

RECEIVED

JUL 22 2020

City of South Gate
CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF SOUTH GATE
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

2:50pm

AGENDA BILL

For the Regular Meeting of: July 28, 2020
Originating Department: Police Department

Department Director:

Randall Davis
Randall Davis

City Manager:

Michael Flad
Michael Flad

SUBJECT: BODY-WORN CAMERA PROGRAM FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

PURPOSE: To explore the implementation of the body-worn cameras for sworn police officers.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive and file status report on the body-worn camera program for South Gate Police Officers.

GA/1/18/20 **FISCAL IMPACT:** There will be no fiscal impact to the General Fund. It is estimated that this program will range from \$90,000 to \$125,000 annually and will depend on the vendor and equipment capacity and capabilities. The sources of funding for this program will come from the Fiscal Year 2020/21 Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (\$42,237) and the Asset Forfeiture Fund.

ANALYSIS: The South Gate Police Department currently utilizes a digital audio recorder for sworn and civilian staff and department policy requires all officer/citizen contacts to be recorded and downloaded. The Police Department now believes that this is the time to make a serious consideration into transitioning to the body-worn camera system. This staff report will examine a number of considerations in establishing and implementing this program into the organization.

BACKGROUND: For nearly two decades, law enforcement agencies have explored and implemented the use of body cameras as a tool to help hold officers accountable and make departments more transparent. Law Enforcement can also use this technology as a means to help rebuild trust with their communities and reduce citizen complaints. Video footage can also be used to collect evidence or clearly identify police officer actions during a particular encounter.

Body worn cameras can be one of many approaches that law enforcement utilizes to bridge a gap between the public it serves. Some members of the community who may be suspicious of law enforcement or feel disenfranchised by law enforcement may view this as a step toward transparency and accountability by their police departments. Others may view this as a reason to believe that the police are genuine in their thoughts and actions while carrying out their duty to protect and serve them while at the same time protecting themselves.

ATTACHEMENT: Staff Report.

South Gate Police Department
Administrative Division
Staff Report



To: Chief Randall Davis
From: Captain Darren Arakawa
Date: July 21, 2020
Re: Body Worn Camera Program

Summary

The ability of law enforcement to fight crime effectively continues to depend on the public's perception of the legitimacy of the actions of police officers. A number of recent civil disturbances across the United States subsequent to instances of lethal use of force by officers highlight the ongoing challenges in maintaining the public's perceptions of law enforcement legitimacy, particularly as it concerns the use of force.

The South Gate Police Department currently utilizes a digital audio recorder for sworn and civilian staff and department policy requires all citizen contacts to be recorded and downloaded. The Police Department is currently exploring the transition to the body-worn camera system. This staff report will examine a number of considerations in establishing this program.

Background:

Body-worn cameras have been viewed as one way to address challenges and improve law enforcement practice more generally. The technology, which can be mounted on an officer's eyeglasses or chest area, offers real-time information when used by officers on patrol or other assignments that bring them into contact with members of the community. Another benefit of body-worn cameras is their ability to provide law enforcement with a surveillance tool to promote officer safety and efficiency and prevent crime.

The emergence of body-worn cameras in policing the past several years has significantly impacted law enforcement operations across the United States. The decision to implement this technology comes with a number of considerations that should be researched at length prior to implementation.

A police department that deploys body-worn cameras is making a statement that it takes the issue and accountability seriously and the actions of its police officers are paramount to a successful service delivery model to the community. One key challenge is specifying how police body cameras should be used. Police departments should establish clear criteria for when officers activate cameras, which personnel will have access to the video, and how often the footage is reviewed.

Body-worn cameras can help improve the high-quality public service expected of police officers and promote the perceived legitimacy and sense of procedural justice that communities have and expect of their police departments. Furthermore, departments that are already deploying body-worn cameras advise that the presence of cameras often improves the performance of officers as well as the conduct of the community members who are recorded, which is an important advancement in policing.

The most common outcomes associated with the implementation of a body-worn cameras are the quality of officer-citizen interactions measured by the nature of the communication, displays of procedural justice and professionalism, and misconduct or corruption; use of force by officers; citizen satisfaction with law enforcement encounters; perceptions of law enforcement and legitimacy; suspect compliance with officer commands; and criminal investigations and law enforcement-initiated activity.

The South Gate Police Department has a positive and meaningful relationship with the community and as a result values the daily interaction that we have with them. While recent events have fractured the public sentiment towards police officers nationally, it has also developed a deep mistrust of the law enforcement profession. In particular, the South Gate Police Department wants to be on the forefront of transparency to help instill confidence and trust with our community.

Fiscal Impact

There will be no fiscal impact to the general fund. It is estimated that the program will range from \$90,000 to \$125,000 annually depending on the vendor and equipment capacity and capabilities. The sources of funding for this project will come from the 2020/2021 Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant and the Asset Forfeiture Fund.

There are three vendors under consideration for the body worn camera and they include Lens Lock, Axon and Watch Guard. The South Gate Police Department has previous experience based on product demonstrations from Axon and Watch Guard and will be conducting a 30 day test and trial period for Lens Lock beginning in August of 2020.