



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager
Eddie M. Buffaloe, Jr. Chief of Police

DATE: January 7, 2016

REF: Consideration – Authorization to Submit Application for Governor’s Crime Commission ~ Body Worn Camera Grant

BACKGROUND:

The Elizabeth City Police Department continues to seek grant funding opportunities through outside sources including federal, state, local, and private entities. The North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission began accepting applications for an off-cycle grant beginning January 1, 2016. This grant will provide funding during FY 2015-16 and offers funds exclusively for expenses relating to Body Worn Cameras, to include cameras, training, hardware, software and other necessary to operate and maintain a successful Body Worn Camera Program. This grant is exclusive of any other grant programs and is in place to provide supplemental funding to local law enforcement agencies in North Carolina. The Elizabeth City Police Department wishes to receive approval to submit an application directly to the Governor’s Crime Commission for this funding so that the opportunity to receive grant monies is not missed. Specifically, the Elizabeth City Police Department will seek to acquire body-mounted cameras and related software and hardware to outfit uniformed patrol officers in the field with this needed technology that allows for greater transparency and accountability in the field of law enforcement. The purchase of the cameras will supplement those cameras that will be purchased with other grant funds already received, combined with the City funding already approved in FY 15-16 budget and further enhance the daily operations of the department and provide greater officer safety and accountability to citizens served.

ANALYSIS:

The North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission, through its Local Law Enforcement Body Worn Camera Grant fund, is offering local law enforcement agencies maximum funding of \$100,000 for expenses relating to the purchase and use of Body Worn Cameras. For FY 15-16, there is 2:1 local match required for this particular grant.

In August 2015, the department was awarded a total of \$14,550 from the 2015 Governor's Crime Commission Local Law Enforcement Block Grant. The 2015 Governor's Crime Commission Local Law Enforcement Block Grant, which was capped at \$15,000, was estimated for the purchase of up to thirty (30) body worn cameras to go towards outfitting the Patrol Division. In addition, the department was approved for \$4,850 in capital outlay funding for the FY 15-16 budget, which was an estimated cost for the purchase of up to ten (10) body worn cameras. The funding received so far was based on the estimated cost of each camera being approximately \$485.00 which, according to research, is an "average" cost of one camera but does not include any associated required software or hardware costs such as the purchase of a server and other required hardware to manage the data of files.

Since the time we received funding from the GCC Local Law Enforcement Block Grant and approved the City Funding, we have found that the combined \$19,400 will provide for funding significantly less body worn cameras than expected due to substantial costs associated with the required hardware and software infrastructure to implement the program.

The police department has two options it can pursue making use of funds that have been made available through this new GCC Body Worn Camera Grant Program. Due to the costs of initially implementing a Body Worn Camera program being notably higher than originally anticipated because of the required server space and other related infrastructure, the average cost of only the camera was used in initial calculations. The department would greatly benefit from any additional funding available that can go towards the goal of outfitting our personnel with this equipment.

Option 1:

The police department can pursue the purchase of twenty (20) Body Worn Cameras, which would allow the department to equip at least one-half of the Patrol Division by June 30, 2016. Research suggests that initial implementation to include 20 cameras, the necessary server, and other related software and infrastructure will cost approximately \$31,970. If this option is pursued, the agency would continue to look for future budgeted funds as well as grant funds to equip all remaining sworn personnel during FY 16-17 and ultimately equipping each sworn officer with a Body Worn Camera.

In consideration of our current funding shortfall of approximately \$12,570 of the necessary amount to implement a fifty-percent (50%) deployment to patrol personnel, the Elizabeth City Police Department would seek to obtain \$4,190.00 in grant funding to supplement the currently funded amount of \$19,400 designated for body-mounted cameras. By pursuing this amount, this would result in a budget impact of \$8,380 in city funding for FY 2015-2016. These additional funds would allow the department to purchase as many as twenty (20) body worn cameras and the required hardware and software necessary to deploy the cameras.

During the Finance Committee of January 7, 2016, the committee requested that staff provide the source of the deficit funding, in view of the recent budget cuts required by the LGC.

Staff has identified a savings of approximately \$17,000 in the Elections line item, as \$45,000 was budgeted and only 27,584 was spent for the 2015 Municipal Election.

Option 2:

The police department can pursue the purchase of forty (40) Body Worn Cameras which would allow the department to equip all officers assigned to the Patrol Division by June 30, 2016. Research suggests that initial implementation to include 40 cameras, the necessary server, and other related software and infrastructure will cost approximately \$49,580. If this option is pursued, the agency would continue to look for future budgeted funds as well as grant funds to equip the remaining sworn personnel of the Elizabeth City Police Department during FY 16-17.

In consideration of our current funding shortfall of approximately \$30,180 of the necessary amount to implement a full deployment to patrol personnel, the Elizabeth City Police Department would seek to obtain \$10,060.00 in grant funding to supplement the currently funded amount of \$19,400 designated for body-mounted cameras. By pursuing this amount, this would result in a budget impact of \$20,120 in city funding for FY 2015-2016. These additional funds would allow the department to purchase as many as forty (40) body worn cameras and the required hardware and software necessary to deploy the cameras.

During the Finance Committee of January 7, 2016, the committee requested that staff provide the source of the deficit funding for this option, in view of the recent budget cuts required by the LGC.

As mentioned above, staff has identified a savings of approximately \$17,000 in the Elections line item, as \$45,000 was budgeted and only \$27,584 was spent for the 2015 Municipal Election. In addition, the Police Firing Range line item could be decreased by \$5,000, which would provide \$22,000 in funding.

FINANCIAL:

The Finance Committee discussed this matter during their meeting of January 7, 2016 and referred the matter for discussion by the full Council without recommendation.

It was a consensus of the committee that Option 2 was their preferred approach.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

For discussion and direction to staff by the City Council.