

Yuma Police Department



Body-Worn Camera Implementation



2020

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Yuma Police Department Project Proposal

Body-Worn Camera System Implementation

I. Background

The City of Yuma Police Department (YPD) continues on the path of harnessing technology to efficiently provide services to our citizens and community.

Critical incidents can happen anywhere and at any time, and when they occur, YPD officers must be ready to react. For these reasons, YPD will be implementing body-worn cameras (BWC) as another tool to gather evidence, provide information about police interactions, increase accountability, and strengthen the relationship with our community.

II. Introduction

Body-worn cameras are worn on the officer's uniform and capture audio and video as they respond to calls. The footage will document the interaction of officers and citizens during an encounter. The anticipated outcomes and major deliverables are: the collection of records from officers utilizing the BWC, training material to be created for the reduction in the use of force, reduction in sustained complaints against officers, outreach improvement of citizen interactions with officers, increase successful prosecutions, and maintain trust between YPD and the community it serves. With that said, officers will not record in places where an enhanced expectation of privacy exists, such as restrooms, jails, and courtrooms, or capture HIPAA protected patient information.

III. Stakeholder Perspectives

➤ Perspectives of the Police Officers:

Before implementation of the program, YPD Officers were surveyed regarding key topics related to body-worn cameras. Officers were very consistent across the various squads, with no significant variances found. There was consensus that BWC's will improve the gathering of evidence, help settle complaints against officers, and increase the department's transparency with the public. They also expressed they believe the system will be a useful tool with the prosecution of cases.

Comments gathered from the 161 officers who completed the survey provided further insight into the officer's views of body-worn camera systems. A notable number of participants believe the body-worn camera system will be another factor adding clarity to their calls for service. In general, most officers believed their behavior, and that of community members, would not change due to carrying body-worn cameras. Many expressed their appreciation of body-worn cameras as they feel the implementation will assist in clearing them from frivolous citizen complaints.

➤ Perspectives of Community Stakeholders:

Many community stakeholders expressed their support for YPD's implementation of a body-worn camera system. Among the stakeholders are:

- Yuma Regional Medical Center
- Fraternal Order of Police Yuma Lodge #24
- Amberly's Place
- Catholic Community Services
- Yuma County Chamber of Commerce
- Yuma Union High School District
- NAACP Yuma Chapter # 1016
- Yuma Elks Lodge 476
- United Way of Yuma County
- Fort Yuma Rotary Club.

Most agreed this technology has the potential to promote officer accountability and bolster community relations through the generated transparency. For example, Amberly's Place feels that a system such as this is crucial in providing crisis intervention from the initial report of abuse. Our local Fraternal Order of Police expressed that the benefits of body-worn technology include enhanced criminal investigations via recovery of BWC footage. All in all, community support of BWC programs has risen due to recent officer-involved shootings occurring throughout our nation.

IV. Project Overview

In May of 2016, the Yuma Police Department was awarded a Bureau of Justice Assistance grant for the introduction of body-worn technology into the Yuma Police Department. Due to city-wide financial constraints at the time, the grant was forfeited by YPD at the request of the City Administration.

Moving forward to May 2018, the Yuma Police Department again considered integrating body-worn camera technology and reapplied for the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant.

On September 26th, 2018, the Yuma Police Department was awarded \$115,500 through the Bureau of Justice Assistance, requiring a funding match of 100% by the City (grant # 2018-BC-BX-0022), to develop and implement 77 body-worn cameras to be deployed with our first responders. As of June 30th, 2020, YPD has contributed \$54,891.22 in in-kind services

applied towards our required match amount. The remaining contributions will continue to be in-kind services supplemented by City funds.

The Yuma Police Department began working closely with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, following their proposed Law Enforcement Implementation Checklist with the assistance of Dr. Charles Katz, a senior advisor to the Bureau of Justice Assistance in Body-Worn Camera Training and Technical Implementation Team. This checklist assisted our agency in establishing a foundation of body-worn technology fundamentals. We began by reaching out to various local and state agencies in the process of developing local policies regarding body-worn technology. With the input of our administrative staff, a policy unique to the Yuma Police Department was developed.

We found we would need to test various companies before a vendor could be chosen. The testing and evaluation process began for the body-worn cameras in May of 2019. The testing period for each of the vendors was determined to be 30 days. Each vendor provided technical support, installation, and training for 6 to 8 evaluating officers. Each vendor was rated on a series of product capabilities that included items such as:

Battery life	Ruggedness	Mounting Options
Settings	Storage Capabilities	Ease of Use
Customer Support	CAD Integration	Upload Ease & Duration
Quality of Audio	Quality of Video	Digital Evidence Management System

There were a total of four vendors that were tested during the testing and evaluation stage of this process, those vendors were Watchguard, Motorola, AXON, and Bodyworn.

