

TOWN OF NEEDHAM
NORFOLK COUNTY MASSACHUSETTS

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To: Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager

From: Christopher Coleman, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Operations

Date: August 17, 2017

RE: Body/Dash Camera Committee

On Monday, March 20, 2017 the Body/Dash Camera Committee consisting of the following:

Police Union Representatives—Sergeant Timothy Dooher, Officer Richard Evan and Officer Vincent Turco
Town Representatives—Matthew Tocchio (ITC), Chief of Police John Schlittler and Christopher Coleman (Office the Town Manager)

The group had a meaningful discussion about body and dash cameras including an in depth discussion of the Department's pilot dash camera project approximately four years ago. The pilot included outfitted one cruiser for approximately four months with a dash camera. The department's overall experience has both positive experiences and experiences of concern with unfortunately the areas of concern being overwhelmingly greater. Although the dash camera provides recordings of traffic stops, police responses that could assist in a hearing, or even upon a supervisor's of the Officer's report there are some real concerns. The dash camera is both an audio and video recorder. This specific concern was raised by Officers to the vendor and the response from the vendor was different for the Officers actual experience. During the pilot program the Officers concerns were confirmed as the dash camera is recording all the time and after the emergency lights in the cruiser are activated the recording goes back to 60 seconds prior to the activation and begins recording both audio and video from that point.

Needham Police Officers are part of the community not just while on duty but even when off duty. This has led to a strong working relationship and mutual respect of our Officers and citizens. Officer often communicate with citizens ranging from directions to more serious questions when a citizen is seeking advice from an Officer. A concern is these conversations would be recorded. It is understood that some people would not have a problem with their conversation with an Officer being part of footage of a traffic stop or when an Officer is responding to a call, however for those conversation when a citizen is seeking the advice/guidance from an Officer (confidentially) is a great concern.

The Union representatives feel the existing technological tools that are available to them although appreciative but these tools need to work better prior to introducing new technology like body/dash cameras.

Some concerns the Committee had with the implementation of a body cameras and/or dash cameras into the department's daily operations at this time would require (1) a significant increase in the department's or Town information technology for both additional hardware and software (2) the addition of a dedicated staff person most likely an additional FTE (e.g. an Administrator) to serve as the Administer for the department and (3) the space to needed for the additional equipment and working area. The Administrator among other duties would be required to ensure the equipment is up to date, working properly, provide training to Officers, record keeping, responding to public records request and requests from Attorneys and local, state and federal agencies.

The Committee is aware that other communities across the country have implemented body cameras and/or dash cameras into their daily operations and in many of those communities reacting to serious situations such as police involved shootings; questionable traffic stops, and in some cases poor community relations. The Committee is not suggesting the Town or the Department rest on the hard work from both current and past members of the Needham Police Department by working together with the citizens but rather refer to the high level of satisfaction with the citizens from the last two National Citizens' Surveys the Town has conducted. At this time the Town is working to seek funding for a new Police Department and the Headquarters for the Fire Department. The Committee feels both the Town and Union should continue to work together by having conversations with other towns/ police departments regarding the administration of body/dash cameras programs. The Committee feels body/dash cameras programs will be part of the Needham Police Department at some time in the future and by continuing to work with the Town when that time

comes the implementation is expected to be positive. The Committee would suggest that the Town include sufficient space for the future technological needs of the Needham Police Department to include the current technology but as important sufficient space and staffing for future technological needs including body/dash cameras.

It is the recommendation of this Committee that the Town and the Needham Police Department continue to monitor the experiences in other communities, continue to strengthen the already positive relationship with the citizens of Needham, work together with Town Management and reevaluate this matter over the next few years.

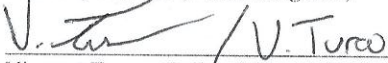
Respectfully Yours,
The Needham Body/Dash Camera Committee



Richard Evans (Police Officer)



Timothy Dooher (Police Sergeant)



Vincent Turco (Police Officer)



Mathew Tocchio (Finance—Network Manager)



John Schlittler (Chief of Police)



Christopher Coleman (Assistant Town Manager/Director of Operations)