



Legislation Text

File #: 22-1175, Version: 1

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 3, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAION, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: DON HAYES, POLICE CHIEF

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration for Grant Applications to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), for Byrne Discretionary Community Project Grants /Byrne Discretionary Grants Program and for Funding Provided Through Congressional Consolidated Appropriations for the Purchase of Body Worn Cameras.

ISSUE: Consideration of grant applications to the U.S. Department of Justice to obtain funding designated through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, through Congressman Don Beyer's office, in the amount of \$600,000. This grant will provide funding to begin a Pilot Deployment of Body-Worn Cameras in the Alexandria Police Department and an application to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance for the FY 2022 Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program to Support Law Enforcement Agencies, in the amount of \$622,000. Total grant opportunity \$1,222,000.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the grant applications (due May 25, 2022) to the U.S. Department of Justice which provides funding to deploy body-worn cameras to the Police Officers at the Alexandria Police Department; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

DISCUSSION: The U.S. Department of Justice is issuing awards through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to support projects that improve the functioning of the criminal justice system, prevent or combat juvenile delinquency, and assist victims of crime. The Police Department is working on a program that would require 315 BWCs, along with the necessary technological and legal support to efficiently and effectively operate the program. This funding will be the initial stage in this project.

BACKGROUND: The mission of the Alexandria Police Department is to provide competent, courteous, professional, and community-oriented police services. We are committed to maintain and enhancing a strong and productive partnership with the community to continue to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in all of Alexandria's neighborhoods. We are dedicated to protecting life and property while assuring fair and equal treatment to everyone. The addition of this technology will enhance our community oriented policing practices and will be beneficial in achieving this core mission.

On June 9, 2020, the Alexandria City Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2950. The adopted Resolution affirmed that "the City of Alexandria and all government officials have a duty to ensure the protection of all communities through actions and reform, including in the justice system." This Resolution directs all City Staff to pursue increased accountability and transparency regarding policing.

The establishment of a BWC program will facilitate the City of Alexandria's objective to pursue meaningful reforms to the justice system. BWCs are vital in our effort to enhance transparency and accountability to policing within our community. They are a great tool to quickly establish what happened in incidents of police misconduct and serious abuse of authority. In addition, body camera footage can be key in assisting officers in their duty to uphold the law and protect the public.

While the City of Alexandria has a quality, accredited police department with quality, trained, professional police officers and specific instances of police misconduct or serious abuse of authority are low in Alexandria, it is important to be responsive to community perceptions and respond to the community's call for review, evaluation and change in our policing policies, practices and systems. BWCs are commonly accepted by the law enforcement field and the general population as one methodology to improve policing and community perceptions of policing. We anticipate that this technology will support APD's goals of promoting civil rights and racial equity, increasing access to justice, supporting crime victims and individuals impacted by the justice system, strengthening community safety and protecting the public from crime and evolving threats, and building trust between law enforcement and the community.

Funding to support the full deployment of body-worn cameras in our community will allow for the strategic deployment of body-worn cameras on Alexandria Police Department officers, with an initial focus on high-impact shifts and high-need areas where the use of body-worn cameras could be part of the City's efforts to improve trust and credibility and increase accountability and transparency with regard to policing in our community.

The Police Department's goal of developing and maintaining the capacity to safely, effectively, and efficiently deliver public safety services with an emphasis on core public safety programs will be significantly enhanced due to the appropriate use of body-worn cameras.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no direct impact on the City's budget. These grants will be received by the City and used by the Police Department to support the implementation of the Body-Worn Camera program. There is currently \$200,000 set aside in the FY 2023 proposed budget for consulting services to support the implementation of the Body-Worn Camera program, with additional funding currently being discussed by Council in the FY 2023 add/delete process. There is no match for the Don Beyer earmark funds; there is a 50% cash or in-kind match for the BJA.

STAFF:

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