



Legislation Text

File #: 16-366, **Version:** 1

TITLE:

Update on Implementation of Police Department Body Worn Cameras (BWC)

PURPOSE: To provide the Board of Alderman an update on Body Cameras including cost, technology and policy due to State Law N.C.G.S.132-1.4A.

DEPARTMENT: Police

CONTACT INFORMATION: Chief Walter Horton 919-918-7397

INFORMATION: On the June 23, 2015 Board of Alderman meeting, you were presented with the final draft of the Body Worn Camera (BWC) policy to review and approve. Due to concerns with what the Legislature could enact concerning BWC devices, the Board decided to delay approval of the policy and moving forward with the purchase of cameras until these concerns could be addressed. Since that meeting, there have been changes in technology and cost of the BWC and a new law concerning BWC Mobile Video Recorders (MVR) became effective October 1, 2016.

Changes in Technology

In the initial planning and budgeting phase of the BWC program, the police department decided to go with the Vista BWC manufactured by WatchGuard. The approved budgeted amount for 42 BWCs and storage was \$90,000, of which \$36,000 was earmarked for the BWC purchase. Since then, an updated version of the BWC has been released. This new version adds several useful features the previous model lacked. Such features are GPS, Synchronization with in-car and other BWC devices, and Wi-Fi download from the patrol car.

With this new version, there was a price increase. The price increase is due to new features and other hardware installed in the car to allow synchronization between the car system and BWC. Since there was a price increase for the new model, the number of BWC devices planned to be deployed was decreased from 42 to 32. This still outfits all patrol officers, community service officers and School Resource Officers and allows for three spare units. The price for the new version increased the price by \$30,000, bringing the total cost to implement just the BWCs to \$66,000. The police department plans to request the difference in the upcoming budget year and is also exploring grant opportunities.

Policy

On October 1, 2016, a new section was added to the existing Public Records law that governs how law enforcement agencies handle disclosure and release of recordings. This new statute makes a clear distinction between release and disclosure of recordings and under what circumstances a law enforcement agency may do so. See Attachment A for a copy of the new law. To address this new law, our current draft policy on BWC was edited to conform with the new statute. See Attachment B for BWC Policy.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: There is no fiscal or staff impact at this time.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends Board accepts update and BWC policy for implementation.