



Report on the Madison Police Department Body-Worn Camera Pilot



Office of the Independent Monitor



Report on the Madison Police Department Body-Worn Camera Pilot

September 1, 2025

Robin Copley, Esq.
Independent Police Monitor

Chioma Njoku
Office Manager

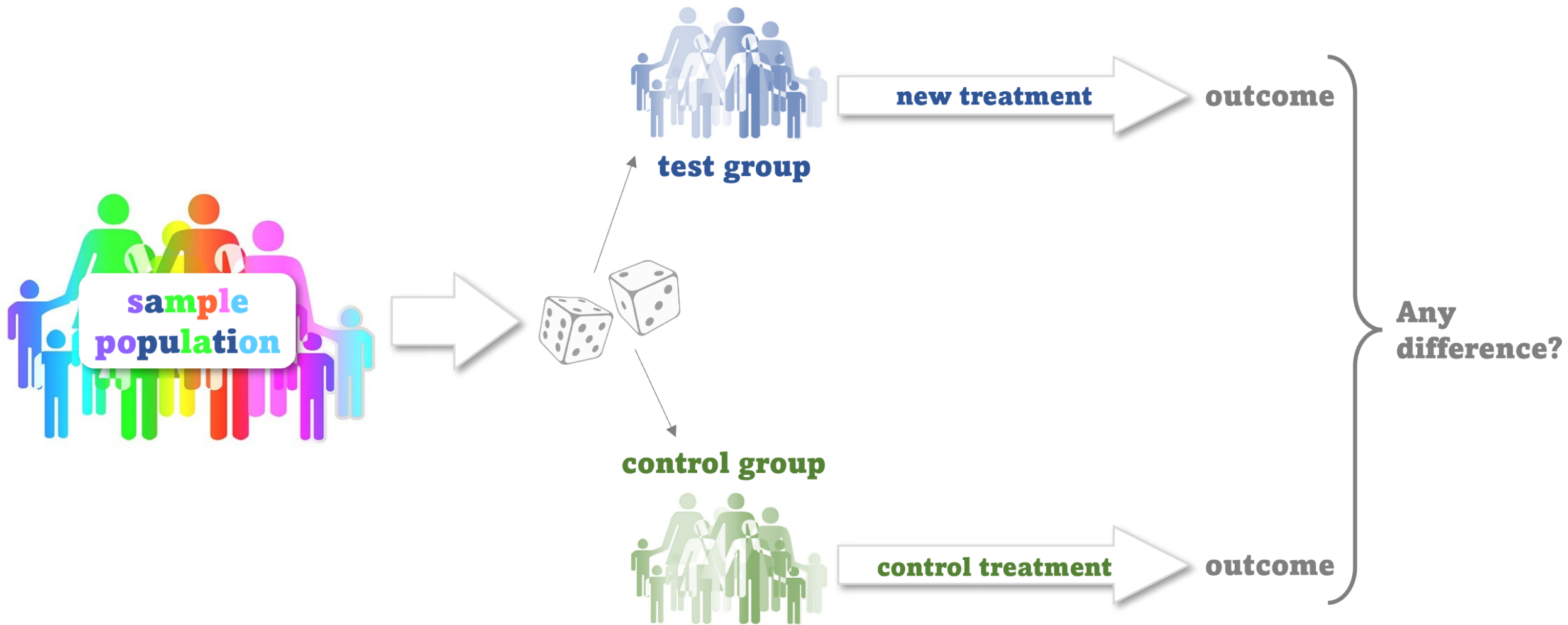
Dr. Gregory Gelembiuk
Data Analyst

MPD Chief Shon Barnes did not comply with Council directives for the BWC trial.

Though, under Wisconsin statute, a police Chief has authority over the day to day operations of their police department, they are required to follow the lawful orders of a city council, such as the policy directives the Madison Common Council issued in the resolutions authorizing the BWC pilot program ([Wis. Stat. 62.09\(13\)\(a\)](#): “The chief shall obey all lawful written orders of the mayor or common council.”). The failure to do so in this case should be reviewed, so that the underlying problems may be better understood and avoided in the future.

