

Body-Worn Camera Program: Costs, Pros & Cons

Alexandria City Council
November 24, 2020



Body-Worn Camera Program

Background:

June 9, 2020 – City Council passed Resolution 2950

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City Council of the City of Alexandria recognizes the urgent need to adopt a police body worn camera policy and it shall make it a priority in the City Council work plan.”



Body-Worn Camera Program

Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Initial Cost Development Team:

- Alexandria Police – Team Lead
- Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney
- Alexandria Sheriff's Office
- City Attorney's Office
- Clerk of the Court
- Office of Management & Budget
- Information Technology Services
- General Services



Body-Worn Camera Program

Effects, Outcomes, Benefits & Issues of BWC Programs:

- BWC technology has significantly matured.
- BWCs offer neutral records of interactions between police and those they encounter.
- Studies suggest a small shift downward in the rate of use of force, but are not empirically clear on that point. APD uses force very infrequently.
- BWCs provide investigative and prosecutorial support for cases.
- Officers have become accepting generally of BWC use.
- The use of artificial intelligence and other analytics in the future for BWC video maybe able to assist the process of meaningful auditing and review.
- BWCs are a best-practices tool, but do not take the place of good supervision and positive culture in a police organization.



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Effects, Outcomes, Benefits & Issues of BWC Programs:

- Studies show mixed results regarding significant change in work output by officers.
- BWCs **DO** cause significantly increased workload for prosecutors, and somewhat increased for police and municipal attorneys.
- Studies show mixed results with communities regarding their attitudes toward police when BWC are deployed (minority communities often did not see them as changing anything for them).
- Studies showed mixed results regarding allegations of misconduct and none showed significant changes.
- BWC programs are expensive, especially in terms of FTEs required.
- BWC programs will require significant long-term preservation of many of the records produced, creating a long-term cost issue if a BWC program is abandoned or vendors change.



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Conclusion:

- Agencies with significant procedural justice approaches to community interactions and enforcement do not show significant changes in their output or perceptions when BWC programs are implemented.
- The potential change expected by the implementation of a BWC program is neither guaranteed nor predictable, except in the increased need for appropriate staff to handle the increased workload across several agencies.
- General public is supportive of BWC program with video record of law enforcement encounters an increasing expectation.
- BWCs have a substantial cost



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- BWCs (Cameras, IT systems, staffing) have a substantial cost.
- City agencies calculated *maximum* potential costs to avoid requesting additional unexpected funds for the project.
 - Staffing needs
 - Equipment (BWC, IT hardware, etc.)
 - Software (BWC, servers, licenses, and new staff)
 - Space needs for new staff



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Scope of Project - BWCs to be Deployed:

APD – 325 members

ASO – 175 members

AFD – 7 members

Total 507 – BWCs



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Scope of Project – 14 New/Additional FTEs estimated to be required at full development.

- Commonwealth's Attorney's Office = 6 FTEs
4 Asst Commonwealth's Attorneys, 1 IT Support II, 1 Legal Secretary
- Alexandria Police Department = 3 FTEs
2 Police Sergeants, 1 IT Coordinator
- Alexandria Sheriff's Office = 2 FTEs
1 Deputy Sergeant, 1 IT Coordinator
- City Attorney's Office = 2 FTEs
1 Asst City Attorney, 1 Paralegal/Law Clerk
- Information Technology Services = 1 FTE
1 Network Engineer



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Costs:

Scenario 1 - FY 2 ASO Pilot Program						
Total BWC Program Costs	FY1	FY2	FY3	FY4	FY5	FY6
APD FTE and Contract Costs	830,000	878,000	887,000	898,000	909,000	920,000
ASO FTE and Contract Costs	-	65,000	498,000	485,000	490,000	497,000
AFD Contract Costs	-	-	33,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Program Consultant Costs	200,000	-	-	-	-	-
Court Technology and Licenses Costs	44,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Commonwealth Attorney FTE and Non-personnel Costs	375,000	589,000	605,000	624,000	645,000	666,000
City Attorney FTE Costs	206,000	208,000	214,000	220,000	226,000	233,000
Space Needs Costs	505,000	78,000	78,000	78,000	78,000	78,000
Anticipated IT Costs	2,070,000	615,000	615,000	280,000	1,355,000	280,000
Total	4,230,000	2,453,000	2,950,000	2,615,000	3,733,000	2,704,000

Assumptions: Sheriff's Office pilot program begins FY2 of City BWC Program, Fire Marshals begins FY3; more gradual phase-in of program would be feasible.



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Effects, Outcomes, Benefits & Issues of BWC Programs:

Research on Body-Worn Cameras: What We Know, What We Need to Know. (Lum C, et al., Criminology & Public Policy, 2019;1-26).

Reviewed over 70 scientific studies of varied empirical thoroughness.

Question: How will a BWC Program affect the police and community?

Short Answer: It depends.

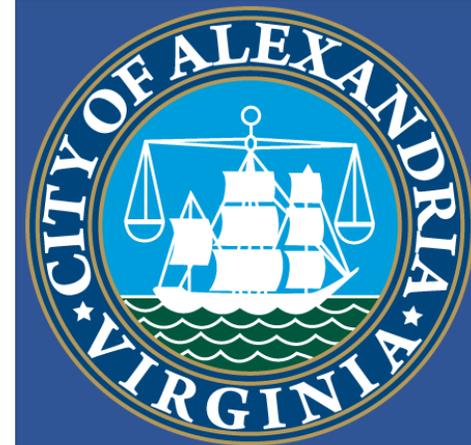


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Recommended Next Steps:

- \$3.6M to \$4.2M first year cost
- About \$3M annual cost on-going basis
- City FY 22 budget gap = \$41M

Recommendation: Present multiyear BWC program phase-in as part of the proposed FY 2022 Operating Budget and CIP



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Questions?

