



CITY OF SIGNAL HILL

2175 Cherry Avenue • Signal
Hill, California 90755-3799

STAFF REPORT

5/13/2025

AGENDA ITEM

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: CARLO TOMAINO
CITY MANAGER**

**BY: YVETTE E. AGUILAR
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER**

**PATRICIA AHUMADA
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER**

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING - AB 2561 VACANCY RATE REPORTING

Summary:

On September 22, 2024, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 2561 (AB 2561) into law to amend the Meyers-Millias-Brown Act (MMBA). AB 2561 added California Government Code Section 3502.3 (GC 3502.3), which mandates that public agencies hold at least one public hearing each fiscal year prior to the adoption of their respective budgets to report on vacancy levels, recruitment, and retention efforts, and allow for participation by recognized bargaining units.

In accordance with AB 2561, the City shall hold a public hearing each fiscal year to present information on vacancies, recruitment, and retention efforts. Staff presents this report in compliance with new transparency requirements related to staffing vacancies. The purpose is to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to community needs regarding the City's staffing and employment practices.

Strategic Plan Goal(s):

Goal No. 5 High-Functioning Government: Strengthen internal communication, recruitment, retention, systems, and processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of City services.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council open the public hearing and file the annual report.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

Background:

On September 22, 2024, Governor Newsom signed AB 2561 into law to amend the MMBA. AB 2561 added GC 3502.3, which mandates that public agencies hold at least one public hearing each fiscal year prior to the adoption of their respective budgets to report on vacancy levels, recruitment, and retention efforts, and allow for participation by recognized bargaining units. During these public meetings, employee bargaining units are entitled to present their perspectives on the report. If the vacancy rate in a bargaining unit is at or exceeds 20%, the bargaining unit may request that the agency provide additional information on the number of vacancies, such as applicant numbers for vacant positions, hiring timelines, and efforts to improve compensation, benefits, and working conditions.

AB 2561 requires public agencies to:

- Report annually on vacancies, recruitment activity, and retention strategies.
- Identify any policies or practices that may hinder hiring or retention.
- Provide recognized bargaining units with an opportunity to present during the public hearing; and
- Upon request by a recognized bargaining unit with a vacancy rate of 20% or more, provide additional data, including applicant volume, hiring timelines, and efforts to improve compensation, benefits, and working conditions.

The City recognizes two bargaining units which include the Signal Hill Employees Association (SHEA) and the Signal Hill Police Officers Association (SHPOA). The City notified both units about the Public Hearing on April 29, 2025, and invited them to participate in accordance with AB 2561.

Analysis:

As of April 30, 2025, the City has 115 full-time budgeted positions and a vacancy rate of approximately 17.4% citywide. The vacancy rate for SHEA is 16.9% and the vacancy rate for SHPOA is 21.9%. Vacancies arise from a range of factors, including retirements, internal/external promotions, resignations, and separations. Overall, staff would note that given the relatively small size of the organization, percentages overinflate the appearance of changes or differences in data, creating the impression that the City is a statistical outlier. The percentages discussed above translate to an absolute value of 20 total vacancies throughout the organization as of April 30, 2025.

Table 1: Vacancies per Unit (as of April 30, 2025)

Employee Unit	# of Vacancies	# of Budgeted FTEs	% of Vacancies
Signal Hill Management Personnel	3	24	12.5%
Signal Hill Employees Association (SHEA)	10	59	16.9%
Signal Hill Police Officers Association (POA)	7	32	21.9%

FULL-TIME CITYWIDE VACANCIES	20	115	17.4%
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Recruitment Efforts:

The City is continuously and rigorously recruiting and onboarding new hires, including full-and part-time personnel. In 2024, the City hired 27 new full-time employees. Between January 1, 2025, to April 30, 2025, the City hired 12 full-time employees. Although AB 2561 requires local agencies to present annually on the status of vacancies and efforts to recruit and retain staff, the City has always prioritized recruitments to fill vacancies, and retention efforts to minimize turnover. Tables 2 and 3 below provide information regarding the number of applicants, recruitments, and hires for calendar years 2023, 2024, and 2025 (through April 30, 2025).

