



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kris Simpson

**From:** Chief Jonathan Williams

**Date:** February 5, 2021

**Subject:** Body and In-Car Camera Purchase Recommendation

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In June, 2020, Det. James Jones was tasked by Chief Ron Compton to gather quotes for body camera and in-car camera systems. The criteria set for the quote was one body camera for each uniformed officer, which totals 19, and two (2) spare body cameras. The quote also required data storage information, warranty information, and functionality of the camera system and software. A second quote for eight (8) in-car camera systems was also requested. Some companies separated the body cameras and in-car cameras, some combined the two totals into one package.

Four companies were selected for the bidding process. The companies were/are Digital Ally, Axon, WatchGuard (Motorola), and Utility. These companies are the four most common providers of body worn and in-car cameras, and all four companies have contracts with St. Louis Area police agencies. Digital Ally has contracts with Arnold, Lake St. Louis, and Union. WatchGuard has contracts with Brentwood, Hazelwood, and Maplewood. Axon has contracts with Webster Groves. Utility has contracts with St. Louis County and St. Louis City Police Departments.

### **Function of the Cameras**

Before discussing each manufacturer, it is important to understand why we need the cameras and how we will use the cameras. As our society has evolved since 2014, transparency in police agencies has become a much debated topic. Certain segments of society are expecting police agencies to share more information on their daily interactions with the public. I as an individual, and as a Chief of Police, believe we should always be transparent. I have faith that our officers perform with professionalism and I am not afraid to show anyone how we interact with the public. With a push from some of the public and some legislators to make body cameras mandatory, it is important that we stay ahead of possible legislation.

Our use of the body cameras and in-car cameras will be controlled through policy and procedure. Patrol Officers, Traffic Officers, the Community Resource Officer, and Patrol Sergeants will wear a body camera while serving as a Crestwood Police Officer. This

includes both while on-duty within the city limits of Crestwood or assisting agencies outside of our jurisdiction. Command staff (Lieutenants, Deputy Chief, and Chief) will not be assigned a camera. Spare cameras can be used by the command staff if needed. Detectives will not be assigned a camera, but will have access to spare cameras if needed. Our eight (8) marked patrol cars will have in-car cameras. Our four (4) administrative cars will not have cameras.

Policy will instruct when an officer is to turn on the cameras. This will include any call for service or self-initiated activity (i.e. traffic stops). Casual encounters with the public will not require the officer to use the body camera. If that casual encounter turns into a situation where the officer feels the camera is needed then they should turn on the camera. Recording inside the police station or city hall will be prohibited, unless the officer is on an assigned call for service, this includes any interaction with prisoners. Our interview rooms are already equipped with cameras. Interviews with suspects inside the interview rooms would be recorded on our current interview room camera system. When and when not to use the camera will be clearly stated within policy. Periodic audits will be conducted by supervisors to ensure officers are using the cameras properly and at the appropriate times.

In-car camera systems typically include two cameras (one forward facing camera and one rear passenger seat camera), a monitor, and an operating system. The below picture is the Digital Ally Evo In-Car Camera System.

Most systems are small enough and can be mounted in a way not to limit visibility for the driver. Our in-car camera will turn on two ways, either manually or automatically when the emergency lights are activated. The recording will continue until the officer manually stops the recording. That recording will be stored on the internal operating system until it is uploaded into a cloud based storage system. The video will be labeled by the officer creating the video. If the video is needed the officer will burn the video onto a DVD and place the DVD into evidence. If the video has no evidentiary value, it will be deleted after a 90 day retention period. That too will be controlled through policy.



The body camera system operates differently than the in-car camera. Below is a picture of the Digital Ally body camera.

Depending on the manufacturer, body cameras typically come in two different ways. The body camera is either one unit which contains the camera lens, microphone, battery, and storage, or is a two piece unit which has the battery and storage as one piece and a separated camera lens and microphone that connects to the battery and storage unit through a wire. All body cameras are connected to an officer's uniform either by magnets or clips or a combination of magnets and clips.



Most operation of the camera is controlled by the officer. The officer will be required to turn on the camera when they arrive on a call. There are features where the camera can automatically turn on. Some have geo-fencing capabilities. For example, we could create a geo-fence around Kohl's. Anytime an officer would enter Kohl's, the camera would automatically turn on. The camera will continue recording until the officer manually turns off the camera.

The camera will store the videos until the camera is placed in a docking station. These docking stations are included in the price. The docking stations also serve as a battery charging station. The videos are then uploaded into a cloud based storage system. Officers will be required to label the videos and then follow the same procedure as the in-car videos. The body camera videos will also have the same 90 day retention period as in-car videos. Again, any video with evidentiary value will be burned to a DVD and placed into evidence.

A body camera is capable of storing approximately 12 hours of video in its internal storage. All manufacturers offer 90 days of unlimited cloud storage in their proposals. If a Department needs extra cloud storage, all manufacturers offer extra cloud storage for an additional charge. For example, Digital Ally offers 100mb of storage for \$63. One hour of video is almost 100mb, so for every 100mb (approximately one hour) we want to maintain beyond the 90 days, the cost increases \$63 per 100mb. This additional cost is not necessary. We will know if we need the video before the 90 days of included retention expires.

