



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

File #: 2018-102, Version: 1

Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, March 06, 2018

Discussion

SUBJECT:

CONSIDER CITY CLERK'S OFFICE PROPOSAL TO RECLASSIFY THE CURRENT PART-TIME OFFICE CLERK POSITION TO A FULL TIME SENIOR CLERK POSITION (AFSCME LOCAL 809) TO ALLOW FOR THE EXPANSION OF PASSPORT AND OTHER SERVICES (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

In June 2016, the City Council reinstated a Part-Time Office Clerk to support the City offering passport services to the community. The Passport Acceptance Facility officially opened in December; however, the services did not ramp up until January 2017. In the first year the City processed 1,943 passports generating \$48,575.00.

During the first year, we learned that approximately 75% of passport applicants are in need of a passport photo. Currently, applicants are referred to local businesses that provide photo services. Given that a majority of the passport applicants are in need of photo services, it was in the best interest of City residents to accommodate the public with a one-stop shop approach. The City Clerk's Office (CCO) recently purchased photo equipment and will begin providing photo services at a cost of \$9 per photo. The fees recovered will be used toward the cost of equipment, supplies, personnel, etc. Effective April 2, 2018, the Department of State authorized an increase in the passport execution fee from \$25 to \$35.

In an effort to keep up with a variety of service demands from the public and City staff, the CCO is proposing enhancement of services by expanding passport acceptance hours an additional 5 hours per day (20 hours a week) Monday-Thursday from 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., by expanding the time allotted for passport services the city will have an exponential increase in its passport acceptance volume. In addition, to offering, passport photo service, increasing walk-in notary services, and offering live scan operation and recordation to our service counter.

In prior years, the CCO organizational chart included adequate clerical staff. However with the immediate change in business needs of the office, additional staff support is required. The CCO is proposing the reclassification of a Part-Time Office Clerk to a Full-time Senior Clerk. This reclassification allows the CCO to provide maximum flexibility of clerical duties for the expanded passport hours, other clerical duties as assigned and support when other

CCO personnel is out of the office for an extended time. The fully burdened rate for the reclassification to a Full-Time Senior Clerk is \$18,173 for the remainder of FY17/18.

Based on the information and data collected, the CCO's proposal of increased passport hours, additional services provided to the public, and the reclassification of existing personnel; will be a self-supporting function. Therefore, it is requested that the City Council approve the reclassification of the existing Part-Time Office Clerk position to a Full-Time Senior Clerk position to accommodate the enhanced services provided by the CCO.

The CCO's proposal of enhanced services, Senior Clerk reclassification and the cost analysis associated with service counter revenue actuals and projections was properly vetted through AFSCME (Local 809), Finance, Human Resources and the City Manager.

II. **RECOMMENDATION**

TAKE the following actions:

APPROVE the reclassification of the existing Part-Time Office Clerk position in the City Clerk's Office to a Full-Time Senior Clerk and ADOPT Resolution No. 18-023, *A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Carson, California, Reclassifying the Part-Time Office Clerk Position to a Full-Time Senior Clerk Position in the City Clerk's Office*;

APPROVE the reclassification from the existing Part-Time Office Clerk Salary Range 824, Step A to the Full-Time Senior Clerk, Salary Range 330, Step A and ADOPT Resolution No. 18-024, *A Resolution of the City of Carson City Council Amending the Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget in the General Fund*.

III. **ALTERNATIVES**

TAKE another action the City Council deems appropriate.

IV. **BACKGROUND**

Early Stages

City Clerk Gause-Aldana took office in February 2016. Subsequently, in June of 2016, the office reorganization was approved; which provided the CCO with a Part-Time Office Clerk. This position was intended to reintroduce passport services with limited hours. At that time, the City Council requested the City Clerk return with an update after the program was implemented. In December of 2016, the CCO officially became a Passport Acceptance Facility from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Monday-Thursday. In April 2017, the CCO hired a Part-Time Office Clerk who became the primary Passport Agent (Agent). Since the reintroduction of passport services, the service has been successful.