Table 2: Total Number of Full-Time Recruitments (Citywide)

Year	# of Applicants	# of Recruitments	# of Hires
2023	2240	47	16
2024	3233	36	27
2025 (as of 4/30/25)	2704	22	12

Table 3: Total Number of Police Officer Recruitments

Year	# of Applicants	# of Recruitments	# of Hires
2023	304	6	5
2024	348	6	6
2025 (as of 4/30/25)	236	4	0

The City recognizes that recruitment is about identifying, attracting, and hiring the right people for the organization, and retention is about keeping employees engaged, satisfied, and committed to the organization in the long term. Both efforts are critical for the organization's success, especially in today's competitive job market.

AB 2561 acknowledges that recruitment and retention is currently a challenge for all public sector employers in California. In this regard, the City experiences similar challenges with respect to its recruitment efforts since it is competing for a limited pool of qualified candidates among other cities within the region. As discussed in further detail below, the City Council has taken proactive measures to support the City's Human Resources Division by enhancing compensation levels, benefits, and supporting initiatives that enhance a better work-life balance for employees.

Police Officer positions pose a unique challenge due to the amount of time and cost necessary to recruit and train qualified Police Officers. The Police Academy typically requires six months to complete, and a new academy graduate requires an additional six months of field training to become a full-fledged Police Officer. A lateral Police Officer hire requires less lead time (approximately six months) and may be deployed with a few weeks of field training after the initial date of hire. For this reason, the City implemented various programs and strategies to attract lateral hires along with other recruitment efforts citywide:

- Police Lateral Recruitment Incentive Program

- Targeted recruitment for Police Officer vacancies including marketing to military veterans and specific demographics on social media
- Social media campaigns highlighting the benefits of working in Signal Hill
- Industry specific and targeted web employment advertising
- Utilization of job boards and job fairs at educational institutions and other community events
- Continued use of NeoGov, LinkedIn, and other platforms to manage and attract applicants
- Revisions to job descriptions to align with industry standards

Retention Efforts:

Employee retention remains a central focus of the City's workforce strategy. In 2024, the City implemented several initiatives designed to improve employee satisfaction, promote longevity, and enhance professional growth. The City implemented the following retention efforts:

- Conducted a citywide classification and compensation study and implemented market equity adjustments for all positions.
- Adopted multi-year agreements with the City's bargaining units establishing competitive salaries and enhanced benefits, including annual cost of living increases over the three-year term.
- Increased and restructured Longevity Pay for Police Officers.
- Implemented Longevity Lump Sum pay for SHEA.
- Implemented Longevity Pay for Dispatcher/Jailer position.
- Enhanced Benefits Package to be more competitive and include comprehensive health benefits, retirement planning, and work-life balance support.
- Increased Tuition Reimbursement Program.
- Revived the Employee Engagement Committee for the planning of year-round employee engagement and wellness events and activities.
- Implemented Employee Recognition Programs including Employee of the Year/Quarter, Years of Service, Public Service Recognition Week, and other professional recognition weeks associated with specific industries.
- Created social media campaigns intended to recognize the work of staff to highlight positions that may not have as many public-facing engagement opportunities.
- Continued to offer training and development opportunities through the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority (CJPIA), Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (LCW), and industry specific professional organizations.
- Established positive labor relations with SHEA and the SHPOA, including meetings outside the negotiation cycle to proactively discuss employment issues with management.

As part of the City's workforce planning and in alignment with AB 2561, the City continues to assess internal practices and workforce conditions to identify and address recruitment and retention efforts. This ongoing self-assessment helps the City to become an employer of choice, supports organizational resilience, and ensures effective delivery of public services.

Conclusion:

The City is committed to maintaining a skilled and resilient workforce and complying with the

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requirements of AB 2561. After the Public Hearing process, staff recommends that the City Council receive and file the first of these annual updates. The City will continue to monitor staffing trends, address recruitment challenges, and invest in staff development and employee engagement and wellness.

Reviewed for Fiscal Impact:

Siamlu Cox

Attachment:

A. AB 2561