum age requirement is 20 years
- The recruit would be required to report to the Police Department for duty in the case of storm or prolonged class cancellation

Anyone hired into this program will be required to sign a Training Repayment Agreement. This agreement requires a Recruit to work as a police officer for two years after graduation from BLET to avoid repayment of the Town's significant expenses in training costs.

The police recruit program would not supplant the department's ability to consider certified or non-certified candidates for a police officer position. The department would retain the right to post job openings to consider certified, non-certified or both dependent on the need of the agency and the BLET program availability.