
TO: Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator
FROM: Todd Schwieger, Police Chief
SUBJECT: Fleet/Body Camera Systems
DATE: March 17, 2025

OVERVIEW:

The police department utilizes both Panasonic in car (fleet) and body worn camera systems. Panasonic Arbitrator fleet cameras were implemented in 2014 and are the same camera systems currently in use. The department then added Panasonic Arbitrator body worn camera systems in 2021. Both camera systems have reached or are reaching their useful life and will need to be replaced soon. The useful life of the original fleet camera systems was determined to be eight to ten years and four to five years for the body worn camera systems. Licensing for the current Panasonic server is also set to expire soon and will no longer be supported. Both camera systems are important to keep in place and are necessary for capturing evidence and to assist with police department transparency. Camera systems contribute to the successful operations of the police department in serving the public.

Beginning mid-year 2024 department staff began researching several camera system manufacturers focusing on performance, reliability, reputation, and warranty. After meeting with several vendors and evaluating their complete systems, the search was narrowed down to Panasonic and Axon. After gaining additional input from other agencies, IT staff, and other references, the police department has chosen to move forward with Axon as the provider of both body worn camera and fleet camera systems.

Axon is the choice of over 25,000 agencies nationwide and is used by most Anoka County agencies. Reasons to move forward with Axon for the St. Francis Police Department include:

- Performance and reliability of the equipment.
- Reputation.
- Customer service which is 24/7.
- Positive reference feedback.
- Warranty and equipment upgrades (5-year warranty on all hardware compared to 3-year with Panasonic).
- Integration capabilities including live viewing, redaction, and license plate viewing.
- Cloud storage (Evidence.Com), phase out existing server.
- Will provide the ability to remove existing programs used by the department for redaction and evidence collection saving money.
- Seamless data transfers which result in increased staff efficiency.

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED:

City Council approval to enter into agreement with Axon as the provider of body worn camera and fleet camera systems as well as integration to Evidence.Com for digital storage through 2029.

BUDGET IMPLICATION:

Equipment and related costs will be funded through the police department body worn camera and fleet camera CIP budget.