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July 24, 2012

The Honorable Vincent J. Gentile  
Council Member  
New York City Council  
250 Broadway  
Room 1728  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Council Member Gentile:

At your request, the Independent Budget Office (IBO) has analyzed the potential impact of lengthening the standard work shifts, or tours, currently worked by New York Police Department (NYPD) uniformed officers. As you note in your letter, police officers currently work shifts that are 8 hours and 35 minutes long. The paid 35 minute period added to each otherwise 8 hour shift, often referred to as muster time, essentially provides operational overlap—including time for debriefing and wash up—as officers concluding one tour are relieved by officers coming in to work the next tour. Also included within each shift are a one-hour meal break and a separate 40-minute break period.

Specifically, you requested that we estimate the fiscal impact of lengthening police officer work shifts from the current 8 hours and 35 minutes to either 10 hours or 12 hours, but with no increase during each shift in the total of one hour and 40 minutes allotted for lunch and break time. Also, we confirmed with Mr. Michael Fieni from your staff that with the modification you have in mind, the 35 minutes of muster time would be included within a 10 hour or 12 hour shift, rather than added on at the end to make a 10 hour and 35 minute or 12 hour and 35 minute shift.

Lengthening work shifts to 10 or 12 hours could conceivably increase productivity by 5.0 percent or 10.1 percent, respectively. However, implementing such a change would involve logistical and administrative challenges that might limit the city's potential gain in productivity.

By contract, police officers are scheduled for a gross of 2,088 hours of straight time duty each year (prior to accounting for vacation days, personal leave, and other forms of paid leave). Assuming that annual gross hours are maintained at 2,088, the number of scheduled tours police officers are required to appear for duty is a function of tour length. Under your proposal, tours would be lengthened without increasing meal/break time or muster time within each tour. Therefore, even though police officers would appear for duty fewer times each year, officers would be available for patrol or other enforcement activities for a greater proportion of the hours within each tour. Lengthening tours from the current 8 hours and 35 minutes to either 10 hours or 12 hours could therefore generate increased productivity.

	Tour Length (hours) [a]	Annual Scheduled Tours or Appearances [b]	Available Patrol Time per Tour per Officer (hours) [c]	Available Patrol Time per Tour as Proportion of Tour Length	Annual Hours of Available Patrol Time per Officer	Productivity Enhancement [d]
Current	8.58	243.3	6.33	0.74	1,541	-
Proposed	10.00	208.8	7.75	0.78	1,618	5.0%
Proposed	12.00	174.0	9.75	0.81	1,697	10.1%
<b>SOURCES:</b> IBO, New York Police Department						
<b>NOTES:</b>						
[b] = 2088 / [a]						
[c] = [a] - [1 hour and 40 minutes of lunch/break time] - [35 minutes of muster time]						
[d] = Percentage increase in <u>Annual Hours of Available Patrol Time per Officer</u>						

Were police officer tours to be lengthened, the city would presumably utilize the resulting productivity enhancement in one of two ways. Uniformed staffing at the rank of police officer could be maintained at its current level of about 23,000 officers, with the result being an increase in the aggregate, agencywide amount of available patrol time. The increase in aggregate patrol time would result from the increased annual number of hours each officer is available for patrol or other enforcement activities. There would be no direct budgetary savings from reduced spending on base salaries and fringe benefits, although police overtime expenditures could conceivably be reduced as a result of having officers available for more straight time deployments. The result would be an increase in the aggregate amount of time police officers are available for law enforcement activities without the need to hire additional personnel.

Alternatively, the city could generate budgetary savings by allowing for a reduction (via attrition) in police staffing while essentially holding constant the aggregate number of patrol hours. By lengthening shifts to 10 hours or 12 hours (assuming no change in the meal/break time and muster time during each tour) the NYPD could allow police officer staffing to decline by either 5.0 percent or 10.1 percent without a diminution in the aggregate, agencywide number of hours police officers are available for patrol or other law enforcement activities.

In computing the productivity enhancements that could flow from lengthening police officer tours, we assume that police officers would agree to have fewer vacation days as compared with the number of days they are entitled to currently. Police officers at present are entitled to 10 vacation days during their first and second years, 13 vacation days during their third, fourth, and fifth years, and 27 vacation days each year thereafter. With tour lengths of 10 hours or 12 hours, each scheduled vacation *day* would relieve officers from duty for more *hours* than is currently the case. To maintain the current number of vacation hours, the number of days off would need to be reduced. If the annual vacation hours were increased to give police officers their current number of days off, some of the potential productivity gains would be lost. We also assume that the total number of hours of sick leave utilized by police officers each year would remain unchanged.

There would be a number of other administrative challenges associated with lengthening police officer tours. For example, the current tour length of 8 hours and 35 minutes allows the NYPD to staff three eight-hour shifts each day with the 35 minute muster time overlap between tours. Lengthening tours to a flat 10 hours or 12 hours

would present considerable scheduling complexities. Perhaps a more administratively feasible option would be the 12 hour and 20 minute shifts currently worked by Metropolitan Transit Authority police officers, a shift length that allows for two tours per day with a 20 minute overlap between tours.

Finally, our analysis does not account for any reduction in officer effectiveness from longer tours. Maintaining alertness and good decision-making can be harder as the number of hours on the job increases.

I hope you will find this analysis useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you might have. The IBO staff contact on this matter is Bernard O'Brien, Senior Budget Analyst, at (212) 442-8656, or [bernardo@ibo.nyc.ny.us](mailto:bernardo@ibo.nyc.ny.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronnie Lowenstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ronnie Lowenstein