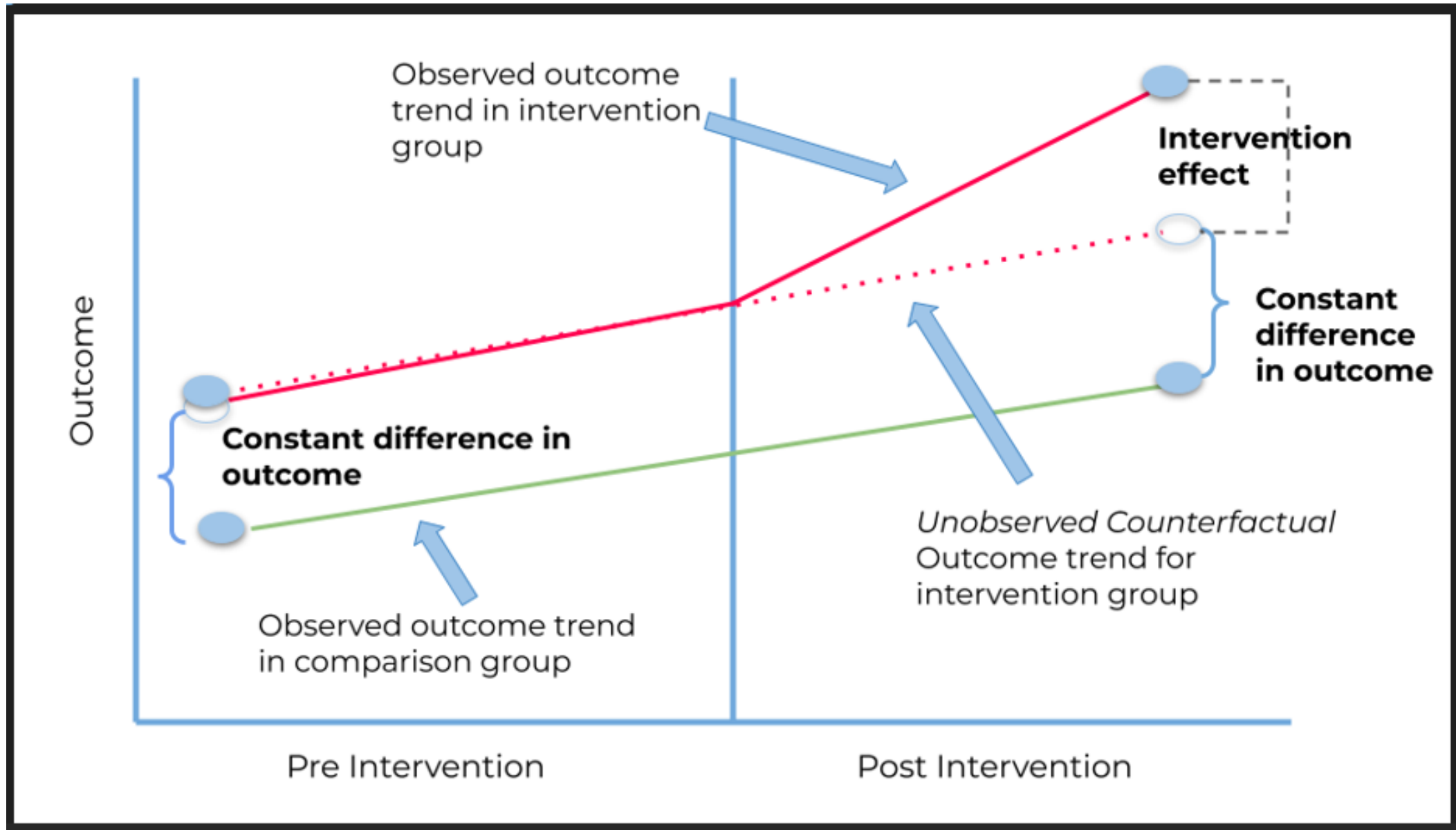
OIM wishes to emphasize that the failure to follow Council directives in this case should not be attributed to MPD's current Chief and leadership.