Improved Customer Experience

Prior to 2017, the CCO was a Passport Acceptance Facility. There was some success, but services were ceased in 2015. Additionally, there was no systematic approach which

caused impositions on staff. With the City Council's support in 2016 to reinstate passport services, it was the City Clerk's intent to improve the experience as a whole, both internally and externally. After a few months, the City Clerk began to implement small, inexpensive changes with big results.

Problem	Solution	Outcome
Tracking Order of Applicants.	Electronic Numbering System.	A simple numbering system eliminates confusion from the "who was first" in line. Now, customers simply pull a number and have a seat until called upon.
Website.	Created a Passport subpage to the City Clerk's webpage which provides all passport information.	Customers can now go on the City's webpage to obtain summarized information and also obtain forms, which can be filled out in advance.
Phone Inquiries - the CCO was inundated with passport calls for general information.	Designated Passport Line (310-233-4891).	Since the separate line has been in place, phone calls have decreased tremendously.
Seating Area - the CCO waiting area was a hodgepodge of tables and free-standing spindles.	Area was cleared out and provided more seating that is "on loan" from Community Services (pending delivery of 15 matching chairs).	Comfort is provided to customers since they no longer need to stand in line.
Payment - Currently the CCO does not accept payments. Customers must go to Treasurers Office to pay.	CCO office will begin accepting credit card payments.	Customers' will not need to go to the Treasurer's Office unless there is a cash payment.
Front Counter Inquiries - the CCO receives a lot of counter inquiries for general passport information.	A ¼ page informational guide sheet was created and is simply handed to the customer to review and take with him/her as a reminder of what they need to bring when prepared to apply.	Eliminates counter time spent on simple inquiries. It outlines what is required and payment information; customers get what they need without having to wait for available staff. This tool has decreased time spent at counter on inquiries.

No Advertising - there has not been any outsourced paid advertising to provide the public with the knowledge of the service.	CCO created flyers in-house and Community Services Parks and our libraries display the flyers for distribution. Also, placed Passport Line on City Halls electronic bulletin board.	Although limited, this effort provides exposure to individuals visiting these areas of Carson. Increased awareness of our facility and hours.
No Individualized Customer Service.	Primary Agent to provide a personable, consistent and professional approach.	Agent has become the expert who prevents misinformation or different interpretations of needs. This consistency allows customers who follow up to speak and work with the same Agent.
Passport Photos - at least 75% of phone calls and applicants inquire on whether the CCO offers on-site photos.	Purchased all necessary photo equipment; pending delivery.	Customers will now have the choice to shop elsewhere for photos or pay for the in-house photo service.
Service Counter - the CCO has a customer counter separated by a handicapped divider. At times, passport customers utilize the entire counter leaving no privacy or room for other CCO customers.	New signage directs passport customers to the passport "service desk". Clipboards are now provided to allow customers to fill out the application in the designated seating area, not the counter. Only one customer/family is allowed at the counter at a time.	Increases necessary privacy, as required by law, and no overcrowding at counters. Efficient and orderly.

Revenue Summary

Calendar Year 2017 (January 1, 2017-December 31, 2017)

In June 2016, the City Council requested the City Clerk provide an update on revenues generated from the passport services. In calendar year 2017 the City processed and executed 1,943 new passport applications; the annual revenue was \$48,575.00. The time spent on passport services by Agent fluctuates, and this position also contributes to the office by answering phones, providing front-counter assistance and assisting with miscellaneous clerical duties.

Current Fiscal Year (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018)

If the passport service continues with the same hours and the recent addition of passport photo services, the CCO expects revenue of \$57,290.00.

Projected FY 17/18 Passport Execution Revenue	\$ 53,433
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Projected FY 17/18 Photo Revenue (3 months)	\$ 3,857
Projected Revenue Subtotal	\$ 57,290

CCO Service Enhancement Opportunities

Passport Services

There is a continued local need for passport services in this area. In the past, the Carson Post Office was an acceptance facility but has since eliminated the service. California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) is the closest acceptance facility to City Hall; they close their walk-ins at 2:00 p.m. and appointments at 3:00 p.m. On any given day, customers wait at the CCO for over an hour before our 9:00 a.m. passport acceptance start time, to which they then must wait. Moreover, approximately 20-25 times a week, the CCO turns away customers seeking assistance after 2:00 p.m. The CCO has received feedback from many customers requesting “prime time hours”. If passport acceptance hours began at 7:00 a.m., it would allow residents and the public the flexibility to handle passport needs before work and school. In addition, if passport services remained open until 4:00 p.m., this would allow the same flexibility to handle needs after work or school. This is especially helpful to families with minor children because in order to submit a passport application for a minor, both parents and the child are required to be present during the entire process.

