



Staff Report

October 4th, 2021 Council Workshop Meeting

AXON Contract for Body Worn Cameras

Presenter: Mitch Lackey, Police Chief

Time Estimate: 15 minutes

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BACKGROUND: A contract with AXON to purchase body worn cameras for the police department, along with redaction software and data storage services. This contract is bundled with the TASER weapon used by the department and includes both the recording devices (BWC) and new TASERS that work in conjunction with the recording devices (BWC).

SUMMARY: AXON is an industry leader in the area of body worn cameras for law enforcement. They are also the company who manufactures the TASER conducted energy weapon, used by Camas Police Department. In preparation for this proposed purchase, the department has worked closely with the Camas IT Department to ensure that we purchase devices that meet our needs and meet the needs of the IT Department. The AXON devices have been tested, come recommended by other law enforcement agencies, and have been recommended by the City of Camas IT Department.

The 2021 Washington State Legislature passed a new police reform law that mandates law enforcement's interrogations of both adults and juveniles be recorded in several situations, and, that those recordings be maintained for many years. In analyzing the new law, the only device that reasonably allows for the implementation of the law, and to ensure future compliance with the data storage, is the body worn camera. Camas Police do not currently have body worn cameras.

In addition to seeking a body worn camera device program for the purpose of the new statute, Camas Police have also been looking at a general body worn camera program. Our Clark County Prosecutor, Mr. Golik, has encouraged all law enforcement agencies to embrace body worn cameras for police officers to provide a higher level of transparency and increase trust in law enforcement and criminal justice. This request came in 2021 and was during the nationwide social justice movement. This goal, to achieve greater trust, is accomplished through recording law enforcement's interactions with the public, including all incidents where force might be used, and having those recordings available as a public record for release and review when necessary.

Although Camas Police need a body worn camera platform immediately for the purposes of achieving compliance with the new reform law, it makes sense to purchase the right device that

will allow for a complete body worn camera program, once that is implemented at a later date. A complete body worn camera program, along with the required negotiations with labor, is not yet ready to implement. Several procedural steps, including policy development and negotiations with CPOA still need to take place. The AXON body worn camera is the device that will be needed when Camas Police are ready to implement a full body worn camera program for general use. Until that time, the AXON camera system will fully meet the needs of the department to fulfill our obligation under the new 2021 police recording law passed by the Legislature.

The AXON body worn camera is the only body worn camera on the market that includes a feature that activates the camera when the officer deploys the TASER weapon. It captures video leading up to the deployment of the TASER, providing a complete recording of the incident. This is a highly desirable feature and makes it stand out amongst its competitors.

As we look forward, into 2022, it is clear that Camas police officers must have a body worn camera to be in compliance with the new recording law. Looking beyond that, we want to make sure that the devices that we purchase will meet our needs when we likely later move to a full body worn camera program. That AXON camera system and supporting redaction software and data storage are the products that best meet that need.

AXON cameras, when used in conjunction with the TASER for the purpose of the automatic camera activation, are considered a "sole source provider." No other manufacture of body worn cameras have that feature.

In both short term, and long term, the AXON camera platform is the right platform for Camas Police Department's needs.

BUDGET IMPACT: This purchase agreement allows AXON to outfit each Camas officer with a body worn camera and TASER that works in conjunction with the camera. The total cost of the agreement is \$311,168.17. The term of the agreement is five years.

The department has normally been spending around \$10,000.00 each year on the TASER program, with money in the police department's small tools budget. If this contract is executed, that \$10,000.00 annual purchase will no longer be necessary. The complete cost of the TASER program will be included in a bundle purchase price with the cameras, software and data storage plan. In short, we could reduce our small tools budget by about \$10,000.00 a year if this new agreement is executed, providing a total savings of around \$50,000.00 from that line item. That means the difference between what we are already spending, and the new purchase agreement, is about \$261,000.00 over the five year period.

The State of Washington has provided the City of Camas with some funding that can be used for this purpose. In addition, the Department has applied for a grant with the Department of Justice, however, we have not yet been informed if we have been selected for grant funding.

AXON allows for two payment options – all of the contract up front, or in equal annual installments over the five year period.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Council move this proposed contract forward to the next meeting for adoption and signing by the Mayor.