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Judge Sides with City to Stop Oakland Police Officers Association Legal Attempt to Block Use of Retirees

OPOA Didn't Want Retirees to "Take Work and Overtime from Union Members"

Oakland, CA – In Alameda Superior Court today, Judge Frank Roesch denied the Oakland Police Officers Association's writ of mandate to block the City of Oakland's effort to temporarily employ retired police personnel for the understaffed Oakland Police Department. The Oakland Police Officers Association opposed the managerial action claiming the retirees "(would) take work and overtime from union members."

"With too few patrol officers on the beat you would think OPOA leaders would heartily endorse any assistance from their retired colleagues," said Oakland City Attorney John Russo, "but OPOA leaders have done just the opposite. I'm glad the court ruled in our favor. We need our police force to be well-supported and our community to be well-protected. Now Chief Tucker can go forward with staffing the department so we can effectively meet public safety needs."

Judge Roesch issued a tentative ruling stating that "it appears to the Court's satisfaction that hiring annuitants is a 'fundamental management prerogative' that is designed to 'maintain the existing level of public safety in the Oakland community'."

"We're grateful that Judge Roesch ruled in our favor," said Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums. "The use of retirees to do the desk jobs will help keep officers on patrol while we're recruiting new staff. I think we can all agree we have a common goal in keeping our community safe and our officers supported."

"Oakland is recruiting police officers at an unprecedented pace, yet we remain understaffed," said Deputy Chief Howard Jordan. "By using seasoned retirees we can maximize the number of sworn officers on the street fighting crime. Annuitants fill administrative jobs, perform background checks, conduct follow-up investigations and solve cold cases. We are pleased the judge agreed that it's in the public's best interest to use annuitants to help address our chronic understaffing problem."

OPOA leaders have publicly stated that the force is overworked and understaffed and the lack of cops on the street is one of the main reasons for increased crime. Since 2001, police overtime has cost more than \$129 million. While a portion of the cost is due to mandatory overtime established to meet public need, the majority can also be attributed to voluntary overtime.