

# WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

## SPECIAL MEETING – POLICE COMMISSION

### MINUTES

October 3, 2022

Via ZOOM Platform (In accordance with SB 1202, this meeting was held by electronic transmission.)

Live Streamed – WGATV, Channel 79

YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/8GxCNru9zU8>

A Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners took place on Monday, October 3, 2022, at 6:15 p.m., via ZOOM platform.

The purpose of this Special Meeting was to discuss the replacement of equipment related to officer and public safety and take action as appropriate.

- Vice Chairman Esposito called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.

#### Attendance taken by roll call:

##### Commissioners Present-

Commissioner Andrew Esposito, Jr.  
Commissioner Mica Cardozo  
Commissioner Henry Kopel

##### Police Administration Present-

Chief Frank P. Cappiello  
Deputy Chief Ronald E. Smith, Jr.  
Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi

##### Absent-

Chairman Robert Berke  
Commissioner Deborah Desir  
Joseph Crisco – Board of Selectmen Liaison

##### Others Present-

Ellen Scalettar – Board of Finance Liaison  
Det. Matthew Iannucci – Department I.T. Specialist

### **BODY CAMERA / IN-CAR VIDEO CAMERA SYSTEM REPLACEMENTS:**

Chief Cappiello: *“The replacement and upgrade of our current body-worn and dashboard camera systems, to a newer, more technologically advanced system, is something we have been planning for several months. As discussed back in our May Police Commission meeting, I submitted a formal request for consideration to the Finance Director, that a portion of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding awarded to the Town might possibly be used for this project. Following further discussion with the Finance Director, and as a backup option to that, it was suggested that it also be proposed as a five-year project in our upcoming FY23/24 budget preparation.*

*Initially, the replacement was to address concerns expressed by court prosecutors as to the dismal quality of imagery being provided by our older camera systems, versus that being received from most of the other towns, many of which had no cameras at all prior to the Accountability Bill mandate, but now have new cameras with new technology. The court also expressed concerns about our inability to submit camera footage directly to court by the preferred method, and possibly soon to become protocol, of downloading and transmitting it to them directly via digital access.*

*We are one of the last remaining Departments of the thirteen towns encompassing the geographical district of the New Haven Superior Court, who is not utilizing Axon brand body-worn and dashboard camera systems and one of the few remaining that still submits footage the old-fashioned way by burning it onto a disc.*

*More importantly and what brought this to the forefront, during the past few months we have experienced unexpected back-to-back major failure issues of two of our patrol vehicle dashboard cameras that have rendered them inoperable and has forced us to take those cars out of service.*

*Until recently, any malfunctions of our body-worn or dashboard cameras were able to be repaired either by us on-site with replacement parts, or by returning them to the factory. Our current vendor, Digital Ally, has notified us that all of these dashboard camera units have reached their “end of life” and the necessary parts to repair them are no longer available, so when they fail, the only solution is replacement.*

*The current price to replace just one of our Digital Ally dashboard camera systems alone, has now significantly risen from the past pricing of a flat one-time amount of just under \$5,000 to a price of \$10,900 per camera, payable in increments of just over \$2,000 a year. That does not include the replacement of any of our other cameras should they fail, and it also presents a new additional problem, any new Digital Ally dashboard camera has upgraded technology which is not capable of synchronizing with our current body-worn cameras, so officers will not be uniform and would be restricted to having to use certain vehicles, which is not possible for us with the fleet that we have.*

*Pursuant to the Police Accountability bill, any activation of the dashboard camera must automatically trigger the activation of the body-worn camera so the incident is recorded and captured from all perspectives, so if the two do not sync up, we would not be able to comply with that.*

*We were on the forefront, as one of the first Police Departments to implement the use of both dashboard and the body-worn cameras, beginning back in 2010, well before it became mandatory pursuant to the recent Police Accountability bill.*

*Currently, five (5) of our ten (10) dashboard cameras have been in-service since their original 2010 date of purchase. As a result, a good portion of this 10 to 12-year-old equipment still in place, that calls for upgrading due to advances in modern technology.*

*Axon, which is primarily used throughout our court system, offers a complete five (5) year plan of new, fully installed, dashboard/body-worn camera systems. The price is just over \$45,000 per year for ten dashboard cameras and 25 body-worn cameras.*

*Of most importance, they will provide a complete upgrade and replacement, all with the most recent technological upgrades, of all our body-worn cameras initially on day one (1), and again at year 2.5, and at year five (5), and for the dashboard cameras initially on day one (1), and again at year five (5).*

*Their pricing also includes adequate cloud-based storage, the required redaction software and the “evidence.com” access portal and licensing, to be used by court for the seamless transfer of case file footage.*

*Our department has already forged a good, long-term working relationship with Axon, as we have been using them for several years for all of our Taser equipment and associated software needs.*

*Currently, the one patrol vehicle that we purchased last fiscal year (FY22), after an 11-month wait due to supply chain delays, has finally arrived and is in the shop scheduled to be upfitted with all the emergency equipment, including the camera system, which is customarily transferred over from the older vehicle being replaced. The problem is today we have no working camera to put in it. This is to be followed shortly thereafter by the outfitting of a second new patrol vehicle, for this fiscal year, which is onsite, and also scheduled to be outfitted, which also needs a new camera.*

*Although this is several months earlier than we were planning, these recent unexpected dashboard camera recording system failures are something that we need to address right away, not only to keep our patrol fleet in service, but for officer safety, public transparency, for the court system, and to stay in compliance with the Police Accountability bill mandates.*