Passport renewals do not require acceptance from a passport agent. However, the CCO provides applications and service to the public from a passport agent without cost recovery. Renewal services are mainly from the senior community, but the CCO assists anyone who needs help with the renewal process. Our records indicate the CCO assisted with over 340 renewal applications since June 2017. CSUDH also assists customers with passport renewals; however, a \$25.00 service fee is imposed for every customer. The CCO offers this assistance as a courtesy and does not burden constituents with additional fees. However, the opportunity can be considered, if necessary, to support the cost recovery for the reclassification of the Part-Time Office Clerk to Full-Time Senior Clerk.

Next Fiscal Year (18/19) Passport Revenue Projections

Based on the annualized average of passports processed in FY17/18, the additional 20 hours per week, and photo services, the CCO anticipates the projected revenue to be \$150,182.

Projected FY 18/19 Passport Execution Revenue	\$ 122,409
Projected FY 18/19 Photo Fees	\$ 27,773
Projected Revenue Subtotal	\$ 150,182

With the passport revenue projections, minus wages and benefits for the Full-Time Senior Clerk (\$72,692), associated overhead, the additional personnel, and equipment cost relative to processing passports and photos, allows the City to provide this service to its residents that is cost recoverable.

Notary Public Services

Public Notary is another service that the CCO offers. This service is limited and only utilized as-needed. The State has set the fee at \$15.00 per signature for acknowledgements and jurats. Last year, the CCO notarized approximately 114 documents. 63% of the notaries were for City business which was cost savings for the City (approximately \$1,080.00). Although the generated revenue is minimal (approximately \$645.00), 37% of the notary's were walk-ins without any advertisement. Notary services can be a benefit to residents and should be advertised. In the past, the majority of banks offered these services to any person, but now there is a trend of banks limiting their notary services to their account holders. Based on the number of documents that require notary services, with little cost of advertisement, this can be another viable service with the proper staff levels and advertisement. Examples of documents that require a notary include Deeds, Parental Consent for Travel, Retirement documents, Bills of Sale, etc.

Recording Services

The Los Angeles County is responsible for recording and retaining countywide records. The Norwalk office is the closest County facility that provides recording services. Community Development requires recordation of certain records such as Certificates of Completion, Regulatory Agreements, Certificates of Compliance, Restrictive Covenant Agreements, and Grant Acceptance Agreements associated with the City's Neighborhood Pride Program, etc. Public Works also requires recordation of Notices of Completion, Road Dedications and Easement Dedications, etc. Currently, options utilized by the City are a manual and time-consuming process: 1) by mail, requesting a conformed copy by U.S. mail (usual turnaround time varies but usually 2-3 weeks); 2) in-person by City Staff or applicant (initial recordation and copy is provided before they leave the counter); or 3) by consultant (generally, dropped off and available for pick-up within 3 business days).

However, a Multi-County Electronic Recording Delivery System (SECURE) is a system that allows local agencies under a Memorandum of Understanding to record in-house and receive immediate and direct communications from the recorders offices. At this time 22 cities (Orange, Los Angeles, San Diego and Riverside counties) use SECURE. Benefits of this service include cost savings associated with City staff time and consultants. For instance, a current vendor used by the City charges \$15.00 for the pick-up and processing with the County. A current contract with a certain vendor expects a yearly cost of \$4,000.00 for document recordation processing within 2 days. Another benefit would be the control of the record. At times, documents are not delivered timely or simply become lost. Additionally, the CCO struggles with obtaining the final recorded version from staff or consultants for the City's official record. With the SECURE system, in-house recording is done within 10-minutes. In real time the CCO office would know if it was accepted and recorded. It also provides any rejections instantly and provides the reason for corrections and electronic resubmittals. Currently, if a document is rejected, staff has to return to the County agency to correct any errors and start the manual recording process again. With this electronic and paperless system, the County does not need the original; therefore, the City would record and retain the hard copy.

