LRB – RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 19, 2009
FILE #090874

File #090874 authorizes the Milwaukee Police Department to apply for, accept and fund a Milwaukee Police Citizen Academy Program grant from the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance in the amount of $21,377.02. Proceeds will be used for various instructional service costs and materials necessary to support the Milwaukee Police Citizen Academy community service program.

BACKGROUND

In 2003, after being in the formulation stage for several years, police instructors in the Training Bureau teamed up with Community Services Division staff to finalize curriculum for a 10-week, 30-hour, Milwaukee Police Citizen Academy program. The primary purpose of the program is to forge partnerships in the community, bridging understanding by allowing citizens to "walk in the shoes of a police officer." Academy topics include MPD organizational structure, the criminal justice system, police ethics, criminal and traffic law, criminal investigations, search & seizure, patrol procedures, identification division, vice control investigations, sensitive crimes investigations, incident command systems, defense and arrest tactics, and vehicle contacts. Tours of various police facilities and equipment demonstrations are conducted, and attendees may participate in a ride-along with officers.

Individuals who apply for the Milwaukee Police Citizen Academy must be 21 years of age, a resident of the City of Milwaukee, have no felony convictions and have no current criminal charges pending. Targeted recruitment for this program is now done on an on-going basis by Police Department District Commanders and their representatives. The goal is to build a pool of citizen "ambassadors" within each police district who will work with District Commanders to proactively reduce crime, fear and disorder – essentially cohesive neighborhood accountability.

Since inception, the Milwaukee Police Citizen Academy has graduated 12 classes for a total of 347 adult citizen ambassadors to the Milwaukee Police Department. Over the years, curriculum adjustments have been made to reflect changes in technology, standard operating procedure, federal and state court decisions, changes to city ordinances and union labor contracts. The most recent Milwaukee Police Citizen Academy class, held in the fall of 2008, required the use of paid sign language interpreters. Because the Academy did not have a budget to accommodate this ADA requirement, classes were temporarily suspended while grant funding was sought to continue this program.

DISCUSSION

This Milwaukee Police Citizen Academy Program grant will provide $21,377.02 for various instructional service costs and materials necessary to support the continuation of this program. A new class is tentatively scheduled to begin on December 1, 2009. Of note, the upcoming class has been modified from 10 to 6 sessions – a total of 18 hours of classroom instruction - to accommodate clergy participants. It is the intent that the 10-week, 30-hour schedule resume with future classes.

FISCAL IMPACT

Acceptance of this grant, which covers the period November 1, 2009 to December 31, 2010, requires no city participation and has no impact on the tax levy.

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