



WEST ALLIS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Patrick S. Mitchell
Chief of Police

Robert Fletcher
Deputy Chief of Police

Christopher Marks
Deputy Chief of Police

February 18, 2021

Board of Police and Fire Commissioners
West Allis, Wisconsin

Re: Purchase Approval – Axon Interview Room Camera System

Dear Commissioners:

Currently, the West Allis Police Department has 6 Interview Rooms, which are used to interview victims, witnesses, suspects, and offenders. Of our 6 Interview Rooms, 2 are equipped to record audio and video, 2 are equipped to record video only, and 2 are not equipped to record either audio or video. A handheld recording device is used to record audio if the room is not equipped to record audio.

While we are required by law to record some interviews (e.g., certain juvenile interviews), it is our practice to at least record the audio of interviews of all suspects and offenders. It is also our practice to record video and audio of interviews related to serious offenses. Sometimes, we record victim and witness interviews.

Currently, officers and investigators must consider the nature and seriousness of an offense, determine which rooms are available, and choose a room that will meet their recording needs when interviewing someone. Following an interview, there are various time consuming steps that officers, investigators, and support staff must take to ensure recordings are saved long term and to share recordings with other professionals.

Equipment associated with our different recording systems is at least 6 years old and some of the equipment has required replacement. We have found repetitive glitches with our recording systems over the years and, in some cases, the systems failed to record an interview or only recorded a portion of an interview. All recordings are currently stored on City of West Allis servers and the recordings require significant space. In addition, purging unneeded recordings can only be accomplished through a labor intensive, manual process.

Having various recording systems is not ideal and is not the industry standard. Recording systems that fail to adequately record video and audio of interviews by law enforcement reduces our ability to capture excellent evidence for use in criminal prosecutions, can compromise criminal prosecutions, reduces transparency to the public, reduces our reputation with the public and other professionals, and can increase the Department's liability

The West Allis Police Department has been using Axon's Body Worn Cameras since 2017. Body Worn Camera recordings are stored on Axon's Evidence.com, which is a cloud based software platform with unlimited storage. We have found the Body Worn Cameras and



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Evidence.com to be user friendly, efficient, and reliable. Axon also offers an Interview Room Camera System, which captures video and audio recordings and then automatically transfers them to Evidence.com. In addition, recordings are automatically purged based on parameters we establish and recordings can easily be shared with other professionals. The purchase and implementation of this system would replace our dated equipment and allow us to have a single, reliable system that would capture excellent evidence to assist in criminal investigations; increase transparency with the public; increase our reputation with the public and other professionals; reduce the amount of time required by staff to obtain, save, and share recordings; eliminate the need for storing future recordings; reduce liability for the Department; and meet the industry standard.

The cost to equip our 6 interview rooms with Axon’s solution is \$43,342.40 for the first year. This solution includes a camera and microphone for each room, other hardware, licensing, warranties, and unlimited storage. The cost to maintain this system for each of the subsequent 4 years is \$11,428 per year. The total sum for 5 years is \$89,054.40.

In an effort to satisfy City of Allis purchasing requirements and to obtain the best possible pricing, we have been working with Robert Barwick from the City of West Allis Finance Department regarding this matter. This purchase has been submitted for approval by the West Allis Common Council at their February 17th meeting. We are now requesting Police and Fire Commission approval to purchase Axon’s Interview Room Camera System using funding from our Federal Equitable Sharing Account (214-0801-521-64-05).

Sincerely

Steve Beyer
Captain of Police

Formal Approval	Date
President, Police and Fire Commission	