2020 Body Worn Camera Program

In July 2018, The Centralia Police Department (CPD) Initiated a Body Camera

Program. With all officers and sergeants in the Field Operations Division being equipped with the Axon 2 Body Worn Cameras (BWC's). Five Sergeants and 13 Patrolman are equipped with Body cameras.

Year two of the program brought no major technological issues. A few BWC's were swapped out via warranty with AXON. This was a non-issue as we keep spare cameras on hand. Street level issues continue to be monitored by supervisors and via use of the CPD Body Worn Camera Evaluation Sheet. These are reviewed for reoccurring issues and are maintained by Administrative staff. Three issues we continue to monitor are officers forgetting to activate, officers inappropriately muting audio and BWC's falling off during a struggle.

Officers' experience/familiarity has reduced forgetting to activate occurrences; they will never completely be eliminated. When officers are thrust into the middle of an unforeseen situation, delayed or failed activations sometimes occur as the officers attention quickly and justifiably is elsewhere. To address the falling off during a struggle issue we implemented a different mounting solution rolling out a Molle vest and Molle mount for the cameras instead of the magnetic mount first used. The solution has greatly reduced the falling off issue.

2020 was the second year of our body cam program. The officers have for the most part adapted to wearing them. Our continued monthly audits have shown to help continually train officers on the use of the BWC.

In 2020 (8) calls were made to Axon with service related problems and were resolved.

With the above information in mind and to ensure proper use and functionality we have the following supervisory review process in place;

• All reports and accompanying BWC videos for Use of Force above normal handcuffing and soft empty hand control are reviewed by First Line Supervisors and forwarded up to the Division Commander then to the Chief for review.

• Starting in 2019 Sergeants are required to randomly review three videos each month for the officers in their respective squads. A spreadsheet is maintained on our shared drive where each supervisor enters the date and file number for each review. This is a simple and fair way to ensure the reviews are completed. The goal here is to ensure proper use, functionality of equipment, professionalism and officer safety. This can be matched up with audit capabilities in evidence.com should questions ever arise.

The Centralia Police Department has also coordinated with the Marion County State’s Attorney to ensure BWC videos are efficiently shared when needed as evidence. The biggest challenge in initiating the system was an efficient way to forward the videos to the SA's Office. The States Attorney's Office has since been set up with their own Evidence.com account that allows for the seamless access to share video evidence along with an audit trail to confirm who it was shared with and who accessed the video evidence.

Body Worn Cameras have been extremely helpful in resolving citizen complaints when citizen's call with concerns/potential complaints, CPD is able to resolve most issues by referring to the officers BWC video. After reviewing the BWC video and educating citizens as to the actual events and reasons for officer's actions the concerns are almost always resolved. As a result, the integrity of our officers, the department and the community are in fact being protected which was the goal of the program. Even so there are potential concerns which require ongoing attention and are as follows:

• We are trending near the 24 Terabytes of storage of Electronic Data stored by the department in evidence.com since 2018. This is a massive amount of data compiled to manage and review sort through to ensure compliance with new Safe T Act and department policy.

• The need to redact videos for FOIA requests is extremely time consuming. The redaction capabilities in evidence.com are adequate and have improved, on average

15-30 minutes is needed to redact each minute of BWC video. The range is based upon the complexities of a given video and the specific request. CPD also believes the below recommendations reference the current BWC FOIA Law warrant consideration.

• Eliminate the requirement for law enforcement to redact uninvolved citizens depicted in BWC video on a public way unless they are juveniles.

• Eliminate the need to provide BWC video from all officers on scene unless the primary officer's BWC failed or is incomplete in some way. In such cases only one additional officers BWC video depicting the requested events should be required.

• Allow for a provision in the body worn camera law to exempt Video taken on school grounds by SRO Officers that follow the guidelines set forth in FERPA

• Eliminate FOIA requests that occur where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists unless Deadly Force or force causing great bodily harm occurred or where the arrested subject is the sole person captured on the video.

• Clarity is needed reference the recording and subsequent release of confidential information whether from a confidential source, informant or citizen. FOIA law should protect confidential information and sources as much as possible.

In conclusion, we agree that the pros outweigh the cons with the BWC's if the FOIA and redaction issues could be resolved.