



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
March 12, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
 Submitted by: Andrew Greenwood, Chief of Police  
 Subject: Authorizing Rewards of up to \$50,000 for Information in Criminal Investigations

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution increasing the maximum cash reward that the City Manager is authorized to approve from \$15,000 to \$50,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for a specific crime or crime series, and rescinding Resolution No. 59,824-N.S.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Authorized rewards would be paid out of the existing Berkeley Police Department Budget (budget code 159-71-705-820-0000-000-421-612990). No new funding source is needed at this time. Although specific annual costs are difficult to estimate, it is unlikely that there would be more than one reward payout in any single fiscal year. Furthermore, major cases almost never get adjudicated within a year's time and as a result, the Berkeley Police Department would be able to plan ahead for any potential reward payouts.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

With approval from the City Manager, the Berkeley Police Department is currently authorized to offer a \$15,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for specific homicides.

Homicide Investigators have asked for an increase in the dollar amount offered as a cash reward for several unsolved murder cases. Investigators point out that the dollar amount has not been increased since 1998, and believe that the requested increase may generate new leads. There are still over a dozen unsolved murder cases since 2005.

Additionally, there have been other types of cases where the Berkeley Police Department would like to offer rewards but is not able to do so because the existing resolution only applies to murder cases.

### BACKGROUND

In 1998 the City Council approved Resolution No. 59,824-N.S. (Authorizing Rewards of \$15,000 in Murder Cases). For each case the Police Chief submits a confidential memorandum to the City Manager outlining the facts, and requesting authorization to issue a reward. Payment has only been made on one case since 1998.

In addition to the City program relating to unsolved murder cases, there was also a similar local program relating to other types of crime. Until recently a community organization called Bay Area Crime Stoppers, had offered a standing reward of \$3,000 as an incentive for people to provide information to law enforcement. The Berkeley Police Department was able to refer to this reward in media releases on a variety of other criminal cases such as robberies, burglaries and sexual assaults. Even though reward payouts are rare, just the presence of a reward results in greater interest from media outlets and the general public. The more interest generated in a specific case, the greater the chance that someone will come forward with new information. Unfortunately the Bay Area Crime Stoppers Reward is no longer available. The Berkeley Police Department anticipates that there will continue to be situations outside of unsolved murder cases where a monetary reward would help generate leads.

If a new resolution is adopted, the maximum dollar amount offered as a reward for unsolved murder cases would increase from \$15,000 up to \$50,000 and the Berkeley Police Department would also be able to offer rewards on other types of criminal cases as well. All offers of a reward would still require the approval of the City Manager.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental opportunities or effects associated with the subject of this report.

### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

A reward can be an incentive, assisting in the resolution of a case and adding valuable evidence to help convict a suspect. The existing resolution allows cash rewards only for murder cases and restricts the amount to \$15,000. Today, \$15,000 is no longer the incentive that it was in 1998. Berkeley Police Detectives believe that increasing the maximum dollar amount to \$50,000 could lead to information that will bring the perpetrators of crimes to justice and bring relief to the families of crime victims.

### CONTACT PERSON

Andrew Greenwood, Chief of Police, 981-5700

Attachment:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZING REWARDS OF UP TO \$50,000 AND RESCINDING RESOLUTION NO. 59,824-N.S.

WHEREAS, Council approved Resolution No. 59,824-N.S. on December 8, 1998, authorizing a \$15,000 cash reward given to those who provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of murderer(s); and

WHEREAS, \$15,000 is no longer the incentive that it was in 1998; and

WHEREAS, there are still over a dozen unsolved murder cases since 2005 as well as other types of cases where a reward may lead to information that will bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice; and

WHEREAS, the existing resolution only applies to murder cases; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Police Department has a commitment to bring suspects of crime in for prosecution; and

WHEREAS, closure of criminal investigations will bring relief to the families of the victims and reduce fear in the community; and

WHEREAS, authorized rewards would be paid out of the existing Berkeley Police Department Budget (budget code 159-71-705-820-0000-000-421-612990).

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that, based on the confidential recommendation of the Police Chief, the City Manager is authorized to offer a cash reward of up to \$50,000 to those who provide information and/or investigative action leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for a specific crime or crime series.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that Resolution No. 59,824-N.S. is rescinded.