Failure to Perform a Randomized Controlled Trial



An RCT is a true experiment. Between the treatment and control groups, everything is identical other than the treatment – in this case BWCs. Data would all be from the same district(s) – comparing officers with and without BWCs in those district(s).

Difference in Differences Analysis for Observational Data



Comparing across districts, assuming that trends in the treatment and control districts would be identical, other than because of the treatment (BWCs).

Failure to Measure Officer Time on BWC-related Tasks



Council Resolution Authorizing BWC Pilot

“officer time needed for bodycam-related tasks -- e.g., viewing video when necessary, tagging video, providing input for redaction when necessary, uploading video....should be accounted for in the design and implementation of the ‘rigorous, randomized trial’ included in the Body-Worn Camera Pilot”

“officer time for tasks related to body-worn cameras during the pilot shall be recorded in work logs in order to gain a better understanding of the complete and true costs for Body-Worn Camera utilization, and that this requirement shall be stipulated in Madison Police Department’s Standard Operating Procedures during the extent of the pilot”

“Madison Police Department shall submit a report to the Common Council that describes...officer time and administrative staff time needed for body-cam related tasks and training”

Failure to Modify SOP to Better Comply with Recommended Policy

The Council explicitly directed that the SOP written by Chief Barnes be modified to be in better compliance with the policies recommended by the BWC Committee.

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a pilot for Body-Worn Cameras in the City of Madison is required to implement recommendations listed in the final report of the Body-Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee to the greatest extent feasible...”

Barnes’ BWC SOP differed in many critical ways from the BWC Committee recommended BWC policy. In most cases, there was no legitimate legal reason for the deviation from the recommended policy.

One example of many is given in Appendix 3.

Under Barnes’ SOP, officers could view their BWC videos before writing their case reports.

There’s a clear consensus across police oversight professionals, civil rights organizations, and scientists, that officers should not be allowed to view BWC video before report writing:

- Watching video before writing turns two independent streams of evidence (video and eyewitness memory), that may have different information, into one stream. Watching the videos contaminates the eyewitness accounts.
- Watching video before writing allows officers to hide misconduct by allowing them to construct falsified reports congruent with what’s captured (and not captured) in the video, undercutting the accountability function of BWCs.

Failure to Measure and Analyze the Most Important Metric Specified in BWC Committee Report

Separate from cost, the single biggest concern stated in that report was the potential increase in criminal charges brought by prosecutors, particularly for misdemeanor offenses, when BWC video is available.

As the Body Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee report clearly states, the pilot was not to be conducted until:

“Arrangements have been made for a rigorous, randomized controlled trial as a pilot program, with tracking and analysis of data on key outcomes, and particularly prosecutorial charging rates. A primary use of the trial would be to determine if charging rates and pleading rates are increased, particularly for misdemeanors, for cases in which BWC video is available....”



Table 23. Effects of BWC Video Availability on Filing Outcomes

Outcome	Model 1 Unadjusted	Model 2 Entropy	Model 3 PSM
Misdemeanor File			
Video Available	1.86*** (0.09)	2.42*** (0.13)	2.49*** (0.15)

Treatment: Video Available.

Control: Video Not Available.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Exponentiated coefficients (i.e., Relative Risk Ratios) are reported. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

Entropy=Entropy Weighted Control; PSM=Propensity Score Matched Sample

Groff, E.R., Ward, J.T., and Wartell, J. (2018). The Role of Body-worn Camera Footage in the Decision to File.

Errors and other Issues in Data Analysis

1. Entirely erroneous number of arrests and cases.

E.g. Report says analysis was done on the 11,514 arrests MPD made between January 1, 2024, through August 28, 2024. But there were only 5,869 arrests made by MPD in this period.

There's no way to come up with the number of arrests and cases claimed in the report. The numbers appear wildly erroneous.

