

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, November 21, 2016, to receive a Police Body Camera Briefing.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:03 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Room of the Greenbelt Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Konrad E. Herling was delayed and arrived at 8:07 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Dale Worley, Director of IT; Tom Kemp, Acting Police Chief; Tom Moreland, Police Captain; Gordon Pracht, Acting Police Captain; Tim White, Police Sergeant; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Stan Zirkin, News Review; Nicole Williams, Colin Byrd, and others.

Acting Chief Kemp reported that the Police Department began researching the possibility of implementing body worn cameras in 2013. He said a Body Worn Camera Committee was formed and composed of various members of the Department, including officers, supervisors and FOP representatives.

Sgt. White said numerous body worn cameras and evidence management platforms were tested by the Department. Based on the testing, the Committee found the Taser body camera and storage platform to be the most suitable options for the Department. Sgt. White said further testing was done through a month long pilot program using four cameras deployed with front line patrol officers. He said the pilot program confirmed to the Department that the Taser product was the best option to effectively deploy a body worn camera program.

Sgt. White explained that the Department created and implemented its body worn camera policy prior to conducting the pilot program in April 2016. He said the policy was created in compliance with Maryland State Law and the Maryland Police Training Commission guidelines. Sgt. White summarized the important aspects contained within the policy.

Sgt. White said storage of video is the single highest cost and detractor for many departments implementing body worn camera programs. He explained that a large amount of video storage is required (366 day retention period of all body camera video) and the City is unable to provide this large amount of storage in-house. Sgt. White said it is recommended the Department purchase the unlimited storage option available through Taser. He advised that unlimited storage is not currently available through other vendors.

It was noted that police records, including body camera video, are subject to public requests for release under the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA). Sgt. White said during the pilot program, several requests were submitted for the release of video related to a police incident. He said the features of the Taser platform allowed for the Department to quickly comply with the requests and release the video in a timely manner.

Sgt. White said the Department is proposing the purchase of the Taser Officer Safety Plan from Taser International for 48 sworn officers at a total cost of \$312,188.70. He explained the plan is a five (5) year contract for all equipment, storage, maintenance and licensing, and includes

integration with the Department's CAD/RMS system and equipment upgrades at the 2-1/2 and 5 year point of contract. Sgt. White said the contract can be paid entirely up front or on a yearly basis.

The plan also provides every officer (48) with a Taser X26. Sgt. White said the Department has been using the Taser less than lethal weapons for well over 10 years and has had great success in preventing unnecessary injury to officers and citizens. He said during the five year period of the Taser Officer Safety Plan, the Department will need to replace its current inventory of Taser weapons. The plan contract consolidates the purchase of the body camera equipment and the Taser weapons into one contract, resulting in great savings (approximately \$65,000) to the Department.

In response to a question from Mr. Putens, Sgt. White said Taser International has been in business since the 1980's and has a good standing in the law enforcement community.

Ms. Davis asked about equipping additional police officers who may be hired. Sgt. White said new officers would be equipped and the contract would be prorated to reflect the increase.

Ms. Pope asked about the plan warranty. Sgt. White said the plan provides a full warranty that provides for replacement cameras while repairs are made.

Ms. Davis requested a spreadsheet be provided showing the "pros" and "cons" of body camera equipment provided from other vendors evaluated by the Department.

Ms. Davis and Mr. Roberts asked when officers would activate the cameras. Sgt. White said officers must activate the camera during all law enforcement related encounters. Mr. Roberts asked about the ability to remotely control a body worn camera. Sgt. White said remote activation is evolving technology that the Department will be reviewing.

Mr. Herling asked if any testing had been done to determine the health risks associated with body worn cameras. Sgt. White said he would check with Taser.

In response to a question from Ms. Williams, Acting Captain Pracht explained MPIA requests must be answered within specified time limits.

Mayor Jordan asked when the General Orders would be updated to reflect the body camera policies. Acting Chief Kemp and Sgt. White explained the changes are being vetted through the Department's internal system and will be in place at least 30 days prior to implementation of the program.

Mr. Byrd said he supported the use of body cameras but questioned whether the Department had done an adequate job in evaluating body camera equipment offered by other companies.

Mr. Orleans asked and was provided answers to several questions.

Executive Session

Ms. Davis moved that Council move into Executive Session in accordance with Section 3-305(b)(9) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland to discuss the collective bargaining negotiations. Mr. Herling seconded.

ROLL CALL:

<i>Ms. Davis</i>	-	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Herling</i>	-	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Mach</i>	-	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Pope</i>	-	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Putens</i>	-	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Roberts</i>	-	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mayor Jordan</i>	-	<i>Yes</i>

Council moved into Executive Session at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*