To: Public Health and Safety Committee

From: Carlos Quiles, Chief of Police (p.p.A.C.)

Date: 09/04/2026

Subject: Body Worn Camera Redaction Fee

Background

The Tumwater Police Department (TPD) implemented a Body Worn Camera program in March of 2026. All Officers are now equipped with body worn cameras which capture recordings of public interactions that are subject to the Washington State Public Records Act (PRA), RCW 42.56. The PRA allows a law enforcement agency, responding to requests for body worn camera footage, to charge certain requesters the reasonable costs of redacting, altering, distorting, pixelating, suppressing or otherwise obscuring any portion of the body worn camera recording prior to disclosure per RCW 42.56.240(14)(f). When a PRA request is received, videos from body worn cameras are reviewed and redacted consistent with statutory exemptions under Washington law:

Washington law allows local law enforcement agencies to charge reasonable costs for redacting videos (see RCW. 42.56.240(14) for detail) if the following exist, but not limited to:

- *Contains images of any area of a medical facility, counseling, or therapeutic program office;*
- *Contains information that meets the definition of protected health information;*
- *Contains images of the interior of a place of residence where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy;*
- *Contains images defined in the RCW as "intimate," i.e., nudity, partial nudity, sexually explicit content;*
- *Contains images of an identifiable minor;*
- *Contains images of a deceased person;*
- *Contains the identity or communications from a victim or witness of an incident involving domestic violence or sexual assault; or*

• *Contains images from an incident where a domestic violence or sexual assault victim or witness indicates a desire for non-disclosure of their recorded identity or communications.*

Some requestors are exempt from these fees per RCW 42.56.240(14)(e):

- *A person directly involved in the incident recorded by the requested body worn camera recording.*
- *An attorney representing a person directly involved in an incident recorded by the requested body worn camera recording.*
- *A person or their attorney who requests a body worn camera recording relevant to a criminal case involving that person.*
- *The executive director from the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs, Asian Pacific American Affairs or Hispanic Affairs.*
- *If relevant to a cause of action, an attorney who represents a person regarding a potential or existing civil cause of action involving the denial of civil rights under the federal or state constitution, or a violation of a United State department of justice settlement.*

For those not included in one of the above groups, TPD is asking to charge requesters the actual redaction time at the rate of $0.89 per minute. The purpose of this document is to outline the costs associated with redaction and request approval to proceed.

Cost Analysis

Tumwater Police Department is asking to charge for actual staff time spent making redactions, as outlined in the PRA. This will compensate TPD for time spent redacting body worn camera footage, while passing along only reasonable costs to the requester. This charge formula factors in the minimum salary and benefits of a Police Records Specialist as well as the evidence.com pro-license fee. The actual calculation is outlined below:

Police Records Specialist - Salary Step 1

A. Monthly Salary:		$6259
B. Monthly Benefits:		$2994.25
C. Total Monthly Salary/Benefits	=	$9253.25

Axon/Evidence.com License Fees

D. Monthly Professional License	$53.48

Average Minutes worked by staff per month

E. 174 avg hours per month	=	10,440 minutes

Estimated Cost Per Minute (C+D) / E	=	$0.89

For each request that involves body worn camera footage, an estimated cost of redaction time will be calculated (an average of 2 minutes to review/redact per 1 minute of actual video) and a 10% deposit will be required before the video is redacted. Estimates may not reflect the final cost of production, however, TPD will only charge requestors redaction costs reflecting the actual time it takes to redact the requested video.

To generate a base fee schedule, we assessed the City of Olympia (attachment 1) and City of Lacey (attachment 2) fee studies from 2024 and 2025 respectively. The City of Olympia determined a $0.75 rate (5 minutes to review/redact per 1 minute of video), while City of Lacey determined a $0.90 rate (2 minutes to review/redact per 1 minute of video). We also referenced published academic research utilized by top national and state researchers (attachment 3 and 4). It was determined that the average time to redact body worn camera footage is between two and five times the length of the video.

We then compiled TPD's data of all BWC redaction completed since implementation of the program. This data was used to determine which employee had the most hours of experience and which had the least. With those datasets we calculated the average time taken to complete redactions. This formula resulted in redactions taking an average of 2.4 minutes per 1 minute of video. For ease of charging deposits, we are asking to round that number down to 2 minutes.

Recommendation

Tumwater Police Department recommends the City adopt a fee schedule of $0.89 per minute of video redaction time and authorize the Mayor to sign Resolution R2026-020, Adopting Fees for the Staff Time Associated with Redacting Tumwater Police Department Body Worn Video Footage Requested Pursuant to Public Records Requests.