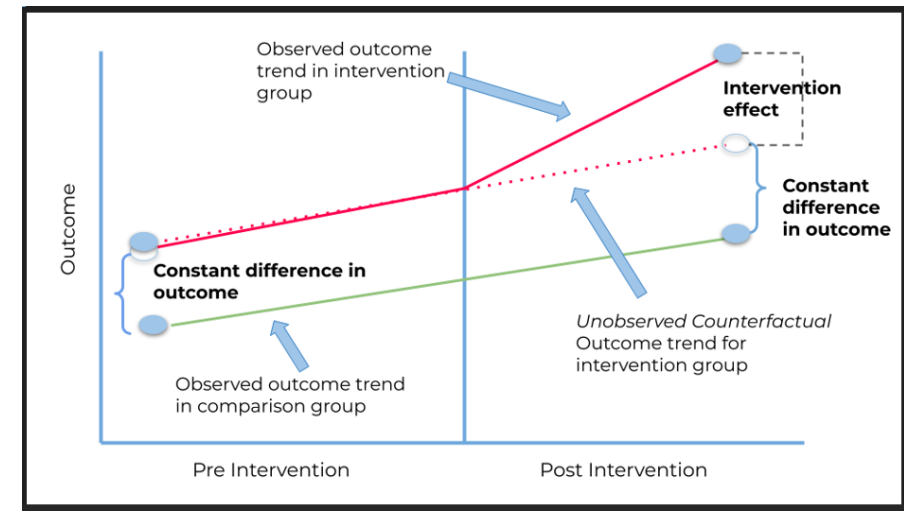
2. Missing arrests and citations.

Discrepancies between restorative justice spreadsheet data versus MPD arrest and citation data. Apparent paper tickets scanned into LERMS data. Missing in TRaCS citation data.

3. Duplication of arrests, referred charges, and citations.

4. Violated analytical assumptions, rendering analyses invalid.

Parallel trends assumption appears clearly violated given nonparallel pretrends for number of arrests, as well as for the number of municipal citations, the number of cases associated with citations, and the racial disparity in Black versus white arrests.



Results Upon Re-analysis of Data After Rectifying Errors

Metric	P-value with Conventional Standard Errors	P-value with Robust Standard Errors	Parameter Estimate – Effect of BWCs
Arrests	0.781	0.893	0.11
All Citations (Traffic + Municipal)	<0.001	0.224	3.11
Traffic Citations*	<0.001	0.024	3.5
Municipal Citations	0.992	0.998	-0.00253
Offenses	0.0371	0.244	-2.06
Referred Criminal Charges	0.869	0.937	0.113
Cases Associated with Arrests	0.0433	0.093	-1.05
Cases Associated with Citations	0.442	0.484	0.276
Cases Associated with Offenses	0.0224	0.0663	-1.74
Racial Disparity (Black vs White Arrestees)	0.398	0.573	-0.03

*Significant decrease at p<0.05 level with robust standard errors.

Additional Issues

Cross-Contamination of Data from Control Districts

At least some BWC use in control districts, which would diminish estimates of BWC effects.

Budget Analysis Scanty on Detail

There is no breakdown of cost, other than for administrative staffing needs, so it's impossible to check the accuracy of the costs provided and whether essential requirements were fulfilled.

Impacts with Respect to Race and Ethnicity

High racial and ethnic diversity given as reason for doing pilot in North district, but virtually no examination of impacts was performed with respect to race and ethnicity. And demographic differences from control districts (e.g., North versus West) could compromise ability to draw valid conclusions.

Sample Size Issues for Surveys and Focus Groups

Number of participants far too small to draw any reliable conclusions.

Effects on Trust

MPD report repeatedly says that BWCs should be adopted to improve trust. But there is no good evidence that BWCs increase trust. Such an effect has not been found in BWC studies.

Conflicts of Interest

Dr. Broderick Turner, who performed most of the analyses for MPD's BWC report, is a paid consultant for a BWC manufacturer, Axon.

However, though the analyses conducted by Dr. Turner had multiple major errors/flaws, it did not show any overt indications of bias.

[Axon Community Impact](#) [Meet the Team](#) [Responsible Innovation](#) [Community Partnership](#)

Dr. Broderick Turner

Broderick L. Turner, Jr., Ph.D is an assistant professor of Marketing at the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech. He leads multiple research projects that consider how



Madison's police body-camera report didn't disclose a researcher's connection to Axon

The researcher serves on an advisory council for a leading body-cam vendor.

