

CITY MANAGER: VARIETY OF INCENTIVE PAY DRIVING UP COST OF PUBLIC SAFETY. SO FAR THE DEBATE IS FOCUSED ON HEALTH CARE AND RETIREMENT. BUT CITY OFFICIALS SAY OTHER ITEM ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE RISING COST OF PUBLIC SAFETY. IF YOU'RE A SAN ANTONIO POLICE OFFICER OR FIREFIGHTER, IT PAYS TO BE HIGHLY EDUCATED. THE MORE EDUCATION YOU HAVE, THE MORE YOU CAN TAKE HOME. POLICE OFFICERS CAN RECEIVE \$215 TO \$300 A MONTH IN EDUCATIONAL INCENTIVE PAY. FOR FIREFIGHTERS THAT RANGED FROM \$185 A MONTH TO \$310 A MONTH FOR A MASTERS. THAT GOES ON TOP OF THE OFFICER'S BASE SALARY. IF AN OFFICER OR FIREFIGHTER WANTS TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION, THE CITY HELPS PAY FOR THAT AS WELL. THAT AMOUNT VARIES ON HOW WELL THEY FARE IN THE CLASSROOM. SHERYL SCULLEY SAYS THE CITY SHE WOULD OUT \$364,000 IN TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR POLICE OFFICERS ALONE LAST YEAR. SHE SAID THE REIMBURSEMENTS ARE NOT WITHOUT MERIT, BUT THEY ARE ADDING TO THE COST OF PUBLIC SAFETY CURRENTLY IN THE AGREEMENT SET TO EXPIRE. THE CURRENT AGREEMENT IS HANDCUFFING THE CITY IN STABILIZING THOSE COSTS. WE HAVE A CHALLENGE WITH WHAT WAS DONE BEFORE, BUT I WASN'T HERE THEN. I CAN TELL YOU THOUGH THAT IT IS NO LONGER AFFORDABLE AT THOSE LEVELS. NOW THERE IS CURRENTLY NO CAP ON THE AMOUNT OF TUITION REIMBURSEMENT A POLICE OFFICER OR FIREFIGHTER CAN GET. AND THE MONEY CAN BE USED FOR ANY COLLEGE COURSE, BE IT ART OR THEOLOGY. THIS SYSTEM IS NOT UNIQUE TO SAN ANTONIO, IT IS ALSO DONE IN AUSTIN AND HOUSTON BUT CHANGING IT WILL HAVE TO COME AT THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATION TABLE.