



Staff Report

RE: Police Drone Bid Award

Department/Program: Police Department

Explanation:

Our current drone is foreign-made and does not have a thermal imaging camera to allow us to see people in the dark. Thermal imaging is imperative for us to operate the drone during darkness in order to locate subjects in wooded areas.

The United States government is currently enacting rules and regulations that will prohibit public safety agencies from operating foreign made drones.

Due to federal regulations, and manufacturer restrictions, governing public safety drone systems, there are a limited number of authorized vendors that meet the required specifications and compliance standards for law enforcement use. As a result, we were only able to obtain two qualified quotes rather than the standard three quotes typically required for purchases. Both quotes were obtained from reputable vendors, Axon and Brinc, that meet the necessary regulatory requirements for public safety operations.

The Axon Air - Skydio X10 proposal has a total cost of \$72, 369.00 with payments broken up over a five (5) year period. The first year the payment would be \$15,000.00 and the subsequent four years the payments would be \$14,342.25.

The Brinc proposal has a total cost of \$ 114, 996.00 with five (5) yearly payments of \$22,999.20.

We budgeted \$15,000 this year for a new drone. This drone will provide significant operational benefits to the Ballwin Police Department and the community we serve. The drone will enhance officer safety by allowing aerial assessment of potentially dangerous situations, assist in search and rescue operations, support accident and crime scene documentation, aid in locating missing persons, and improve overall situational awareness during emergency incidents. We are recommending the Axon Air - Skydio X10 drone. The selected platform, the Skydio X10, is specifically designed for public safety operations and includes obstacle avoidance technology, high-resolution imaging, thermal imaging for low-light or nighttime operations, and AI-assisted tracking that allows the drone to follow subjects or vehicles while avoiding obstacles.

Recommendation:

We recommend the Board of Aldermen approve the purchase of the Axon/ Skydio X10 drone. The Ballwin Police Department currently utilizes Axon for its TASER devices and body-worn camera systems, and continuing with the same vendor allows for better integration, streamlined training, simplified procurement, and more efficient long-term support and maintenance.

Submitted By: John Bergfeld, Chief of Police

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