BY SCOTT GORDON & CHRISTINA LIEFFRING • **POLITICS** • NOVEMBER 26, 2024

A portrait of Dr. Broderick Turner, Jr., a Black man with short dark hair and a mustache, wearing a dark shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing some greenery and a building.

ISTHMUS
NEWS OPINION FOOD & DRINK ARTS CALENDAR ABOUT STORE

HOME / NEWS / NEWS /

Madison police event paid for by body camera company

BY DYLAN BROGAN FEBRUARY 9, 2022 5:32 PM

A close-up photograph of an Axon body camera mounted on a black tactical vest. The camera is black and rectangular with a lens in the center. To the left of the camera, a blue microphone is visible. The vest has a white letter 'P' on it. A blue shirt is visible on the right side of the frame.

AXON

Public Records Requests for BWC Video

The police departments for Cleveland (population ~ 365,000), Cincinnati (population ~ 315,000), and Milwaukee (population ~ 564,000) employ, respectively, 7, 7, and 5 full time staff to specifically respond to BWC public records requests. Cleveland provided the most detailed information, stating that last year, they received 1,537 public records requests for BWC video (a number that they said was growing by about 300 additional requests annually), and redacted and released 3,214 BWC videos.

The number of requests reported by these departments appears roughly comparable to what MPD reported for its short (three month) BWC trial in one police district, after scaling up from the limited duration and spatial extent of the MPD trial.



Public Records Request Center

Appendix 1 – Language in Council Resolutions and former Chief Barnes' Memo

Relevant excerpts from Council resolutions authorizing the BWC pilot program only under specific conditions, and excerpt from a memo from Chief Barnes. Key language underlined. Yellow highlighting = directives to record and provide data on officer time on BWC-related tasks and training. Blue highlighting = requirement that the BWC study be a rigorous randomized controlled trial. Magenta highlighting = directive that for the pilot program, MPD must work to bring the SOP into better compliance with the policy recommendations of the Body Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee.

Excerpts from April 19, 2022 resolution passed by Council:

<https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5558429&GUID=7FD88A11-E420-4469-8AA1-C74BC8AE0584&FullText=1>

WHEREAS, officer time needed for bodycam-related tasks -- e.g., viewing video when necessary, tagging video, providing input for redaction when necessary, uploading video, and related administrative work such as responding to public records requests for video and performing redactions when needed, preparing video for the district attorney, ensuring video is properly stored, etc. should be accounted for in the design and implementation of the "rigorous, randomized trial" included in the Body-Worn Camera Pilot, and

WHEREAS, training will be required for all officers using body-worn cameras in order to comply with department SOPs, and therefore should be accounted for in the design and implementation of the "rigorous, randomized trial" included in the Body-Worn Camera Pilot, and....

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council authorizes the Madison Police Department to implement a pilot program for body-worn cameras according to specific criteria; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a pilot for Body-Worn Cameras in the City of Madison is required to implement recommendations listed in the final report of the Body-Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee to the greatest extent feasible including, but not limited to, the stipulation that "arrangements be made for a rigorous, randomized controlled trial"; and the Council direct the Mayor's office to collaborate with outside entities to advance the Body Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee recommendations; and....

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that officer time for tasks related to body-worn cameras during the pilot shall be recorded in work logs in order to gain a better understanding of the complete and true costs for Body-Worn Camera utilization, and that this requirement shall be stipulated in Madison Police Department's Standard Operating Procedures during the extent of the pilot; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that after conducting a thorough review of the implementation of the body-worn camera pilot program the Madison Police Department shall submit a report to

the Common Council that describes Madison Police Department's use of the cameras, policies and procedures governing their use, and qualitative and quantitative data related to their use, officer time and administrative staff time needed for body-cam related tasks and training; and that report shall be subject to evaluation by a third party identified by the Common Council; and....

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that upon receipt of said report the Common Council will refer the report to the Madison Civilian Oversight Board and Independent Monitor for a thorough review of the report to assess the costs and benefits of MPD officers wearing body-worn cameras."

