

COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

One Police Memorial Drive • Covington, Kentucky 41014

Mayor and Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional context regarding the recently announced Axon contract, particularly in light of public comments and discussion in the community. Some of those discussions reflect misunderstandings about the scope and purpose of the agreement, and I believe it is important that the Board have a clear understanding of what the proposal provides.

Much of the attention has focused on the approximately \$6 million total contract value. While that figure represents the full value of the agreement, this is a 10-year contract, covering equipment such as Body Worn Cameras, Tasers, software, licensing, support, and related services for the Police Department. A portion of the contract will be funded through asset forfeiture proceeds collected primarily in connection with drug-related cases.

The bulk of the contract relates to the continued expansion and improvement of the City's body-worn camera and evidence-management systems, which document police interactions, preserve evidence, and support transparency and accountability. With that comes ever-increasing technology costs, simply to maintain the equipment and services that we currently utilize. The agreement also includes new technology intended to assist officers with report and case preparation responsibilities, thus reducing administrative time while improving the quality and content of reports. These improvements will greatly assist officers in meeting our departmental mission of reducing crime and calling offenders to account.

Additionally, the technology upgrade will result in the Department being more accessible to our residents. The AI Assistant software includes a translation feature which will allow officers to effectively communicate with non-English speaking residents and visitors during calls for service and other community interactions. Another part of our mission at the police department is to provide excellent customer service. Being able to effectively communicate with all our residents has been a priority of mine as we work to better serve all the residents of the City of Covington.

I also want to specifically address concerns regarding automatic license plate reader (ALPR) technology. The Axon agreement includes a small fleet-based license plate reader component, consistent with technology the Department has used on four of our marked patrol vehicles for over 15 years. These mobile units are used for tasks such as locating stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, and finding missing persons who may be linked to a specific vehicle.

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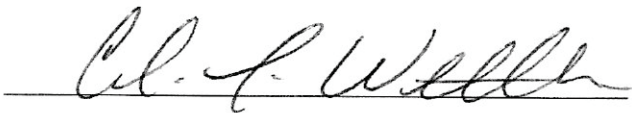
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This technology is significantly different from a broad, fixed network designed to continuously collect vehicle-location information. Unlike nationwide networked platforms, the Department's ALPR system would be limited in scope, access, and retention. The data is owned by our department and can only be accessed if permission is granted by a reviewing authority. The information gathered is not utilized as part of a national or regional network freely accessible by other departments.

Furthermore, under Department policy and in accordance with Kentucky law, ALPR data is retained for no more than 90 days, unless continued retention is required for an active investigation or auditing. Access is restricted to authorized personnel who must document the reason for accessing a license plate read, and those searches are regularly subject to audit by the commander of the Investigations Bureau. These safeguards are intended to prevent misuse and are consistent with professional standards and state law.

I hope this information helps clarify the scope of the proposal and addresses some of the concerns that have been raised publicly. I am available to provide any additional information the Board may need.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Wietholter", written over a horizontal line.

Justin Wietholter
Chief of Police