

Falls City Council approves hiring incentive for police officers
(KLZA)--The Falls City Council approved a hiring incentive plan Monday night in an effort to hire certified police officers.

Recently two Falls City Police Officers resigned and joined the Richardson County Sheriff's Department. Assistant Chief of Police Jamie Baker told the Council it has become increasingly difficult to hire officers due to a lack of applicants.

The council approved a hiring incentive of \$10-thousand for up to two, certified officers. The incentives would be paid over three years with the first installment paid at hiring to help the officer with relocation expenses. Baker said that it costs the City approximately \$19,600 and 16 weeks to send a new hire to the Nebraska Law Enforcement Center to become certified.

In related action the Council approved a request to hire a third part-time police officer. The part-time officers are used when there is a manpower shortage, or to help cover vacation and times when officers are ill. The Council also voted 5-1 to increase the part-time officer wage to \$23.60 per hour. Council member Lucas Froeschl cast the nay vote with Council members Amber Holle and Carla Rhodd absent.

Also approved Monday evening was creation of a Master Police Officer Program for the Police Department. To qualify an officer would need to have three years of service as a police officer. There would be a points program to acquire the designation which would make the officer eligible for a two-dollar per hour pay raise.

The City will be opening two areas of negotiations with the Police Department Officers union regarding wages and hours of work. Assistant Chief Baker said the Department is looking at make a change in shifts for officers. He said the feeling is that going to a 12-hour shifts without the current rotating shifts would make the officers work hours more consistent and would help with morale.