

MCCLEARY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Dear Mayor and City Council Members

A question was asked last council meeting regarding when and who got rid of the “body camera program” the McCleary Police Department had in the past. I am writing this to clarify what I was trying to say through our online meeting without the glitches and audio problems that arise during these meetings.

- 1) I started working for the City of McCleary on November 1, 2016 and no officer at that time was issued or wore a body camera for the McCleary Police Department that I had knowledge of at that time. I relied on my Officers to advise me if they had a camera or not. Officer Bunch advised me the last operational camera he had was in 2015 and Officer Sample advised he never had a body camera. So, when Chief Crumb left, the only camera that was in use was by him and the “body camera program” that he was working to implement ceased in 2016 and not 2015.
- 2) I understand Chief Crumb was working on a body camera program, but it never became a functional program because of lack of funding which was needed to provide adequate storage space for the video system, redaction software necessary to meet the requirements of public disclosure, and staffing to monitor and maintain the requirements of RCW 42.56.240
- 3) In regards to the invoice #10197, 9/28/2016 I stated this was for downloading video off of the camera into storage, I have seen a copy of the invoice now and it was actually to try and get a 2nd body camera working for the police department, this is the Chinese model that was not able to be figured out on how to use and was never put into service
- 4) Since 3/8/2021 I have been in contact with Blake Galloway with Motorola Solutions regarding their Watchguard V300 and 4RE, body camera and in car camera systems, including cost of camera, the software ability to redact, the amount of storage space that we would have access to and the security of the system itself, to meet the legal requirements that were not ever in place before. Currently a rough estimate is around \$14,000 per officer to meet all requirements.
- 5) The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and law enforcement agencies in the state were anticipating **Washington State Legislature – HB1223** to require mandatory use of body worn camera’s, this in fact did not happen and still lack clarity on body cameras for police agencies in the state on funding.
- 6) As of 5/17/2021 we still don’t have the minimum requirements for a body camera program to be operational to include lack of storage space, staffing, or redaction software.

I have included some information from the Washington State Bar Association as well as a report published by KING5 News to give a little more insight of the complexities of a “body camera program.” Myself and all of my officers fully support body cameras and in car cameras but, I only want to be able to implement a system that is maintainable into the future.

Chief Blumer

WASHINGTON BAR ASSOCIATION

The use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement raises significant public policy, legal and practical issues and concerns and the debate is ongoing. Although there is little empirical research regarding the actual benefits and impacts of using body-worn cameras, the considerations and issues raised by both proponents and opponents express genuine concerns.

The implementation of body-worn camera programs is expensive, requiring significant investments in equipment, ongoing maintenance expenditures and increased resources devoted to personnel, training, and technology. The decision to implement programs is made more difficult by increasingly scarce criminal justice funding.

Law enforcement agencies choosing to fund and implement body-worn camera programs must be prepared to develop policies and protocols addressing numerous personnel, equipment, technology, privacy, public records issues, as well as partner with local prosecutors to assure compliance with discovery obligations. However, the Legislature must first provide the framework in which these programs may be implemented, addressing several issues under the Washington Privacy Act, RCW Chapter 9.73, and Washington's Public Records Act, RCW Chapter 42.56.

<https://pceinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Washington-Link-1.pdf>

This is an excerpt of a survey done by KING5 NEWS in 2020 and published this year. I have attached a link below for the whole report.

Most Washington law enforcement agencies don't use body or dash cameras, KING 5 investigation finds amid calls for police transparency and reform, dozens of leaders at Washington police agencies without body cameras say they're now actively considering them.

Taylor Mirfendereski, Chris Ingalls

KING 5's analysis of the 213 responses, collected between July 2 and Nov. 18, revealed:

- 75% of the agencies had no body cameras in use.
- 25% were using one or more body cameras.
- 79% did not use dash cameras.
- 21% had one or more dash cameras in operation.
- 63% had no camera system — no body cameras and no dash cameras — to record police interactions.
- 9% had at least one dash camera and at least one body camera in operation.

Of the 160 law enforcement agencies that reported no body cameras in use, officials at 86% of the agencies—138 departments—cited financial barriers as at least one of the reasons why.

The initial cost of the camera equipment isn't the hold-up for many law enforcement agencies, according to KING 5's survey. Officials at 61% of the departments that don't have body cameras said they can't afford them because of the workload from data management, including responding to public records requests for body camera video and blurring portions of video, like license plates and other private details that are exempt from release.

<https://www.king5.com/article/news/investigations/most-washington-law-enforcement-agencies-dont-use-body-or-dash-cameras-king-5-investigation-finds/281-3ab69570-d76b-469e-85a2-f91dc2cb169f>