



COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: August 20, 2024

ITEM TITLE, PRESENTER: Funding approval for contract purchase and deployment of Axon Body Camera 4 and Fleet 4 vehicle camera systems to San Juan County Sheriff's Office patrols.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

SUMMARY

The San Juan County Sheriff's Office is requesting the approval of the contract purchase of Axon Body Camera 4 and Fleet 3 vehicle camera systems.

IAW Utah Code 77-7a-104. Activation and use of body-worn cameras.

- (1) An officer using a body-worn camera shall verify that the equipment is properly functioning as is reasonably within the officer's ability.
- (2) An officer shall report any malfunctioning equipment to the officer's supervisor if:
 - (a) the body-worn camera issued to the officer is not functioning properly at any time while the officer is on duty.
 - (b) an officer determines that the officer's body-worn camera is not functioning properly at any time while the officer is on duty.
- (3) An officer shall wear the body-worn camera so that it is clearly visible to the person being recorded.
- (4) An officer shall activate the body-worn camera so that it is clearly visible to the person being recorded.
- (5) An officer shall record in an uninterrupted manner until after the conclusion of a law enforcement encounter, except as an interruption of a recording is allowed under this section.

...

If approved, the purchase of the Axon body-worn cameras and Fleet vehicle mounted cameras is crucial to enhancing the safety, accountability, and transparency of our law enforcement operations. This upgrade is necessary to ensure compliance with Utah Code 77-7a-104 and will provide each patrol deputy and their vehicles with the upgraded and reliable technology required in these challenging times for law enforcement.

If not approved, the patrol deputies will continue to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. However, the combination of older versions of body worn/vehicle mounted cameras with errors, failed recordings, upload failures, and lack of accessibility will only increase. In addition, the requirement to turn in the loaned body-worn cameras will place several deputies without the ability to record. This will place the San Juan County Sheriff's Office into a situation in violation of Utah Code 77-7a-104, in question during court for lost/unavailable critical evidence, and at risk of lawsuit.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The San Juan County Sheriff's Office recognizes the numerous benefits that derive from the use of Body-Worn Cameras and Vehicle Mounted Cameras, including, but not limited to, enhancing public trust in law enforcement operations; increasing officer and public safety; ensuring greater transparency and accountability; providing accurate officer reporting and court testimony; bolstering evidence collection for investigative, prosecutorial, and disciplinary purposes; and facilitating opportunities for officer training. It is the sheriff's office goal to document encounters between deputies and the public, while ensuring the constitutional and privacy rights of individuals are honored and respected.

Currently the San Juan County Sheriff's office has a piecemealed distribution of body-worn cameras throughout the patrol section. Predominantly, older versions of the Watchguard brand of body-worn cameras. There is an insufficient number of the older Watchguard body worn cameras and several of the senior patrol administrators are utilizing temporary loaned versions of newer body-worn cameras in an attempt to be in accordance with Utah Code 77-7a-104, we are past the end date of these loaned cameras.

Additionally, the older versions of the Watchguard body-worn cameras are currently problematic. Across the patrol section errors are a daily occurrence. They include the fact that many of the fielded Watchguard body-worn cameras and vehicle cameras are having recording errors wherein the video recording fails; many will not upload to the server from the body-worn camera or vehicle; body-worn cameras batteries are failing or will have 0% charge at the start of a deputies shift.

If and when, these errors occur during a significant response, encounter with a citizen, or during a significant criminal investigation, will place the San Juan County Sheriff's Office into a situation in violation of Utah Code 77-7a-104, in question during court for lost/unavailable critical evidence, and at risk of lawsuit.

Upgrading to Axon Body Camera 4 and Fleet 3 Vehicle mounted cameras will upgrade the recording systems which will provide high definition video, and clear audio recording. The Axon contract will provide:

- Technology Assurance Plan (TAP): provides replacement with latest cameras and docking stations at the 2.5 year mark.
- 5 year “no questions asked” warranty coverage on all hardware.
- Axon Capture mobile app for cellular telephones to upload photographs and other audio recordings.
- Access to Redaction Studio for video/audio redaction to assist in accordance with Utah Code 63G-2-2. Government Access Records Act (GRAMA) and Utah Code 13-44-2. Protection of Personal Information.
- Axon Professional Services: Training on equipment and Evidence.com
- 24/7 Customer Service, Arizona based company and assigned/dedicated team after sale.
- Installation.

FISCAL IMPACT

The funding amount is approximately \$58, 371 per year over a contracted 5 year plan, totalling approximately \$291, 856.

The Beer Tax fund provided to the county is approximately \$44, 277 annually and the Bureau of Land Management funding of \$27,000 annually. These combined with the separate annual Forest service funds of \$5,000 annually (Currently \$28,600, half available for equipment purchases, which must be spent or forfeit by mid September, 2024). These funds should be considered as offsetting the annual contracted amount of \$58, 371.