



*People sleep peacefully in their beds at night  
only because their officers  
are ready and willing  
to face violence on their behalf.*

January 19, 2021

CPOA Presentation to the Columbia City Council Work Session

To: Mayor Treece, and Councilmembers Fowler, Trapp, Skala, Thomas, Pitzer, and Peters.  
cc: City Manager Glascock, City Counselor Thompson, City HR Director Enyard, and Police Chief Jones.

The Columbia Police Department continues to struggle with recruiting and retention. Officers are not leaving for the cities Columbia reviews and attempts to compete with as 'comparable communities.' Rather, they are gaining experience and leaving for St. Louis, other much larger municipalities, and occasionally private industry. The common denominator remains 'better pay and benefits.' The primary contributor to Columbia's continuing problem is 'Pay Compression.'

The City of Columbia recognized the problem and, in 2019, provided a much needed albeit partial adjustment. The CPOA does not believe the continued use of partial solutions serve the department, the officers, the citizens, or those who must anticipate budgetary demands of the future. A permanent solution is overdue and the CPOA will ask the City to conclusively rectify the problem.

PAY COMPRESSION:

1. Pay compression exists, in CPD's case, when an organization has only minimal differences in pay between people who have differing experience levels.<sup>1</sup>
2. It often happens when employee pay raises have failed to keep up with increases in the market and with 'the competition' resulting in the necessity to attract new hires by using a pay very similar to that received by employees who have been with the organization for many years.
  - a. This is primarily how the problem has developed here, in Columbia.
  - b. However, the problem was further exacerbated by many years without adequate pay adjustments or with no pay adjustments whatsoever.
  - c. In other words, the current council largely inherited the problem.

Problems with Pay Compression

1. Pay compression leads to turnover because *experienced* employees feel undervalued by receiving pay that is only marginally above that of *brand-new* employees.
2. This can cause an employer's best employees to jump ship.
3. Pay compression may also lead to a reduction in motivation even if the employee is not actively seeking employment elsewhere.
4. Pay compression also hampers recruiting.

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the following information may be found at <https://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2016/11/24/what-is-pay-compression/>

- a. This is especially true when there is a disconnect within the City about what the appropriate pay rates for a given level of experience are versus what other employers (police departments) are paying for the same skillset and experience.
- b. When current employees with a years of experience have not received pay adjustments commensurate with the competition, or with their experience and accomplishments, and the City hires new officers from the police academy with no experience at a pay rate only slightly less than the pay of our seasoned and experienced officers should we really be surprised by the ongoing negative outcomes?

With the appointment of Geoff Jones, Columbia has a new Police Department and one which has actually attracted and hired from those sought-after applicants who rejected an employment offer under the previous administration. Nevertheless, until Columbia's long-standing pay problems are resolved our department will never return to its previous status as one which routinely attracted applicants *from elsewhere* to come to *Columbia*.

On behalf of the men and women who stand in harm's way to protect us from evil, I am sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dale Hardy Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dale" being the most prominent.

Dale Hardy Roberts, J.D., Executive Director  
The Columbia Police Officers' Association, FOP Lodge #26