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Patrolmen, city reach pact on \$500,000 in raises

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The city and the union representing Gloucester's 48 police patrolmen have reached an agreement on a contract that will cost the city \$500,000 in pay raises. The pact is the first in nearly five years for the patrolmen.

It mirrors the agreement reached with the superior officers union in April, about four years after its agreement expired. That one cost \$90,000 for the 13 superior officers.

"The Gloucester Police Patrolmen's Association is relieved to have reached this point," said Patrolman Michael Williams Jr., the secretary and spokesman for the union. "Both sides worked long and hard to reach this agreement. This was the best agreement possible for all concerned given the current financial crisis enveloping the city. Some concessions were made to allow the administration to begin to turn our city around in a positive direction."

The new contract expires at month's end. Phil Terpos, the Police Department's business manager, said the retroactive raises will cost \$271,000, which will first have to be transferred by City Council. He said it will mean an increase in personnel costs for the 48 patrolmen of \$221,000 for the coming fiscal year.

According to the agreement, signed June 8 by Mayor John Bell, the union president, Patrolman John Foote Jr., and the other three members of the executive board, there is no pay increase from the time the previous contract expired June 30, 2002, to June 30, 2005.

The retroactive pay increases are:

* Two increases in salary of 1.75 percent each starting July 1, 2005, and Jan. 1, 2006.

* Two increases of 2 percent each starting July 1, 2006, and Jan. 1, 2007. With the increases, a patrolman's base salary increases from \$44,243.05 to \$47,655.63.

In addition, employees who receive training in the emergency 911 system Gloucester uses, called Vesta, will receive a 0.5 percent bump in pay.

The patrolmen's union, after appearing before the City Council with the superior officers in January, filed for arbitration in February because it said the mayor's office had been negotiating in bad faith.

Steven Magoon, Bell's chief of staff, said the contract is similar to the agreement reached with the Gloucester Superior Officers Association, including time with no raises and a provision that moves police parking to the Fitz Henry Lane lot across Rogers Street from the police station.

The city hopes to build a parking deck directly behind the station, which shares space with Gloucester District Court, should money from the state become available.

On Thursday, the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee voted against transferring \$90,000 to the Police Department to pay for the 13 superior officers' pay raises, fearing that approving the money could be legally construed as a council ratification of the pact.

The council did not vote on either police contract or the firefighters contract, which was approved in April 2006.

Magoon said the mayor's office is planning to submit a similar transfer request to the council for the patrolmen's contract.

"The GPPA hopes that the City Council will recognize the positive aspects of this agreement and approve to fund it," Williams said. "Five years is a long time, and we look forward to moving on from here in a positive way."

The superior officers filed for arbitration Jan. 12 with the Massachusetts Joint Labor Management Commission, and meetings began in February. The union voted to accept terms April 19, and Sgt. John McCarthy and Magoon signed the agreement April 25.

For the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, the Police Department was appropriated \$4.5 million out of a total city budget of \$75.7 million. Police Chief John Beaudette requested \$5,102,538.35 for this coming year's budget; Bell submitted a request to the council for \$5,108,281.99.

The increase in Bell's request over Beaudette's represents increases over Beaudette's request of \$31,604 for patrolman and officer pay increases offset by reductions in other parts of the police budget.

Patrolmen's contract

According to the agreement, the union members have no pay increase from July 1, 2002, through June 30, 2005.

In retroactive pay, they receive increases of:

- * 1.75 percent starting July 1, 2005.

- * 1.75 percent starting Jan. 1, 2006.

- * 2 percent starting July 1, 2006.

- * 2 percent starting Jan. 1, 2007.

Meaning:

A patrolman's base salary will increase from \$44,243.05 to \$47,655.63.

Superior officers' contract

According to the agreement, members have no pay increase from July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2005.

In retroactive pay, they receive raises of:

- * 1.75 percent starting July 1, 2005.

- * 1.75 percent starting Jan. 1, 2006.

- * 2 percent starting July 1, 2006.

- * 2 percent starting Jan. 1, 2007.

Meaning:

- * A sergeant's base pay will rise from \$51,922.98 to \$56,003.33.

- * A lieutenant's base pay will rise from \$58,243.44 to \$62,735.91.