

From: Amy Owen <amydownen@hushmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 11:04 AM
To: All Alders <allalders@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: police bodycam report

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Dear Alders,

I am writing to request that you choose not to accept the police body-worn cameras report as is, and that you choose not to implement bodycams on officers.

The report is not supported by all members of the committee, this is documented, and I am concerned with some of what I have learned about how the committee members treated one another to try to push for unanimous support. Some of the information is presented as supportive of bodycameras even though the actual sources cited will describe concerns with the implementation of this tool. I attended several meetings of the committee and repeatedly requested that they allow the all the information out there to be presented in the report accurately, whether or not these articles or studies supported bodycameras. Just let the complexity be accurately documented in the report! Those with more power on the committee did not seem to be willing to do this. I am uncomfortable with the city accepting the report as though it is a valid representation of the body of knowledge we have about body worn cameras on law enforcement, when both the process and the writing have significant flaws.

In addition, we know there are substantial costs to body-worn cameras that the city could better spend on crime prevention and community safety measures outside of law enforcement. I strongly request that you choose to do this instead. Camera footage is not a panacea, and camera footage will not make our city safer. Documentation is not justice. No amount of camera footage guarantees we can know exactly what happened in an incident, and as much as it would be nice to have an unbiased recording of complicated events, footage is not unbiased even during recording (and can be altered easily in a "partial release" many months later, in ways that do not result in any community trust in the police or the footage). We cannot afford to spend so much on something that will not make our community safer. Please first invest the same amount the city would be spending bodycameras and related equipment, training, video storage facilities, staffing related to bodycams and footage generated, and any increased related costs into housing solutions, addictions treatment, domestic violence prevention, youth mentoring, and schools first.

Thank you,
Amy Owen
3129 Buena Vista Street
Madison, WI 53704

From: Bonnie Roe <bonnie.roe@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 8:10 AM

To: Rhodes-Conway, Satya V. <SRhodes-Conway@cityofmadison.com>; Bottari, Mary <MBottari@cityofmadison.com>; Common Council Executive Committee <ccec@cityofmadison.com>; All Alders <allalders@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Barnes, Shon F <SBarnes@cityofmadison.com>; Austin, Brian <BAustin@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Body-Worn Camera Clarification

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Dear Mayor, Mayor's Chief of Staff, Members of the Common Council Executive Committee, and Alders,

Last night the Common Council Executive Committee voted unanimously to accept the Final Report of the Police Body-Worn Camera Feasibility Review Committee and rejected Alder Bennett's amendment to recommend against moving forward with a pilot project.

At one point in the meeting, Alder Benford asked one of the speakers, Dr. Greg Gelembiuk, about the costs of body-worn cameras. Dr. Gelembiuk estimated the anticipated cost of a BWC program in Madison to be a whopping \$23 million over 5 years. He arrives at this amount by saying the vast majority of the expense is for personnel, requiring officers to spend, on average, 30 minutes per shift reviewing, documenting, and annotating footage. This is a ridiculous assumption. On most calls, there is no need to review or even annotate any footage. The vast majority of officer's shifts do not include even one arrest. For arrests that are made, many would not require BWC footage. A representative with the Fitchburg Police Department estimates that their officers (who are equipped with body cameras) spend just minutes per shift, on average, if even that. In his letter, Dr. Gelembiuk states that 32 additional officers would need to be hired to compensate for this loss of time that officers would be responding to calls for service. I think we could use 32 officers, as our police department is severely understaffed. But there is no way officers will spend 30 minutes per shift reviewing footage on a typical shift. In my opinion, he also severely inflates the cost of training. Fitchburg completed BWC training in one day and ongoing training is built into regular, ongoing training events.

Also, Alder Bennett is opposed to equipping our officers with body-worn cameras, saying they are intended to reduce use of force incidents by police, and they don't. That does not need to be a priority in our police department, where in 2020, out of 125,272 calls for service where interaction with the public occurred, any use of force was used in just .18% of calls for service.

As you can see in the report (linked below for ease of reference):

In Q1, 0.25% of calls for service involved any use of force
In Q2, 0.17% of calls for service involved any use of force

In Q3, 0.16% of calls for service involved any use of force
In Q4, 0.12% of calls for service involved any use of force

It is important to note that this is all use of force, not just unauthorized or excessive use of force, but any time any force was used.

You can see breakdowns of every kind in this very detailed report, linked below:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:fb489b66-b6f5-4472-bf9a-21c319c704ce>

The purpose of body-worn cameras is for accountability, transparency, officer training, and evidence gathering. It is an objective, unbiased tool to be used with mitigating policies and oversight, both of which we have in place in our city.

Body camera evidence captures what actually happened, and unlike bystander cell phone camera footage, body-worn cameras show what led to the crisis point in certain critical incidents.

Some argue that officers can turn off their body cameras as a defense against using them. But without them, 100% of the time there is no body cam footage. Some will say the positioning of the camera can make the suspect look larger than life, or the movements of the officer can make the situation look more chaotic than it actually is. The Model Policy mitigates for all of these things. It aims to keep the benefits of the technology, including accountability, transparency, training and discovery, while minimizing the risks. It adds significant investigative evidence to any investigation. Our DA wants officers equipped with body cameras, as does the leadership of 100 Black Men, the Urban League, and the NAACP, to name a few.

I believe all decisions the City makes need to be viewed through the lens of equity and racial justice. Whose lives do these decisions affect? I think that honest question needs to be at the forefront of every decision that comes before you. For this reason, I strongly support gathering our own data for our uniquely well-positioned situation by proceeding with a pilot program in the north district, as already appropriated in this year's budget. More than half of all police departments in Wisconsin equip their officers with body cameras; Madison is the second largest city in the state. More than 65% of police departments our size (mid-to-large) equip their officers with body cameras. The Madison Police Department welcomes body cameras as a 21st century policing tool; they have nothing to hide. It is way past time to make this investment in our community. Body-worn cameras have overwhelming public support nationwide, around 90%, depending on the study. Black Americans favor body cameras over white Americans by a factor of over 20%.

As this issue moves before the Common Council, I urge you to move forward by approving the allocated money for the pilot in the north district. Our community needs this.

Thank you,

Bonnie Roe
District 10
608-239-1748