



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Title: Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS)

Preferred Agenda: August 6, 2024

Submitted By: Jason Ogden, Chief of Police

Reviewed By: Kelcey Young, City Manager

Type of Action: Resolution ____ Motion X Roll Call ____ Other ____

Relevant Code/Policy: N/A

Towards Council Goal: Goal 2: BE AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

1. Update and streamline processes.
2. Develop continuity in planning and permitting processes.
3. Invest in long-term staff stability and training.
4. Develop transparency in all communication.
5. Continue to implement financial “best” practices.
6. Employ sound technology to maximize efficiency.

Attachments: Five Year Contract with Utility™

Purpose of this RCA:

Council decision and approval of a five-year contract with Utility™.

Background/Context:

Digital evidence is expanding exponentially, and as a law enforcement agency, it is necessary that we keep up with managing this information effectively to minimize the risks involved such as liability, loss of valuable resources, and public embarrassment. This is accomplished by having a reputable digital evidence management system (DEMS). The Sweet Home Police Department historically managed digital evidence on a local server without any programs to organize and purge this information. In 2021 the agency contracted with Pro-Vision to use SecuraMax as our first DEMS which stored *some* digital evidence on a cloud-based server.

The Challenge/Problem:

The problem is SecuraMax is not a digital evidence management system which will accept *all* forms or formats of digital evidence. Additionally, there are complications with the program which prohibit the agency from effectively using the system and all its potential, and other problems with the program making it not very user friendly for some users. Over the years, customer service with the company has also been subpar.

While the program’s ability to organize and purge this data via a cloud-based platform has been an improvement from our previous way of managing digital evidence, there are other systems

available to help check all the boxes in minimizing the complications with managing digital evidence. The agency researched several companies which offer solutions for digital management and have found a company named Utility™ to be an innovator and leader in the digital evidence management world.

Utility™ policy-based platform allows police departments and agencies to decide how to manage their smart-policing solution. Collected media uploads automatically to CJIS Compliant cloud-based storage, which greatly improves the security of agency databases.

Using the Utility™ police body camera will give us access to the POLARIS by Utility™ evidence management system where users can search incidents, track fleets, redact video, and more under a secure chain of custody.

Utility™ overcomes significant pitfalls that are found in competing police body cameras. Utility™ provides agencies with greater benefits than a manually operated camera. Some of the key features include the following:

- Securely mounted in the uniform
- Officer down detection
- Pre-event recording of audio and video
- Automated recording triggers/door, lightbar, shotgun rack, and siren sensors
- Foot pursuit and struggle activation
- Holster sensor activation
- Live stream from camera with recording notifications

In addition to the robust features offered by Utility™, we have a unique opportunity to align with the District Attorney's office, which is already purchasing HELIOS—a powerful evidence management platform from the same company. By leveraging both Utility™ and HELIOS, we can achieve seamless integration, streamlined evidence sharing, and improved collaboration. This strategic alignment ensures that our law enforcement agencies work cohesively with the DA's office, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and overall effectiveness in our justice system.

We respectfully request the City Council's approval for the Sweet Home Police Department to purchase and contract with Utility™. Accepting Utility™ will not only improve our ability to manage all digital evidence, but also improve officer safety, transparency, as well as strengthen our partnership with the DA's Office.

This contract is allowable without a formal solicitation process by the City of Sweet Home under the State of Oregon's cooperative procurement requirements.

Stakeholders:

- Community – Communication is vital for transparency and public involvement.
- Police Department Staff – Management of digital evidence is required in policing.
- Council – Council support in contracting with Utility™.

Issues and Financial Impacts:

The cost of contracting with Utility™ will include a tiered subscription fee over a period of 5 years. Year 1 will cost \$30,582, while years 2 through 5 will be \$17,500. The total cost of this five-year contract was \$100,582. The cost for this year has been budgeted.

Elements of a Stable Solution:

A stable solution includes contracting with a reputable source that will allow us to continue managing our digital evidence effectively and efficiently to provide the highest level of police services to our community and minimize liability and loss of resources.

Options:

1. Approve police department staff to purchase/contract with Utility™
2. Deny the request and stay with Securamax by Pro-vision.
3. Direct staff to research other ways to accomplish the same goal.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends option #1 – Approve staff to purchase/contract with Utility™.