



Memo

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Danny Barton, Chief of Police

Date: January 23, 2020

Reference: **Police Legal Advisor**

The Coppell Police Department began using the legal services of Warren Spencer in 2017. Warren Spencer is the legal advisor to the Texas Police Chiefs Association, by whom the Coppell Police Department is accredited, and has previously been the police legal advisor in the Cities of Plano and Frisco. His expertise in the legal application of the law to police operations such as search and seizure, arrests and detentions and probable cause is invaluable. Mr. Spencer currently works from the Coppell Police Department approximately one day a week and was always available by phone.

Mr. Spencer has been invaluable in providing detectives, school resource officers, and patrol officers with legal guidance. Training bulletins are frequently drafted by Mr. Spencer for Command Staff approval. Those training bulletins are based on either current legal challenges or training needs of the police department. When time allows, Mr. Spencer vets training providers for Command Staff to ensure that Officers and Detectives are sent only to training classes that meet our legal standards and philosophies. Mr. Spencer has also provided policy guidance at the operational level.

Scrutiny over police actions are as common and numerous as ever. Public trust hinges on the legitimacy of the police department and its actions. Simply stated, the margins of error have decreased, and the legal climate has been changing faster than ever. I asked Mr. Spencer for additional help in training our officers and detectives and to have an increased presence in the police department so that supervisors and officers can obtain his guidance when needed. Additional training and policy guidance will also be increased.

The past two years, the Police Department has paid a set fee of \$2600.00 for 28 hours per month. I feel that his guidance has been valuable to the department, however, 28 hours a month has proven too little given the legal landscape today. Mr. Spencer has agreed to 56 hours per month at a rate of \$5200.00. The annual cost to the Coppell Police Department would be \$62,400.00.

This three-year agreement requires the signature of the City Manager due to its annual cost.