Recorded records, with limited exceptions, require notarized signatures. With in-house notary services coupled with recording services, it can be a one stop shop that generates revenue and provides cost savings to multiple departments. This suggestion has informally been presented to the applicable City staff and is fully endorsed.

Live Scan Operator

The State of California authorizes designated government agencies to submit requests for criminal offender record information reviews directly to the Department of Justice using a communication network; which is maintained by the Attorney General. Live Scan Operators submit these electronic requests on behalf of applicants that are being reviewed for suitability of employment, licensing, certification, foreign adoptions or entry into the United States or another country.

Oftentimes the public will visit the CCO to inquire if the City is a Live Scan Operator. The CCO believes providing Live Scan Operations will not only be a benefit to the community, but will also eliminate City costs associated with fingerprinting.

Parent volunteers through the Parks and Recreation (P&R) program are required to obtain fingerprinting services from a mobile live-scan operator at the cost of the City. P&R programs have 3 sporting seasons at 12 different parks. On average, there are 10-20 parent volunteers every season. Bringing Live Scan operations in-house, the City has the potential to save approximately \$10,800.

City Attorney & City Manager Public Records Support

Over recent years, local agencies have experienced increased demand for records accessibility under the Public Records Act (PRA). The City currently responds to hundreds of PRA's on a yearly basis. In response to the numbers rapidly increasing, the City Clerk and the City Attorney's Office developed a PRA administrative policy. The City Clerk will train city staff that will be implementing the policy citywide. With this new policy, aligned with the reclassification of the Senior Clerk position, the CCO would be more involved in the processing and compliance with records requests. The Senior Clerk would also be utilized as the administrative support to the daily tasks associated with handling PRA requests preventing the outstripping of available resources in the CCO.

Service Desk Sustainability

The handling of a passport application is a process that necessitates the Agent to be cautious of every situation, sensitive to the different backgrounds such as naturalized citizenship, and retain the necessary knowledge and expertise to obtain all necessary information to prevent delays from the U.S. Department of State. All U.S. citizens traveling internationally, including children are required to have a U.S. Passport Book or a Passport Card.

With California's execution of issuing "Real ID's" there have been questions about passport requirements. In October 2020, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will require Californians to possess a "Real ID" to board *domestic* flights. This does not affect

international travel, as a passport is still required; therefore, the issuance of Real ID's does not decrease or eliminate the need for passports or Passport Acceptance Facilities. In addition, the U.S. Department of State has recently increased the execution fee Facilities shall charge from \$25.00 to \$35.00 per application, which was reflected in the projections. The City's costs to provide the service include employee compensation, supervision, overhead, equipment, and supplies; which support the fee increase.

With new additional services such as live scan and recordation, and expanded notary services, it is difficult to provide revenue projections without any actual data.

Conclusion

The CCO originally prepared for the reclassification of the Part-Time Office Clerk to a Full-Time Office Clerk. During the meet and confer, the AFSCME president expressed concern with the scope of duties, thereby requesting that the existing Part-Time Office Clerk be reclassified to a Full-Time Senior Clerk

The CCO has made great strides in providing efficient and effective services, specifically with passport acceptance. The need to move forward with suggested enhanced and additional services is an effort to address the public demands for services and bring the community needs that are ordinarily outsourced to an in-house operation.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

The City Clerk anticipates annual revenue of \$150,182 from passport and photo processing. The \$35 processing fee is federally mandated. The City is not allowed to charge less or more. The costs of the program include staff time, supervision, overhead, credit card processing fees, equipment and supplies.

The current annual employee costs for the part-time position is \$15,778, since this is a non-benefited position. The compensation increase for the remainder of FY17-18 is \$18,173. The annual cost of the full-time position is \$72,692, which is covered by the passport revenues.

Additional equipment/supplies necessary to implement expanded services will either be absorbed by the City Clerk's FY17-18 budget, or requested in the FY18-19 budget.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. RESOLUTION NO. 18-023, Pgs. 9-10
2. RESOLUTION NO. 18-024, Pgs. 11-12

Prepared by: Donesia Gause-Aldana, City Clerk