

City Council – Action Request Form

Date: August 9, 2021

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Damon Dequenne, Assistant City Manager
 Catrina Thompson, Chief of Police

Council Action Requested:
 Resolution Awarding a Contract to AXON Enterprise Equipment and Services for Body Worn Cameras and Conducted Electrical Weapons with Related Hardware, Software, Licensing, and Cloud Storage

Strategic Focus Area: Safe and Secure Community
Strategic Objective: Improve Public Safety Service Delivery
Strategic Plan Action Item: No
Key Work Item: No



Summary of Information:

On January 15, 2017, the City entered into a 5-year contract with Taser International, Inc. (now Axon Enterprise, Inc.) for the supply of TASER® conducted electrical weapons (CEW) and associated hardware and licenses, as well as body-worn cameras and cloud-based data storage through Evidence.com. This contract is set to expire as of January 15, 2022. Axon Enterprise, Inc. ("Axon") has offered to enter into a new 5-year contract for the purchase of updated and/or new equipment, hardware, installation, software, licensing, data storage and associated warranties. The new contract will continue to provide the benefits under the Officer Safety Plan created in the 2017 contract. The Axon system is recommended as the only system that will assimilate with existing technology, and specifically with Evidence.com.

Committee Action:

Committee	Finance 8/9/2021	Action	Approval
For	Unanimous	Against	
Remarks:			

The existing contract with Axon, which is set to expire on January 15, 2022, will be terminated early so that the new contract can begin on October 1, 2021 and continue to and through October 1, 2026. This early termination will result in an offset and credit already reflected in the new contract for services budgeted and paid for, but not used, under the existing contract. In addition, the new contract certifies that the Police Department will receive all the new equipment needed to transition from the Taser X2 to the Taser T7 by the contract start date of October 1, 2021; however, from an operational standpoint, the Police Department Training Staff will not be able to train and transition sworn personnel to the new Taser T7 until January 2022. Consequently, Axon Enterprise, Inc. has agreed to provide an additional 3 months of warranty protection on the new Taser T7 at no extra cost, such that the new equipment will be fully warranted for a total period of 5 years and 3 months. In sum, Quote No. 325230 will provide updated and/or new equipment, hardware, installation, software, licensing data storage and associated warranties for a 5-year contract beginning October 1, 2021 and ending October 1, 2026 at a cost of \$6,702,065.30 including an additional warranty period on the Taser T7, at no additional cost to the City, beginning October 1, 2026 and ending December 31, 2026. While the cost provided above is an increase over previous costs, the upgrade in equipment and services will enhance officer safety, public safety and agency transparency. Specifically, the following factors account for this contractual increase:

- **Normal inflation:** The current contract was signed on January 15, 2017 and since that time, Axon Enterprise, Inc., has upgraded their technology and grown in demand, especially with the increased need for police transparency; consequently, the costs associated with their equipment and services has increased as well.
- **Upgrade of the Conducted Electrical Weapons (CEWs) from the X2, which is the current model, to the T7:** The T7 has advanced technology that makes it more effective at closer distances (most Taser deployments occur at less than 6 feet, and the X2 is most effective when deployed at 7 to 11 feet) and faster and more penetrable, which defeats thick clothing and jackets that become problematic in the colder months. In addition, the T7 is yellow in color for clear distinction between the CEW and a service weapon. Lastly, the T7 comes with a rechargeable battery, which eliminates the fiscal responsibility of buying new batteries to replace old ones.
- **The addition of Fleet 3:** Fleet 3 will equip all patrol vehicles with a front facing camera to capture an officers' driving view and a rear compartment camera to capture prisoner transport. When the Winston-Salem Police Department entered into the contract with Axon Enterprise, Inc. on January 15, 2017, patrol vehicles were still equipped with a Mobile Device Video Recording (MDVR) System, which served a similar function; however, that system has since been discontinued so Fleet 3 is being sought not only as a replacement for but an upgrade to the MDVR.
- **The addition of Axon Respond:** Axon Respond is a software program that offers a real-time operations platform that, among other things, affords assigned users the capability of live streaming Axon Body Cameras that are in the active mode. There are several benefits to this program, many of which enhance officer and public safety.

- **The addition of Axon Performance:** Axon Performance is a software program designed to reduce the amount of time supervisors spend reviewing compliance with agency policies and procedures. Axon Performance streamlines the supervisor's review process and enables supervisors to deliver tailored personnel training and feedback to ensure employees are operating within agency guidelines. In short, this feature will provide an early warning system that will identify those who are not in compliance with Axon related policies so that behavior and performance can be corrected before it becomes a liability.
- **The addition of Axon Signal:** Axon Signal is a technology that automatically activates the Body Worn Camera System under specified situations. This automatic activation allows the officer to focus on the critical incident rather than his/her Body Worn Camera system. This feature also ensures transparency by eliminating any human error of either forgetting to activate the camera or failing to activate it properly.

This recommendation is based upon provisions of N.C.G.S. 143-129(e) which provides that formal bid requirements do not apply to purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment when performance or price competition are not available; when a needed product is available from only one source of supply; or when standardization or compatibility is the overriding consideration.

Approval sought is for the City Manager to be authorized to enter into a contract (together with any required ancillary documents) with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for the equipment and services outlined above, upon approval as to form and legality by the City Attorney's Office. The contract payment for FY21-22, which totals \$1,340,415.70, has been budgeted in the Police General Fund. The annual recurring payment for the remaining four years of the contract have been evenly divided so that each year will cost \$1,340,412.40. These remaining four payments will also be budgeted in and paid for out of the Police General Fund.

M/WBE comment: Axon Enterprise, Inc. is the sole source provider for this purchase.

Workforce Demographics: See Exhibit A.