The body cameras and associated policies will add some extra work for officers. Officers will be required to label videos and download videos with evidentiary value. Supervisors will be required to frequently audit videos. In my experience, having used body cameras and in-car cameras for years at my previous department, I found that this extra work is minimal. Once officers become proficient at the systems they can label videos and download videos in a matter of minutes. Supervisors are able to audit the videos while reviewing reports. The small amount of extra work does not outweigh the benefits of these systems.

## **Bidding Process**

Every bid from each of the four manufacturers included the same equipment. All have 21 body cameras, eight in-car cameras, docking stations for the body cameras, 90 days of

cloud based storage, warranties on the product, customer support, and set-up and installation. In all of the bids we asked to lease the products instead of purchase. This option allows us to receive new, updated, equipment every two years. Body camera technology is quickly evolving and the lease programs allow us to evolve with the technology. Like all technology, think of your home computer or cellular phone, if we purchase the equipment eventually the software will not be supported, or the hardware will become outdated, resulting in replacement cost in the future. Leasing the equipment makes the most sense for our use case.

All of the manufacturers require a five year contract, which is standard in the industry. The overall cost of the contract is divided over the five years. The first year, in some instances, costs more because of installation, product purchase, set-up and training. The final four years of the contract are typically a fixed cost and should not increase. If we do not want to use the cameras before the five year expiration we still owe the remainder of the contract. There are no early exit clauses. The contract can either be paid in full in year one, or the cost can be spread out over the five years. If we choose to spread out the costs over the five years, the cost of each year is in each bid. A breakdown of each manufacturer's bid/cost is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Axon</b>	<b>Utility</b>	<b>WatchGuard</b>	<b>Digital Ally</b>
<b>1</b>	\$68,985.50	\$34,756.00	\$40,644.00	\$66,730.24
<b>2</b>	\$43,248.00	\$34,756.00	\$40,644.00	\$10,076.88
<b>3</b>	\$43,248.00	\$34,756.00	\$40,644.00	\$10,076.88
<b>4</b>	\$43,248.00	\$34,756.00	\$40,644.00	\$10,076.88
<b>5</b>	\$43,248.00	\$34,756.00	\$40,644.00	\$10,076.88
<b>Total</b>	\$241,977.50	\$173,780.00	\$203,220.00	\$107,037.76

Digital Ally's price is based on a cooperative procurement program through NPPGov. It is a nationwide contract, purchased under contract number PS20165.

NPPGov is a national cooperative procurement organization based in Seattle, WA offering publicly solicited contracts to government entities nationwide. Access to their cooperative contracts is complimentary with no purchasing obligations.

The important thing to remember when reviewing the chart is that all services requested and provided are the exact same. Each quote is for 21 body cameras, eight (8) in-car cameras, cloud based 90 day retention storage, service and support, product replacement and updating, and installation. All systems operate the exact same way. Body cameras will require the officer to turn them on and off. The in-car cameras can either be turned on manually or will automatically turn on with the emergency lights. The only company that has a difference is Utility. Their body cameras require a uniform modification. A hole must be placed in uniform shirts, coats, and sweaters. Leon Uniform Company, our uniform supplier, gave us a quote for the uniform modifications.

Standard long-sleeve shirt	\$54.00
Oversize long-sleeve shirt	\$59.00

Standard short-sleeve shirt	\$48.00
Oversize short-sleeve shirt	\$53.00

All existing shirts would need modifications and any new shirt would need a modification. Utility will originally give each officer a \$200.00 credit for the modifications. Going forward thought that cost would be placed on the officer. A new shirt without modification average \$75.00. Add the modification and that shirt becomes \$129.00.

### **Recommendation**

The staff at the Crestwood Police Department recommends we select Digital Ally as our body camera and in-car camera supplier. There are several reasons for this selection. First, and foremost, is cost. Their cost is substantially lower than the other manufacturers. This is the most fiscally responsible option. The price is also based on a cooperative procurement program through NPPGov. It is important to note though that the lower cost does not mean we are getting an inferior product. It functions as well as their competitors.

Second, during the bidding process, multiple Crestwood officers were consulted, and the group favored the Digital Ally product. They liked the multiple mounting options the body camera provides. It can either be mounted to your shirt with an alligator clip or a magnetic clip. They preferred the web based software. They preferred the recording functions. The body camera and in-car camera link together an incident. Take for instance a traffic stop, the video captured on the body camera and in-car camera will upload onto the same file. The officer can then review all videos captured simultaneously. And finally they preferred the customer service.

I met with the sales representative from Digital Ally. The corporation is based in Lenexa, Kansas. Their target audience is small to mid-sized police departments. Some of their local contracts include Arnold Police Department, Lake St. Louis Police Department and Union Police Department. At my previous police department we had used the Axon body camera for three years and the WatchGuard in-car camera system for 10 years. I saw no difference between Axon, WatchGuard, and Digital Ally. The body cameras and in-car cameras appear to function the exact same as Axon and WatchGuard. Their software looks and functions similar. The only difference is price. I know Utility provides a quality product. I am familiar with its function. Why I will not recommend Utility is the uniform modifications. There are enough products on the market that do not require uniform modifications. Again, all of these products function similarly.

Finally, Digital Ally fits our department's needs. Our need for cameras is three fold. First, they are needed for transparency. Second, they are needed for incident documentation. Third, they are needed for evidence. The Crestwood Police Department needs a camera system that will record video, retain the video for 90 days, and allow us to download the video if it is needed for evidence. Digital Ally fits all three of our needs at a fiscally responsible price.