

Chief: new officer top need for Hiawatha Police Dept

(KNZA)--An additional full-time officer is the top need for the Hiawatha Police Department.

That's what Police Chief John Defore told the City Commission Monday evening during discussion on how best to use funds the city has been paying Brown County for providing dispatch services.

The city earlier this month accepted the county's offer to no longer charge for the service, with the stipulation those funds be used for law enforcement purposes.

The city has been paying the county about \$49,500 annually for providing dispatch services.

Defore said he prioritized his department's needs and at the top of that list is a new officer. "By putting another officer on the street with this money, that puts the minimum staffing of levels to two officers on the street covering first and second shift, seven in the morning to midnight. That's a big deal. When you've got a beat buddy on the street with you, you get more done, you can respond to calls faster."

Defore said putting an additional officer on the street would also help free up his investigator from having to respond to calls. In addition, he said it would allow his department to participate in more traffic safety programs through the Kansas Department of Transportation that pay an officer's overtime.

The Commission tabled a decision until their October 30th meeting.

Many Signals Communications