



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

DATE ISSUED: March 10, 2014

REPORT NO. 14- 018

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee  
Agenda of March 19, 2014

SUBJECT: San Diego Police Department Body Camera/Digital Evidence Storage  
Project

**SUMMARY**

This is an information item.

**BACKGROUND**

A body worn camera is an audio/video recording device mounted on the officer's body. Additionally with this type of product, is the need for a solution which stores and manages digital evidence.

**DISCUSSION**

In 2010, the Police Department was approached by several vendors to buy their cameras. The department felt this would be useful as another tool for the officers, offering a way to improve officer safety, provide best evidence in court, protect officers from false complaints and ensure accountability. The department conducted several field tests on cameras mounted to equipment (Tasers, microphones and flashlights) and to cameras attached to officers (glasses, lapel and chest). Various vendors' products were utilized (Taser, VieVu, Vidmic and WatchGuard). Associated with the cameras were backend storage solutions for the digital evidence. We saw potential at this point for officers operating in the field with these products but it was decided that the cameras and storage systems were cost prohibitive.

Technology quickly improved with the body cameras (as did costs, smaller sizes and more capabilities) in the last few years and many agencies nationwide are now testing body cameras and purchasing them for their officers. Video cameras are commonplace in society. Much like an eyewitness account of an event, cameras provide a perspective. The cameras ability to collect evidence is invaluable. This technology would give officers the ability to perform their jobs more efficiently and provide more transparency.

In January 2014, the department launched a 90-day field test with body cameras on 10 patrol officers. The vendor's digital storage solution is also being utilized. The test is being conducted within Central Division which encompasses the busy downtown and Gas Lamp areas. Officers

on all shifts are wearing the cameras and turning the cameras on during every enforcement contact with a citizen. Policy was developed for officers to follow during this field test. In addition to testing the product, we are also examining our infrastructure to fully implement support for this product.

Backend digital storage solutions have also improved in the last few years and more vendors are beginning to offer various levels of these systems. They are designed to enhance communication and case management with file sharing as well as enhance criminal investigations which will improve our prosecution outcomes. Current software with this type of storage solution can track all actions involving the evidence and provide an audit trail for chain of custody purposes.

### **FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The police department has been allocated \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2014 to implement the body camera project. The amount of \$400,000 will be spent on infrastructure improvements to the police department. An additional \$600,000 will be spent to acquire 400 cameras and docking stations, evidence management software, licenses and data storage. The cost breakdown for the \$600,000 is as follows: \$346,000 for licenses, software and data storage; \$220,000 for cameras and docking stations; 34,000 for additional equipment expenses.

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL AND/OR COMMITTEE ACTION**

On January 29, 2014, former Chief Lansdowne made a presentation on this item as requested by the committee and in February of 2014, the council granted \$1,000,000 to implement in fiscal year 2014.

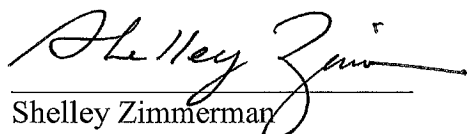
### **KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS**

The cameras will provide the community a higher level of confidence in the police department. Additionally, the City Attorney and District Attorney are key stakeholders as video provides the best evidence. Last year, a senior policy analyst for the ACLU wrote that with the right policies in place and strictly monitored, police body-mounted cameras are a win for all.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Police Department believes body cameras are the right choice for our city. The costs of the product and storage solutions are declining as technology improves. It is the department's goal to outfit every officer in patrol with a camera as well as allow access by investigators, supervisors and administrators to the digital evidence storage solution. The department firmly believes this will help build trust between the community and the police department and improve our efficiency and effectiveness.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Shelley Zimmerman  
Chief of Police