From August 1, 2023. Resolution passed by Council:

<https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6259937&GUID=23C374AE-53D0-4B67-88BD-5C7FA20EA4D3>

"WHEREAS, on April 19, 2022, via Resolution File Number 68625, the Common Council authorized the Madison Police Department (MPD) to implement a Body Worn Camera Pilot program...

WHEREAS, in the report provided by the OCA, there are numerous areas including requirements related to hardware, deactivation, tracking, retention, and reporting as well as coordination with the Independent Monitor (IM) and Civilian Oversight Board (COB) and the District Attorney's office that are not consistent with the Body Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee recommendations, and

WHEREAS, as per Resolution File Number 68625, after conducting a thorough review of the implementation of the body-worn camera pilot program the Madison Police Department shall submit a report to the Common Council that describes Madison Police Department's use of the cameras, policies and procedures governing their use, and qualitative and quantitative data related to their use, officer time and administrative staff time needed for body-cam related tasks and training; and that report shall be subject to evaluation by a third party identified by the Common Council; and

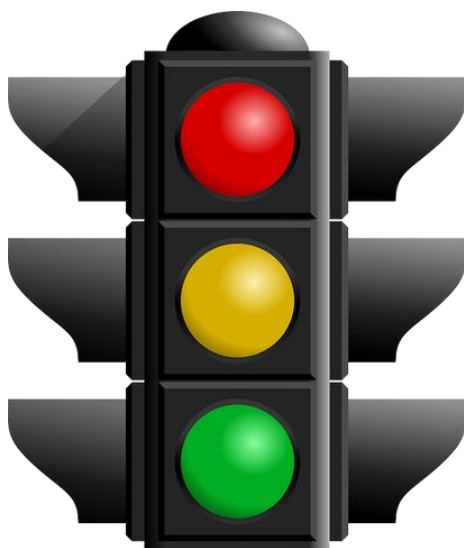
BE IT RESOLVED, that Common Council directs MPD to continue to work towards updating their policy to have better compliance with the Body Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee recommendations during the Pilot program, and...."

2023 memo from Barnes:

<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12089966&GUID=715C386B-EFB2-46F5-913E-D256C63AAF6C>

"We believe we have sufficiently completed all requirements of the BWC Pilot Study which was approved by council in 2022. The Madison Police Department respectfully submits (1) MPD's BWC Pilot Study Policy (2) MPD's BWC Pilot RCT Study Proposal (3) MPD's BWC Overview PowerPoint Presentation and (4) Madison's BWC Feasibility Committee's Proposed Policy."

BWC Committee – Strict Preconditions for BWC Implementation



Appendix 7 - Strict Preconditions for BWC Implementation Specified in BWC Committee Report

Below is text from the Committee report, along with a color-coded statement on whether each precondition has been satisfied.

Green = precondition satisfied

Yellow = precondition partially satisfied

Red = precondition not satisfied

While the Committee struggled to come to consensus on whether to recommend for or against BWCs, the Committee was unanimous that BWCs should only be implemented if done so in a context that includes good policies and procedures as part of an overall package of reforms that enhances the potential for desired effects and minimizes the potential for unintended harms as much as possible. Thus, the following should be strict preconditions for implementation of BWCs.

Madison should adopt a BWC program only if:

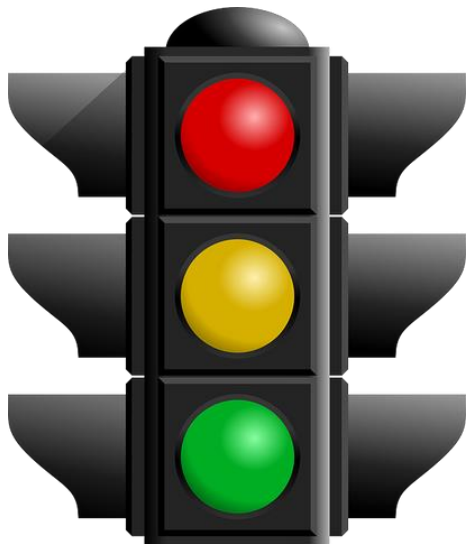
1. MPD has formally adopted the BWC policies recommended by the Body-Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee with, at most, minor modifications that do not alter the essential substance and principles outlined in this Report and in the Model Policy, which are designed to minimize officer discretion, minimize potential bias in the captured images, protect legitimate privacy interests, minimize opportunities for exacerbating racial disparities and increased criminalization of marginalized groups, minimize opportunities for mass surveillance of civilians, ensure the integrity of the recordings, enhance accountability and transparency, and enhance access to the truth.

