

## **The accumulation of these changes has had a negative impact on officer morale and officer retention.**

Resignations are at historical highs in recent years and are expected to increase in 2023 and 2024, according to Chief of Police Jennings. Recruiting also is a significant challenge, with applications down 12% in 2022. The Department hired more civilians in 2022 (171, up 106% from the prior year) than police officers (151 up only 12% from the prior year). As of September 2022, there were 300 officer openings.

Chief Jennings recently attributed the exodus to public mistrust of the police force. "We project 2023 and 2024 are going to be the highest number of ... officers retiring" he said, "I think what we need to do, is turn the narrative of the profession around and to make sure that people understand that this is an admirable and noble job and profession."<sup>i</sup>

The impact on public safety of a demoralized and understaffed police force is self-evident. In addition, the fiscal impact of this pattern of premature resignations by experienced police officers (who receive lifetime pensions and retirement benefits) combined with the costs of recruiting and training new, inexperienced officers creates added and unnecessary burdens on taxpayers.

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<sup>i</sup> An internal survey of officer morale in June 2021 showed historically low morale, reflecting changes in Department policies and distrust of CMPD leadership, who is viewed as not "having the backs" of officers.