



City Council Agenda Item

City Council Meeting Date: September 1, 2020

TO: Jim Throop, City Manager

FROM: Joseph Mariani, Chief of Police
jmariani@ci.lompoc.ca.us

SUBJECT: Council Request – Body-Worn Cameras

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council evaluate the proposal for Body-Worn Cameras prepared in response to a directive from the City Council on June 16, 2020.

Background:

In 2015 Lompoc Police Department (LPD) staff conducted research and evaluated the use of body-worn cameras and vehicle-mounted dash cameras. The research at the time revealed the cost to purchase the equipment was not the issue, rather the price for the storage of data captured by the cameras was cost prohibitive. Due to that cost, a decision was made to move forward with purchasing dash cameras, allowing the LPD to obtain video evidence but not overburdening the limited budget at the time. That option gave the LPD the capability of obtaining video evidence and addressing and enhancing risk management.

The City invested \$136,712 into the Watchguard dash camera technology. The Watchguard product stores the video locally on a server housed in the LPD offices. The LPD currently has 30 terabytes allocated on this server at the cost of \$240,000.

The WatchGuard equipment was installed in 15 police vehicles, including marked patrol vehicles and Community Service Officer vehicles. The Watchguard video equipment is entering its "end of life" phase and will no longer be supported by WatchGuard at the end of this year. Staff considered this and looked for options to save money without giving up on quality or functionality by combining the purchase of replacement for in-car video and body-worn cameras.

Discussion:

In light of recent national protests, there is a call for police reform. There has been an outcry by community members across the nation for law enforcement officers to wear

body-worn cameras. During the June 16, 2020, City Council meeting the LPD was directed by the City Council to research the cost of implementing and deploying body-worn cameras. When researching, one has to recognize the physical demands of the police officer role and the effects that has on equipment worn by officers. Durability, reliability, and quality have to be considered, along with functionality.

Should the City invest in this technology, then the tool needs to be well supported and provide quality imagery with limited distractions to officers. There should be triggers that automatically activate an officer's camera, such as when an officer activates his/her taser or when an officer un-holsters his/her weapon. The body worn cameras should also have the ability to buffer video recording. Buffering would allow for the capture of video before the device is triggered or activated by the officer. These devices should have the ability to upload to a cloud-based storage platform automatically. In considering this functionality, WiFi or Cellular network technology should be considered. Cellular based technology is a better option. It is currently more reliable and would save the City money as there is no stand-alone server required at the LPD to store the video evidence. With cellular, all video is stored on a cloud platform, which would allow for the direct upload of the video evidence. The use of a WiFi platform would require the LPD to continue storing video on in-house equipment, and this would be an additional cost not included in this report. However, there would be a need for a minimum of another 30 terabyte system, so the additional cost would be well over \$500,000 more than the cellular system.

Another critical function to consider when implementing a body worn camera program, is the demand placed on records and property staff. Under specific legal guidelines, attorneys and citizens will have the right to request copies of video evidence at no cost. Currently, the LPD does not have the staff to manage the expected increase of Public Records Act requests this program will generate. To effectively manage this program, the LPD will need to create a new unit comprised of a Police Sergeant, Police Officer, and two Police Records Technicians. This additional staff would be designated as the Community Affairs Section for the LPD. Personnel assigned to that section will be responsible for accepting Public Records Acts requests and responding to the requests within the legal guidelines. Should the request meet the legal requirements for release, then the video will need to be redacted. That means all faces, except those involved in the incident, uninvolved license plate numbers, and potentially audio files will need to be blurred or removed from the entire video. That can be very time consuming, depending on the length and number of videos requested.

As an example, the most recent video redaction performed by the LPD involved a traffic stop. The stop occurred over a 20-minute time period. That 20-minute video required 4 hours of work to redact the video and audio in adherence to legal mandates. If this program is approved, the expectation is there will be multiple requests every day for video. Three 20 minute traffic stop videos could result in a 12-hour day for just one staff member. Any redacted video released by the LPD must also be reviewed by a supervisor to ensure the department has met its legal redaction requirements.

If a tool is acquired, part of the purchase should include cloud-based evidence storage and the tools to redact video. It should also include a maintenance program for the cameras.

Fiscal Impact:

Body Camera 5 Year Program Estimate Obtained From A Competative Vendor:

<u>Payment</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Year-1	\$115,043
Spares	0
Year-2	\$58,501.58
Year-3	\$86,020.58
Year-4	\$86,020.58
Year-5	\$86,020.58
Total:	\$517,626.93

Police Department Staffing Increases

<u>Position</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>
Police Sergeant	\$165,274
Police Officer	\$133,700
Police Records Tech	\$82,964
Police Records Tech	\$82,964
Total:	\$464,902

Conclusion:

The Body-Worn Cameras will provide the LPD with the capability of capturing critical video evidence for criminal and administrative investigation. This equipment has been deemed vital and essential to providing real-time review of police incidents to maintain public confidence and improve community relations. It is recommended that the purchase of this equipment be designated as a priority for the next biennial budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph A. Mariani, Chief of Police

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

Jim Throop, City Manager