This precondition is not satisfied. The current MPD SOP has multiple major differences from the Committee's recommended policy.

2. Accompanying all disclosure or release of BWC footage shall be a statement, either written as a document or added to the beginning of the video, informing viewers of the perceptual bias (detailed below) inherent in viewing BWC video footage, with an instruction to the viewer to consider this risk and its impact before reaching a conclusion about the footage, in order to arrive at valid judgements.^[1] This instruction may include:

- a. Because the BWC is not aimed at the wearer, it may not capture relevant actions of the wearer. BWC footage may not accurately capture the intent and possible misconduct of the person wearing the BWC, since they are largely invisible in their own BWC video. Research shows that human beings tend to judge more harshly the person who is the subject in a video and therefore to skew perception in favor of the wearer and against the subject because BWCs are pointed at the subject.
- b. BWC footage may promote or create an exaggerated perception of aggression of subjects interacting with the BWC wearer, given motion and jostling of the BWC on the wearer.
- c. BWC footage may promote or create an exaggerated perception of the height and size of subjects interacting with the BWC wearer, dependent on the position of the BWC mount.

BWC Committee Report Strict Preconditions



d. The speed at which BWC footage is viewed may affect perception of subject intent or actions. Slowing down footage may make the subject appear more deliberate in their actions, while speeding up footage may make the subject appear more aggressive.

e. BWC footage provides a record of events, but that record is not comprehensive and is subject to the viewer's interpretation. BWC footage should be considered within the context of other evidence provided.

It appears that no action has been taken to satisfy this precondition.

3. Given ongoing advances in research, experts on cognitive and perceptual biases should periodically be consulted for recommendations on steps that should be taken to best mitigate these biases in judgements based on body camera footage (e.g., specific trainings for prosecutors, etc.), and appropriate actions should be taken, based on these recommendations.

It appears that nothing has been done to satisfy this precondition.

4. The Independent Police Monitor and Police Civilian Oversight Board are fully operational and have access to BWC video footage as set forth elsewhere in this report and model policy.

This precondition is satisfied.

5. The City and MPD have made substantial and sustained progress toward adopting the other reforms recommended by the previous Madison Police Department Policy and Procedure Review Ad Hoc Committee, especially in the areas of Accountability, Use of Force, and Response to Critical Incidents.

Though only a limited portion of the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations have been implemented at this point, OIM judges this precondition substantially satisfied.

6. A system and or process for sharing BWC video footage files – preferably an electronic file sharing system if feasible – with the Dane County District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office in time for informing charging decisions for cases referred by MPD for potential criminal charges.

It appears that no action has been taken to satisfy this precondition.

7. The Dane County District Attorney's Office has formally enacted a policy to review any relevant BWC video before making a charging decision in any case referred by MPD where BWC video is available.

It appears that no attempt has been made to negotiate and obtain such a commitment.

8. The Dane County District Attorney's Office has firmly committed to measures sufficient to prevent an overall increase in charging rates and criminalization in low-level offenses caused by MPD BWC implementation.

It appears that no attempt has been made to negotiate and obtain such a commitment.

