



## SAN BENITO COUNTY AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL FORM

Dom Zanger  
District No. 1

Kollin Kosmicki  
District No. 2

Mindy Sotelo  
District No. 3  
Chair

Angela Curro  
District No. 4  
Vice-Chair

Bea Gonzales  
District No. 5

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**Item Number: 2.1**

**MEETING DATE:** 02/07/2023

**DEPARTMENT:** SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

**AGENDA ITEM PREPARER:** Eric Taylor

**DEPT HEAD/DIRECTOR:** Eric Taylor

**SUBJECT:**

**SHERIFF'S OFFICE - E. TAYLOR**

Receive presentation on our current Body Worn Camera (BWC) Program and the designation is at "end of life." Discuss options moving forward with AXON BWCs and Records management System (RMS).  
SBC FILE NUMBER: 110

**AGENDA SECTION:**

REGULAR AGENDA

**BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:**

Our office has been with WatchGuard Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) since 2015/2016. Our office has been concerned with the quality of customer service and the speed with which changes to their cameras quickly render the "old" ones to be obsolete.

We currently use TracNet as a Records Management System (RMS) at a cost of nearly \$40k per year for licensing.

We currently replace Tasers one at a time at a cost of nearly 2k each. We spend approximately 10k per year on new devices.

We currently forecast \$116-120k in necessary upgrades to keep current system going.

We were just notified our current BWCs and supporting software suite is at end of life (EOL) and we must purchase all new equipment.

It is not feasible to replace our older/broken cameras with the "new ones" and try to run our BWC program on two different systems. For transparency, we need a robust BWC system that offers modern

features such as redaction and storage. Our current system lacks reasonable storage, and we host the storage on-site. We need to transition to a cloud-based solution with modern technology to make sure we are adequately addressing risk-management concerns as well as preserving evidence for criminal cases.

## **From a Staff Report in 2021:**

### **Overview:**

Our nation's Law Enforcement members are often called First Responders because they are the first to arrive at the scene of an emergency, a public contact, or call for service. Such emergencies and calls can be dangerous, even life-threatening. Despite imminent danger, they rush toward hazards, assume risks so others don't have to, and they confront diverse threats. These actions fall under the blanket of public service and protection of the communities they serve. This service is a law enforcement officer's duty; it's what they swore an oath to uphold. <sup>1</sup>

There are strong societal expectations of law enforcement to operate under high standards, professionalism and civility, impartiality and fairness, and transparency. Such desired expectations are often challenging when having to confront those who are angry or violent, mentally impaired, under the influence, or who think an officer's lawful authority, or the law does not apply to them. <sup>1</sup>

Officers and Deputies will apply their lawful influence, ranging from mere presence to deadly force and they often do so with immediacy and under the worst of conditions. Their actions should be balanced and measured; as these actions are assessed and reassessed to be reasonably and objectively congruent with law, policy, and training. Communities deserve public policy and service that mandate the highest policing standards possible, especially when it applies to the use of force or the seizure of a person. <sup>1</sup>

Nationally there has been a push toward transparency in policing and in police agencies. One of the "pillars" of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing is "Building Trust and Legitimacy" and another is leveraging "Technology and Social Media" to help us do our job better.

As 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing was integrated into law enforcement and influenced organizational philosophy, policy, and all levels of training, it became known primarily as Procedural Justice and Principled Policing. Through necessity, the umbrella of Community Oriented Policing expanded to adopt and integrate Procedural Justice and Principled Policing as the next evolution to meet today's societal needs and to solve identified foundational problems being experienced by law enforcement. <sup>1</sup>

Additional important aspects of Procedural Justice and Principled Policing that fell under the umbrella of Community Policing included:

- Fair and Impartial Policing (Impartiality)
- Transparency
- Implicit Bias
- Police Legitimacy
- Constitutional Policing
- Tactical Communication

One area, in particular, that has evolved and has the potential to pose a serious threat to law enforcement is Police Legitimacy or more accurately described; a lack thereof. This concept, left unaddressed, could have dire and long-lasting repercussions. When society begins to believe that the police no longer are legitimate, then the police are viewed to no longer have lawful authority. This scenario creates the potential for confusion, division, distrust, and the societal subversion of public safety in the best-case scenario and civil unrest, violence, and anarchy in the worst. In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the hyper-focus and scrutiny of high-profile uses of force by police. Anti-police/government groups were formed, organized, and even externally funded and their efforts at civil unrest included targeting law enforcement with hate-related speech and threats or violence. Adverse trends became commonplace on the Internet and through social media depicting those defying, aggressively challenging, and even menacing the police while video recording the contacts for mass public consumption. Mainstream media coverage of police incidents often lacked impartiality and reporting was sensational-based in that it was cosmetic, rushed, and lacked facts or journalistic thoroughness. These problematic and collective societal conditions, among others, could have a substantial adverse impact and far-reaching consequences. <sup>1</sup>

Some of the ways our office is trying to stay on the forefront of these philosophies are in the use of “less-lethal” force options, use of technology, and the continuation of de-escalation techniques and training. We are also attempting to use technology to create more transparency while still affording the legal aspects of privacy to those affected. We implemented a Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program recently in our office and have deployed Taser less-lethal devices for over a decade. These devices have a proven track record of lowering use of force incidents, use of force complaints, and workman’s compensation claims. There are numerous studies and reports showing decreases in the aforementioned areas after Tasers and BWCs were deployed.

In addition, there were more than two dozen bills attempting to reform policing practices in California. Governor Newsom signed 15 of the bills and vetoed 4. We can expect the balance of the bills and new ones to come into play this coming legislative year. Many of these will be seeking changes in use of force, and transparency.

Our cameras and tasers are outdated (BWCs are end of life) and in need of replacement. We

had budgeted for a one-time replacement of these devices in FY 20-21. Also, technology in our cars is end-of-life and in need of upgrade. Lastly, our on-site servers are failing and in need of replacement. All of these factors, as well as our need to have these technologies to maintain “Legitimacy” bring us to this report.

### **Analysis:**

We have outfitted our Operations and Corrections Divisions with Taser less lethal devices and Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) for many years and we budget each year to maintain these programs. In FY 20/21 we had budgeted \$73,800 for the upkeep of our less lethal and body worn camera programs. We have had some unexpected costs arrive due to failing equipment. Our server that stores our BWC videos is failing and in need of immediate replacement. This evidence is criminal evidence and is also needed for civil liability claims. The replacement cost of our in-house BWC data server is \$16,000. There are also failing hard drives in the server. We have replaced 2 of 7 so far. That leaves approximately \$1000 of replacement parts still needed.

We recently re-certified our staff in Taser (annual recertification). That will take from training money already budgeted. The cost for firing two cartridges for each staff member comes to be nearly \$2400. As it stands today, we can keep our program going for \$93,200. We average replacing 5 Taser Devices a year at a cost of nearly \$7000. That brings our total annual cost to the general fund to just over \$100,000.

Next, as we replace our BWCs that are at end of life, all the connections need to be replaced as well. This was something we did not know when we built the budget. The “docking stations” that transfer the BWC data will no longer fit the new form factor of the updated cameras. Therefore our transfer/docking stations will need to be replaced. These stations cost approximately 1500 each and each car will need to be updated for approximately \$1,000 each or a total of approximately \$16,000. That brings this year’s impact to approximately \$116,000.

There are also many costs that are difficult to quantify. For example, we cannot quantify the cost to the community if we were to “lose” criminal evidence. We cannot quantify the possible cost to our community if we were to lose evidence that could assist us in civil litigation. We cannot quantify the cost to our community if we were to be seen as “not transparent.” There are many possible costs that can be detrimental to how we do business. In some ways, less-lethal and BWC programs are both forms of insurance.

Another tremendous benefit of this program is the introduction of Axon Empathy training. We would receive one (1) Virtual Reality system that would assist us in training our deputies to master scenarios, and de-escalation tactics, in Schizophrenia, Autism and with suicidal persons. Many more modules are in development. That would cost nearly \$1,000 if purchased separately.

**Axon Performance** provides automated auditing of the BWC and Taser program. While integrated with the CAD/RMS system, the algorithm alerts administrators to possible issues in the program. For instance, if a deputy responded to 50 calls in a month, but only had 3 videos in his/her account, the system would alert administrators to this anomaly.

**Axon Respond and Axon Aware** are both technologies that would allow administrators and line-level supervisors to view live-stream body worn and patrol car camera footage during critical incidents. For example, the Captain can call-up a deputy's camera while he/she was engaged on a call. We would be able to watch, real-time, as the event is unfolding, and help make crucial decisions while not on-scene. In a small agency like ours, this level accountability is difficult to achieve right now due to staffing constraints.

Real-time situational awareness leads to faster responses and safer deputies.

**Axon Signal and Axon Signal Sidearm** are technologies that allow for activation of ALL Axon cameras in a 30-foot radius whenever a triggering event is happening. Event triggers are when a deputy turns the camera on him or herself, when the lights and siren are turned on, when a firearm is un-holstered, when a patrol car goes over a pre-determined speed, and also during a crash. What sets Axon apart from others is that "signal" turns on ALL cameras in the area. This automatically captures all angles of an event. This technology would even activate Axon cameras from different agencies. This is a huge leap in transparency and accountability as well as risk-management.

**Axon Citizen** for Communities is a public facing portal that allows the public to submit files to our office for evidence. This drastically reduces staff time, and physical contact in the transfer of photographs, video and documents. For Deputies, Axon Citizen allows for individual requests for files to witnesses directly from the Axon Capture mobile app or Axon Evidence without the need to confiscate a person's phone. For community members, Axon Citizen creates a portal for public evidence submission that would allow us to collect evidence from the public during both large-scale and smaller day-to-day events. We would also be able to share a "link" with key stakeholders on social media.

**Redaction Studio and Redaction Assistant** will assist us in timely response to Public Records Act requests with less staff time and better attention to confidentiality.

**Axon Fleet** is a technology that enables our in-car camera systems to interface with Axon Evidence, Axon Aware and Axon Signal.

**Axon Channel Services** is a technology that would allow us to store our media from other sources (iPhones, CCTV media, etc) on our Axon Evidence account. We would receive 300

TB of additional storage space to bring this existing, and future, evidence into a secure environment.

Finally, **Axon Records** is a brand new, emerging technology which transcribes BWC video to essentially “write” a crime report automatically. This will keep our staff “out on the street” and “out of the office.” This will increase actual man-hours patrolling our community.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from POST De-Escalation Strategies and Techniques:  
[https://post.ca.gov/Portals/0/post\\_docs/publications/DeEscalation.pdf](https://post.ca.gov/Portals/0/post_docs/publications/DeEscalation.pdf)

**RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:**

No

**CONTRACT NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:**

N/A

**CONTRACT AND RFP HISTORY:**

NA

**LAST CONTRACT AMOUNT OR N/A:**

NA

**STATE IF THIS IS A NEW CONTRACT/ HOW MANY PAST AMENDED CONTRACTS/ OR N/A:**

NA

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 1. Operational Development & Excellence**

Yes

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 2. Planning And Sustainable Growth**

Yes

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 3. Technology**

Yes

**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 4. Community Engagement**

Yes

## **STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 5. Health & Safe Community**

Yes

### **BUDGETED:**

Yes

### **BUDGET ADJUSTMENT NEEDED:**

Yes

### **SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

General Fund

### **UNFUNDED MANDATE:**

No

### **SBC BUDGET LINE ITEM NUMBER:**

NA

### **CURRENT FY COST:**

\$120,000

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Approve our office to move forward with the Axon OSP for new BWCs, Tasers and RMS from Axon as part of the Officer Safety Plan not to exceed \$200,000/year; or
2. Direct staff to come back to the BOS with a quote for BWCs only; or
3. Direct staff to come back to BOS with quote for BWCs and RMS only.

### **BOARD ACTION RESULTS:**

Item pushed to next BOS meeting.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

[AXON OSP SBSO](#)