- Watchguard was the first vendor to be tested and offered a camera unit that included a single piece camera and a 2-piece camera system.
- AXON was the second camera system to be tested and provided a single piece camera that was mounted on the chest. They also provided a two-piece camera system that has a component mounted on the chest or belt of an officer and a separate camera that could be mounted on the collar, epaulet, or a hat or eyeglasses frame.
- Motorola Solutions was the third camera system to be tested. This system incorporated a microphone and camera combination that was attached to the officer's current handheld radio. It also provided channel switching functions for the portable radio utilized by our officers.
- Bodyworn by Utility Associates, Inc. was the final camera system that was tested. This system uses cellular phone base camera technology in a cellular phone chassis that was mounted in a cradle in the center of the chest under the officer's shirt.

V. Laying the Foundation

As the process of testing the various vendors continued, the Yuma Police Department prepared for the selection and acquisition of the body-worn technology by developing a new position within the department: Law Enforcement Program Supervisor. This position

was created to coordinate the body-worn camera program for implementation and continuous oversight. This position will assist the department by maintaining and troubleshooting the BWC units, budgeting for and tracking all related equipment, training officers and support staff on all things BWC related, coordinating the storage and management of recovered BWC footage, performing quality assurance of requested redactions, along with all other duties as generated by the BWC program.

The Video Analyst position will provide support for body-worn camera operations. The position will review BWC footage, create copies for official departmental use, and assist with the redaction processes of all recovered video. They will be responsible for the timely completion of these requests, with the proper redactions being completed for the public or other public safety agencies. The Video Analyst will ensure compliance with state laws and YPD policies related to public records requests under the supervision of the Law Enforcement Program Supervisor.

While assessing the impact body-worn cameras would have on the city network, the City of Yuma Information Technology Services determined the current internet bandwidth infrastructure in place throughout the city would need to be upgraded. Through the use of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) funds, the Police Department has purchased \$20,453.64 in hardware to expand the internet bandwidth city-wide in anticipation of the implementation of the new body-worn camera system. This upgrade not only benefits the Yuma Police Department but the entire city by increasing internet speeds and allowing for a more stable bandwidth connection. The bandwidth expansion has already proven to be a great benefit to the City network, allowing for more network traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic as many employees continue to work from home. The bandwidth expansion has allowed for a successful telecommuting experience.

VI. Vendor Selection

After conducting an intensive testing and evaluation process, the City of Yuma Police Department will be partnering with AXON, an Arizona based company that has partnered with more than 7,500 agencies around the world to deliver innovative hardware and software solutions built for the public safety sector. Originally known as TASER, the company changed its corporate name to AXON in 2017. The company was originally founded in 1991, becoming a leader in law enforcement with a mission of protecting life. AXON has a proven track record and has pioneered the development of BWC's by emphasizing continuous research and development. AXON's customer service has proven to be unparalleled from day one.

With the implementation of AXON's body-worn camera solution, YPD can have:

- Reliable hardware, including cameras, docks, and accessories, as well as complimentary mobile applications.
- A comprehensive Digital Evidence Management System, known as Evidence.com that makes storing, sharing, managing, and redacting evidence simple.
- Technical support focused on customer success pre and post-deployment.

- Integration between YPD's CAD system and AXON Evidence automatically categorizing videos based on the correlated event metadata captured by the respective system referred to as Auto-Tagging. Auto-Tagging enables automatic labeling of AXON videos with the correct corresponding metadata from the CAD system, saving officers many hours of manual entry time. Automatic retention is accomplished through categorization mapping.

AXON and the Yuma Police Department's relationship will not be a new one. Currently, AXON is the provider for the electronic control devices our officers depend on. This continued partnership with AXON would bring the Yuma Police Department the AXON Body 3 camera. The AXON Body 3 is a rugged and high-quality camera that would sit front and center on every call, providing the most reliable audio and video. The AXON Body 3 features enhanced low-light performance and reduced motion blur.

VII. Hardware and Software

The Yuma Police Department has been in contact with AXON to learn about our options for purchasing body-worn cameras and seeking the best solution for storing data that would best fit the needs of our Department.

The optimal package for YPD is a body-worn camera package from AXON that includes 77 body-worn cameras plus two spares, 10 docking stations, uniform mounts, Evidence.com usage and storage, setup, and training. This package would include 142 basic user licenses, enough to supply all of our current sworn personnel staff with access to Evidence.com, allowing staff to access the recorded data. This package will also include the Taser Assurance Program. This program upgrades our body-worn cameras and equipment by exchanging camera hardware at the 3rd year and 5th year after implementation with Axon's newest release. By participating in the Taser Assurance Program, we ensure we have the most updated hardware and device warranty.