9. Arrangements have been made for a rigorous, randomized controlled trial as a pilot program, with tracking and analysis of data on key outcomes, and particularly prosecutorial charging rates. A primary use of the trial would be to determine if charging rates and pleading rates are

increased, particularly for misdemeanors, for cases in which BWC video is available. If there is statistically significant evidence of an increase in charging rates, particularly for misdemeanors, which can be causally connected to the implementation of BWCs, measures sufficient to fully offset the increase should be taken before BWC program continuation or more widespread BWC implementation. If expansion of implementation occurs after the pilot program, MPD, as well as the Dane County District Attorney's Office, should continue to collect data on the effects of BWCs to continue to ascertain if BWCs are producing increases in charging rates for low-level offenses or other unintended negative consequences. If so, the City should take the necessary steps vis-à-vis the MPD and/or the District Attorney's Office to fully offset any unintended negative consequences.

A BWC pilot has occurred, but it wasn't conducted as an RCT. No analysis has been performed of prosecutorial charging rates. MPD and the DA's Office have not yet committed to continued collection and analysis of the specified data.

10. The Common Council should engage in informed deliberation on whether resources required for BWC implementation would best be allocated to BWC implementation or other competing needs.

It appears that such a deliberation has yet to occur.

If the City, MPD, and the DA's Office fail to fulfill these preconditions, then the Committee unanimously agrees that BWCs should not be implemented in Madison.⁵⁰

Recommendations



1. Upon being appointed Madison Chief of Police, Chiefs should be explicitly informed that under Wis. Stats. 62.09(13)(a), they are required to "obey all lawful written orders of the mayor or common council". Under Wisconsin Statutes, police chiefs have independent authority to manage day-to-day operations of MPD, but Chiefs are not free to disregard Council or Mayoral lawful written directives, such as those in the resolutions authorizing the BWC pilot program.
2. In hiring external consultants, MPD should seek individuals and firms that do not have a financial conflict of interest. Whenever such a conflict of interest does exist, it should be disclosed in any resulting reports. The Departments of Statistics at University of Wisconsin - Madison is one of the top university statistics departments in the nation. In the future, for trials such as this, MPD may wish to consider collaborating with statisticians at UW-Madison for experimental design and data analysis.
3. External audits should routinely be performed on certain MPD reports, such as those generated in-house on MPD trials. These can help reveal problems or limitations in reports and can serve a function similar to peer review of scientific publications.
4. MPD should endeavor to maintain data that is as accurate, consistent, and accessible as possible, and should maximize cohesion across data systems. While it is inevitable that some data entry errors will occur, particularly in the field, high data standards should be maintained. Accurate, cohesive, accessible data is critical both for effective data-driven policing and for proper oversight of police activities.
5. If the City still chooses to pursue potential BWC implementation, it should consider performing a proper randomized controlled trial BWC pilot program, to actually achieve the aims specified by the Body-Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee and Common Council. If such a trial is performed, the City should consider increasing the length or size of the BWC pilot, to achieve greater statistical power. With insufficient power, a substantial effect might not be detected, even if present. Consideration might also be given to randomizing by shift rather than individual officer, to minimize contamination between the control and BWC arms of the trial.

Recommendations



6. OIM strongly recommends that MPD bring its BWC SOP into better compliance with the recommendations of the Body-Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee. Former Chief Barnes, who personally authored the MPD SOP, asserted that differences from the Committee's recommended policy were due to conflicts with state statute. However, on the whole, this is simply not true. The primary author of the Committee's recommended policy was Professor Keith Findley of the UW Law School, who well aware of state statute. Insofar as there might be any conflicts with state statute, these do not account for most of the differences between the Committee's recommended policy and MPD SOP.

7. OIM recommends that MPD and the City take the necessary steps to implement the ten preconditions specified by the Body-worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee before implementing BWCs (see Appendix 7). The Committee's report states "If the City, MPD, and the DA's Office fail to fulfill these preconditions, then the Committee unanimously agrees that BWCs should not be implemented in Madison." At this time, the large majority have not been implemented.

8. OIM recommends that, as specified in the Body-Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee report, the Council and Mayor should explicitly discuss whether they wish to allocate funding to BWC implementation rather than other competing needs. Moreover, this should include discussion of the impact of BWC implementation on effective staffing levels, and, what degree of reduction in police services (including in the proportion of proactive policing time), if any, might be considered acceptable to accommodate BWC implementation, given the City's fiscal constraints.