*We have reached the point where it is critical for us to switch over to a company that has a proven technological and performance track record of high-quality imaging, reliability with the courts, and is being used by surrounding agencies, and that is Axon.*

*I have discussed the urgency with both Chairman Berke and the Finance Director over the past several weeks and I presented the same information I presented to you tonight to the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on September 14, 2022.*

*The Board of Selectmen recognized the urgency of the camera system replacements and at that time authorized the Finance Director, who has been in contact with Axon, to discuss and look further into contract and payment options, to draft the necessary contractual paperwork for their review and possibly moving forward with Axon and present it for their review at their next meeting scheduled for October 12, 2022.*

*Last week the Finance Director, Det. Iannucci (our I.T. administrator), and I met again with Axon representatives and finalized the specifications tailored to our agency.*

*Tonight I wanted to share that information with you, stress the urgency of it, and I look to the Board for your support of this proposed change of our body-worn and dashboard camera recording systems, which in addition to being a huge jump in technology for us, would also serve to ensure our day-to-day operations, and would enhance the professionalism and high standards of the department.”*

General discussion took place with the Chief fielding questions from Board members. Deputy Chief Ronald Smith and Det. Iannucci also spoke regarding this matter.

Key points:

- The equipment is fully warrantied throughout the five years, with replacement of anything that fails.
- The body-worn cameras are new at day one, refreshed with all new upgraded technology at 2.5 years, and again, all new equipment at five years; there are three times you would be getting new body-worn cameras.
- The dashboard cameras are new initially and then at the fifth year.
- At the end of five years, you would waive or start the same process again, with all new equipment.
- Cost is \$45,219 per year, paid annually, with a choice of different payment options that the Finance Director was working through with the Axon representative.
- Per the new Police Accountability bill, police officers are to have body-worn camera equipment functioning when they deal with the public and the same with all patrol vehicles (not detective or administrative cars) are required to have dashboard cameras. The dashboard cameras have to be in sync with the body-worn cameras to give different perspectives. There are also requirements for the release of the footage and all new redaction software available so we can redact things and people that should not be visible to the public.
- This would bring us into compliance; we would be out of compliance if we could not put the new cars into service without cameras.
- Funding: As discussed with the Finance Director, funding would be a five-year capital project, but because we are in this predicament, the first year would not be funded, so that is something the Chief and the Finance Director are working on together to make it work for the first year and then the subsequent following four years it would be part of our capital budget.

- The courts have alluded to the fact that they are looking toward making a protocol that would require the transmittal of the footage through the portal.
- Det. Iannucci: *“Technology changes at such a high rate and very quickly that this plan will allow us to have a plan in place in case that technology updates and upgrades over time, we will get the newest and greatest. When the five years is up, we can have a discussion about storage, and we can adjust our storage and what we need to do with our current system and then plan again for five years in the future. This is going to put us on the same playing field as everyone else in the area. It is an important move for officer safety. I think it is a great move if we end up going with it.”*
- Deputy Chief Ronald Smith: *“The Hamden Police Department has had Axon for quite some time with much success. The Axon camera is something that is much clearer, the audio is better quality. We also can utilize the camera by having a magnet that sticks to the officer’s chest instead of having a wire dangling. (In Hamden), having quality video helped us immensely with Internal Affairs Investigations, helped us with court cases in which we had a violent domestic, per se, and we were able to show quality video which actually helped us in getting a conviction. Also with regarding to civil litigation, it only takes one case, one incident, for us to have poor quality camera, poor quality audio to really be behind the eight ball. I think these cameras will more than pay for itself, it will only take one incident. Since I have been here over the past year, I know we’ve had a couple of incidents and the camera quality has been pretty poor. So, I strongly believe in these cameras, I think the officers will like wearing them, and I think for the town it just gives us great protection moving forward.”*
- Commissioner Esposito addressed the Chief: *“I just want to make sure that all the software upgrades during the first five years are covered, so basically there should be no additional charges to us for equipment or software upgrades within the first five years. Is that correct?”*
- Chief Cappiello: *“Right, and at the last follow-up meeting we had with their representative, that was exactly my statement, how I started it. I said we need to iron out everything, put everything on the table. I do not want to have to come back looking for we need this, or we need that. They assured the us (Tony, Matt, and me), that they should take care of everything.”*
- Commissioner Esposito: *“The data is being stored on cloud, but they are responsible for backup data, backing it up; they take our data, and they send it to the cloud, but they also back it up?”*
- Chief Cappiello: *“Yes, and if for some reason the data was lost, it would be totally on their end, and they would be responsible and they have to testify to that in court. It becomes their responsibility, not ours.”*

**ACTION TAKEN:**

*The Board voted unanimously (Cardozo/Kopel), by roll call, to accept the body camera/in-car video camera system proposal, as outlined by Chief Cappiello.*

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*The Board voted unanimously (Cardozo/Kopel), by roll call, to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 6:50 pm.*

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

# **WOODBIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS**

## **SPECIAL MEETING – POLICE COMMISSION** **MOTIONS**

**October 3, 2022**

### **BODY CAMERA / IN-CAR VIDEO CAMERA SYSTEM REPLACEMENTS-**

#### **ACTION TAKEN:**

*The Board voted unanimously (Cardozo/Kopel), by roll call, to accept the body camera/in-car video camera system proposal, as outlined by Chief Cappiello.*

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

*The Board voted unanimously (Cardozo/Kopel), by roll call, to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 6:50 pm.*

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant