

Chief's Advisory Committee

June 29, 2021, at 2:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting Participants: Chief Bieber, Captain Braman, Captain Buttice, Roger Esparza, Sandy García, Earl Gooding, Kanasha Henderson, Noah Leavitt, Dick Morgan, Steve Moss, Roberto Rodriguez

Absent: Brooke Bouchey, Ruthell Martinez, Curtis Phillips

1) **Chief's Welcome**

- 2) **Body Worn Camera Discussion—Grant Support Letter Discussion—**With the right setup and adequate funding in place Chief Bieber would not hesitate to implement body-worn cameras (BWC). The setup is reachable; however, the expense for having BWC over five years has a substantial price tag of almost \$1 million.

The Pasco Police Department and College Place Police Department both experienced an increase in records disclosure requests when they implemented BWC. Our Records group is already overloaded, so we would need to hire a full-time Public Disclosure Records (PDR) clerk to handle the additional BWC disclosure requests. In reviewing the grant guidelines, it appears the salary expense of a PDR Clerk would likely be grant reimbursable. We are working on the narrative to apply for a Department of Justice (DOJ) grant that, if awarded, could reimburse us for half of the expense during the first three years. The remaining two years of a service contract with the BWC vendor would be entirely a local expense.

If we are awarded a DOJ grant for body-worn cameras and the PDR Clerk salary is reimbursable, then the grant may cover up to \$280,000 of the estimated \$1 million price tag. Vendors will give a discount for customers signing agreements with a longer contract period; they usually increase the yearly charge contracts with shorter contract periods.

If we implement BWC and then, for some unanticipated reason, we stop utilizing them—state disclosure rules will require us to maintain and pay for ongoing data storage costs for up to six years. Public disclosure laws in Washington State are relatively open. Most anyone can submit a public disclosure request, whether they were involved in the event an event or not. There are some types of crime investigations with a more restrictive disclosure rules, such as crimes involving a minor.

As a smaller law enforcement agency, the WWPD may qualify to apply for a second grant to purchase body-worn cameras. While we can only accept one grant, we can always decline a grant award.

Steve Moss recommended this group present the pros and cons of implementing BWC to the City Council.

Noah Leavitt observed that body-worn cameras offer some level of transparency, which fits inside the City of Walla Walla's values. (Specifically, those values include "*customer focus, excellence, stewardship, communication, leadership, and integrity.*")

One million dollars is a big chunk of the general fund dollars. There is always an opportunity cost. The City Council must decide their priorities because there is not enough funding for everything.

The WWPd receives fewer than eight complaints per year and implementing body-worn cameras should reduce the number more. In reviewing the video, people can see the reality of the call and compare it to their perception at the time. Also, officers and citizens tend to be more cognizant of what they say and do when being recorded.

Chief Bieber has spoken with the President of the Police Guild. They are fine with implementing body-worn cameras.

The inclusion of a letter of support from the Advisory Board will increase our chance of being awarded a DOJ grant for BWC. Chief Bieber passed around a draft letter of support for review and signature by the board members who were comfortable doing so. All eight Committee Members present at the meeting signed the support letter, which includes Roger Esparza, Sandy García, Earl Gooding, Kanessa Henderson, Noah Leavitt, Dick Morgan, Steve Moss, and Roberto Rodriguez.

- 3) **June 30th—Town Hall**—The Town Hall meeting will take place tomorrow from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Steve Moss will chair the meeting, and attendees will participate by Zoom. Seven people submitted questions, and we will address those questions during the meeting. The last twenty minutes of the Town Hall has been set aside to address any remaining questions. Chief Bieber is finalizing his PowerPoint presentation and he will email it to the committee members tomorrow prior to the Town Hall. Representative Skyler Rude will provide an update on the law enforcement related legislation that recently passed and goes into effect on July 26.

The Town Hall meeting will be recorded. Jodi Stephens and Elizabeth Chamberlain will be attending to assist us. Brenden Koch issued a press release about the event and posted the meeting information online. WWPd administrative staff are working with Lexipol to revise our policies, so they comply with the new legislation.

Steve Moss noted that COVID and holding the meetings via a Zoom platform did slow down our progress. Still, we accomplished some notable things that should be shared

with the public. The City Council recently expressed interest in the Chief's Advisory Committee continuing to meet.

- 4) **Civil Service List**—Last week we held testing to create a new civil-service list for entry-level police officers. While several Spanish speakers made it through the written test, unfortunately, they all failed to make it through the physical test. Two women of color made it onto the list.

- 5) **Next Meeting**—July 27, 2021, from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 in-person at the WWPD.

The June 29, 2021, meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Submitted by Deborah Minter