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Summary:

DISCUSS AND CONSIDER AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF A DRONE FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT (PB)

Background:

The police department is requesting approval to purchase a Skydio X10 Patrol drone system, along with the associated software, support services, and cloud data storage. This equipment will significantly enhance our ability to respond to critical incidents, improve officer and public safety, and modernize our investigative and operational capabilities.

A companion document is included with the agenda outlining several recent Park City incidents where a drone would have been valuable, as well as situations where we relied on drones from surrounding agencies.

Background and Need

Police drone systems have become an essential tool for public safety agencies across the country. They provide rapid aerial situational awareness, reduce risk to responders, and improve effectiveness in incidents such as:

- Search and rescue operations
- Missing or endangered persons
- Fleeing suspects or outstanding warrants
- Tactical or high-risk calls
- Hazardous situations, including fires and storm damage assessment

Our department has increasingly encountered situations where a drone would have significantly improved our ability to manage an incident safely and efficiently. In several cases, Park City has depended on other agencies to deploy a drone in our city. While these agencies have been helpful, their availability is not guaranteed, especially during high-priority events or severe weather. A Park City-operated drone ensures immediate access to this capability when it is most needed. The FAA requires law enforcement drone pilots to be licensed, and the police department currently has five officers who are licensed and trained.

Legal Considerations and Vendor Eligibility

During the past two legislative sessions, the Kansas Legislature enacted laws prohibiting state and local agencies from purchasing or operating drones manufactured by companies located in adversarial nations, including China. A similar federal ban will go into effect later this month. These restrictions sharply limit the number of vendors legally eligible for government use in Kansas.

As a result, only a small group of U.S.-based or U.S.-approved manufacturers remain authorized. Skydio is one of the leading American manufacturers meeting these requirements. Skydio drones are used extensively by law enforcement agencies nationwide and are the primary drone systems used locally by:

- Wichita Police Department
- Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office

Selecting the same platform as our partner agencies improves interoperability, joint training, and coordinated response. In addition, staff did research one other major drone manufacturer and we obtained a quote, which was significantly more expensive.

Reason for Selecting Skydio

After reviewing the available U.S.-authorized manufacturers and evaluating current regional use, Skydio was selected for the following reasons:

- **U.S. Manufacturing & Compliance:** Skydio drones are built in the United States and fully comply with new Kansas statutory restrictions.
- **Proven Performance:** Skydio drones are widely regarded for their advanced autonomous flight capabilities, obstacle avoidance, and reliability in both day and night operations.
- **Regional Consistency:** Using the same platform as Wichita PD and Sedgwick County allows for shared training, improved interoperability, and streamlined support during mutual aid incidents.
- **Ease of Use & Rapid Deployment:** The X10 Patrol platform is designed for patrol-level deployment, allowing officers to quickly launch the drone with minimal setup.
- **Comprehensive Support Program:** Skydio's service package includes replacement coverage and technology refresh, reducing the risk of outdated or unusable equipment.

Contract Proposal Overview

The proposed five-year contract with Skydio includes:

1. One Skydio X10 Patrol Drone and Hardware Kit
 - Includes the aircraft, controller, batteries, charging system, and deployment hardware.
2. Software Package (Skydio Basic Patrol Software Kit)
 - Enables flight operations, automated mission functions, and remote live-streaming.
3. Skydio Safe Patrol Kit / Skydio Care Program
 - Provides coverage for one total drone loss per year for the first three years.
 - After year three, Skydio provides a new drone and allows the department to retain the original aircraft, ensuring our equipment remains up to date.
 - This functions both as a technology refresh cycle and an insurance policy against accidental loss.
4. Axon Evidence Data Storage Integration
 - Secure cloud storage for recorded and live-streamed video.

This package is structured to ensure the drone program remains operational, supported, and technologically current throughout the five-year period.

Fiscal Impact:

The total cost of the proposed five-year Skydio contract is \$78,712. The 2026 Police Department budget already includes \$35,000 designated for the purchase of a drone. Skydio has advised that pricing is expected to increase substantially—between 35% and 60%—after the end of 2025 due to increased national demand and the end of two years of artificially suppressed pricing.

By entering into the contract before the end of 2025, the City can lock in current pricing and avoid these anticipated increases for the full five-year term.

Staff recommends the following funding approach:

- Apply \$35,000 from the 2025 Police Department budget as the initial payment.
- Spread the remaining balance across four (4) annual payments of \$10,928 each, beginning in 2026.
 - The 2026 payment will be paid from the 2026 Police Department budget.

- The remaining three (3) annual payments will be included in future budget cycles.

The contract includes a non-appropriation clause, ensuring that the City may terminate the agreement without penalty should future governing bodies determine that funds are not available.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends authorizing the mayor to execute a contract with Skydio for a five-year term at a total cost of \$78,712.00.

Attachments:

- [Drone Deployment Examples DEC 2025.pdf](#)
- [Skydio Drone Contract DEC 2025.pdf](#)