Below is a table indicating the contractual summary of payments. Note year one will be supplemented by Federal grant funding. Refer to the attached AXON quote for a full breakdown of the associated costs.

Summary of Payments	
Annual Funding	Amount (USD)
Year 1	\$180,605.44
Grant Funding	-\$115,500.00
Year 1 City Payment	\$65,105.44
Year 2	\$88,821.88
Year 3	\$88,821.88
Year 4	\$88,821.88
Year 5	\$88,821.88
City - 5 Year Cost	\$420,392.96

VIII. Implementation

The biggest obstacle to implementing the body-worn camera system is the associated costs. The Bureau of Justice Assistance grant will provide tremendous aid. YPD will successfully implement the BWC Program by continuing to collaborate with the Department of Justice and multiple community stakeholders for policy development, addressing technology usage, evidence acquisition, officer safety, privacy concerns, and community impact. While continuing to work internally with sworn personnel ensuring the system is used at its fullest potential.

With City of Yuma FY 21 funds being released towards the end of July 2020, we intend to open a requisition with the City's Finance Department, allowing for the procurement to occur in late August. AXON has indicated it would take approximately 4-6 weeks to deliver the BWC's, followed by a 4-day on-site installation and training service. Training for our officers and trainers would be provided upon delivery in late September, with the BWC's hitting the streets shortly thereafter. Axon Professional Service consultants would help with the setup of all the equipment and make sure it is ready to launch. The consultants would then give a variety of training classes, centered on the following groups: user training for officers, back-end user training, administration training, and redaction classes. The installation and training will be completely customized for our agency's needs.

IX. Key Concerns and the Solutions

➤ Activation

Under the proposed YPD policy, officers are required to record:

- All encounters with members of the public that go beyond a casual conversation. This includes investigative stops, citations, or arrests. It also includes interviews with victims or witnesses, as well as searches of people and their belongings, vehicles, and residences.
- Any use of force.
- All vehicle and foot pursuits.
- When a member of the public asks the officer to record their interaction.
- For various other law enforcement matters, like documenting a crime scene.

➤ Privacy Concerns

The Yuma Police Department is aware of the many privacy concerns of those captured in recordings. Our officers shall record, per policy, when conducting official business. If a video is to be released to the public, we shall redact

information that is not pertinent to the specific event. This includes but is not limited to juveniles, personal information, and other non-related identifiers such as license plate numbers and addresses. Our priority is to protect citizen privacy rights and safeguard non-related parties and information.

➤ Retention

All digital evidence related to any criminal proceeding, claims filed, pending litigation, or personnel complaint, shall be preserved until that matter is resolved and/or per state retention guidelines. Recordings of no evidentiary value shall be retained in conjunction with other evidence related to the same case.

➤ Public Access

Body-worn camera footage under certain circumstances may be made available to the public. Because body-worn cameras are used to record sensitive and often embarrassing incidents—like victim statements or arrests—access to body-worn camera footage must be carefully regulated to protect the privacy of those who are captured on film. At the same time, cameras may capture events—like officer-involved shootings—that the public may wish to see. Likewise, someone who believes an officer was discourteous or used excessive force may wish to see footage of that incident to prove what happened after filing a complaint.

Under the proposed policy, members of the public can only access footage in two ways:

- With the permission of the Chief's office or designee.
- By filing a request under the Arizona Public Records Law §39-121 et seq through the Records Division. Under the law, there may be some circumstances when YPD can deny the request (for example if the video is part of an ongoing criminal investigation).

X. Conclusion

It is anticipated that introducing body-worn cameras will likely have substantial benefits for the Yuma Police Department and the residents of the City of Yuma. They will:

- Likely reduce excessive and unnecessary use of force complaints. In particular, deployment of body-worn cameras is likely to reduce uses of all categories of force, including lethal force, by decreasing the rate of use of force in the first place.
- Reduction in sustained complaints against officers.
- Outreach improvement of citizen interactions with officers.

- Maintain a positive relationship between the Yuma Police Department and the community.

These are important benefits, making the prompt implementation of the Yuma Police Department's body-worn camera program vital. Along with the benefits mentioned above, the partnership with AXON will introduce a new platform of Digital Evidence Management Systems (DEMS), adding the possibility of combining other systems utilized within the Yuma Police Department, such as the in-car video system and Digital Image Management System (DIMS). This implementation will assist in replacing outdated technology currently in place, and adding significant ease to the chain of custody and distribution of digital media.

The implementation of the body-worn camera system should be considered a major advancement for the City as we strive towards contemporary policing. As the program moves forward, a yearly assessment will take place in the form of surveys and program audits monitoring effectiveness while assessing sustainability. Given these significant benefits, it is recommended that this proposal be accepted and the necessary approvals are provided to implement the body-worn camera program as described above.