



Memorandum

DATE: October 26, 2016

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager

FROM: Kevin Woodhouse, Assistant General Manager
Michael Newburn, Visitor Services Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to the Process for Appointing District Peace Officers and Redesign of the District Rangers' Badge

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the Board of Directors about changes to the method by which District rangers are appointed as Peace Officers and the associated badging ceremony, and a proposed redesign of the District rangers' badge. If there are no concerns raised by the Board, the General Manager's proposed changes will be implemented. Alternatively, if Boardmembers raise concerns, the Board could refer this item for committee review by majority vote.

PEACE OFFICER APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Background

At its meeting of January 14, 1976, the Board of Directors determined that District rangers were to be appointed peace officers as classified by California Penal Code Section 830.31(b). The code specifies that a person is a peace officer if he/she is designated by a local agency as a park ranger and regularly employed and paid in that capacity, if the primary duty of the officer is the protection of park and other property of the agency and the preservation of the peace therein (see Report R-76-2).

In January, 2010 the District initiated the practice of having a swearing-in ceremony, which would include the manager in charge of the ranger staff orally administering the written oath that all District Rangers sign, and to have this act performed before the Board of Directors (R-10-03).

Proposed Changes

The proposed change is to have the Visitor Services Manager make the appointment of District Peace officers, and have the District Clerk administer the Oath of Office at a badging ceremony to occur during work hours and to which friends and family would be invited to attend. Board members who would like to attend would also be most welcome. This process and ceremony would replace the current practice of having a Board report and resolution for each peace officer who is appointed.

Reasons for Proposed Changes

With the growth of the agency, and the creation of a seasonal ranger program, the number of peace officer appointments has grown. The practice of waiting for the next available Board meeting to appoint peace officer delays (up to two weeks) the appointment, which in turn delays their required Field Training. In addition, a daytime ceremony will allow more flexibility than at a Board meeting for staff or Boardmembers who attend to meet and greet with the newly appointed peace officer.

Discussions were held with District legal staff who confirmed that there is not a legal requirement for a Board resolution or a ceremony during a Board meeting. Other local agencies were also contacted and the common practice is for a staff-level ceremony, including administering the oath of office.

Next Steps

Once finalized, the new procedure would be implemented with the next ranger who is appointed as a peace officer. Staff who are hired as full time District rangers would be introduced to the Board in the same manner as other District staff.

CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF DISTRICT RANGER BADGE

Background

District rangers wear a seven-point star badge which identifies their authority as peace officers. There have been two changes to the ranger badge since its inception. The first change came when the District changed its name from Midpeninsula Regional Park District to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. The second change occurred in the early 1990's when the old District logo was removed from center of the badge and replaced with the seal of the State of California. One major deficiency in the current badge design is the lack of space to display the badge number, which is often asked for by members of the public. Currently, staff are provided with three badges -- one wallet badge and two curved badges which are worn on garments.

Proposed Changes

To accommodate room for a badge number on the front of the badge the current rocker (the position label) will need to move to the top of the badge. Additionally, the new rocker will have room to inscribe the appropriate ranger classification, which is industry standard practice and helpful during public interactions and emergency situations.

The proposed changes include the following:

- Assigned badge number to be outward facing so staff can be readily identified by their badge number.
- A rocker which indicates the rank of the staff member (Ranger, Lead Ranger, Supervising Ranger, Superintendent, Chief).
- Increased size of the badge from 2 ½ inches to 3 inches to allow for the additional information to be legible and to use industry standard size badge templates.
- Issue one badge instead of three, replacing outer wear badges with cloth badges: Badges which are worn by staff on outer wear often suffer from wear and tear by their exposure to the elements and tough working environment. When badges become worn they are refurbished, a process can weaken the clasp which holds the badge in place and increases the likelihood of the badge falling off the garment. To address these issues, staff would be

issued one badge, to be worn on regular uniform shirts, and cloth badges would be provided for use on outer wear. Staff who wish may purchase a flat (wallet) badge at their own cost.

The figure below shows an approximation of the differences between the old and new badges.

Costs

One-time costs for the proposed changes are estimated to be \$6,000. This would cover the 33 sworn positions. Staff who wish may buy one of the replaced badges at a cost of \$60/badge, which would help to offset the cost of the new badges.

Next Steps

Once finalized, the newly designed badges would be ordered and a procedure for replacement of the badges would be implemented. Implementation is anticipated to take place in January, 2017.



Current Badge Design



Note: Picture of proposed badge does not have final gold finish and will appear the same as the current badge.

Badge number

Proposed Badge Design