****

**Report Prepared by:**

**Sergeant Travis Wiemelt**

**Administrative Services Sergeant**

**Quincy Police Department**

**Quincy, IL 62301**

[**twiemelt@quincyil.gov**](mailto:twiemelt@quincyil.gov) **/ 217-221-2266**

**Date: April 19th, 2021**

**Brief Overview:**

The City of Quincy is a home rule, incorporated municipality located along the Mississippi River in west central Illinois. According to the most recent census information, the population of Quincy is 39,751 (2020). The nearest larger city from Quincy is Springfield, IL, which is 110 miles to the east. The daytime population of Quincy is often well over 60,000 due to its location, industry and commerce, and its status as the Adams County Seat.

The Quincy Police Department currently employs 70 sworn law enforcement officers and one civilian Animal Control Officer. Of the sworn personnel the breakdown is as follows: 1 Chief, 2 Deputy Chiefs, 3 Lieutenants, 11 Sergeants, and 53 officers. At any given time of those 53 officers, approximately 40 are assigned to the patrol division as either a Patrol Officer, K-9 Officer or Housing Officer. Of the 11 Sergeants, 8 are assigned to supervise the 4 patrol squads. The Quincy Police Department Patrol Division works 12 hour shifts over a 2 week alternating off day schedule.

The Quincy Police Department deployed “Officer-Worn Body Cameras” in early October of 2018. QPD utilizes a product called “BodyWorn” by Utility. The body cameras are generally worn on the middle of the officer’s chest in either a “molle” pouch attached to a tactical vest, or in a custom designed pouch that is sewn into the outer vest carrier or uniform shirt. The camera itself is a Motorola Moto Z smart cellular phone that has been specifically modified for Utility to function only as a body worn camera.

The Quincy Police Department leases 59 separate body camera systems. Every uniformed patrol officer and patrol sergeant (52 personnel) is issued their own body camera that they are responsible for maintaining. The Administrative Services Sergeant, who is the administrator for the body worn camera and in car video camera systems, and the Animal Control Officer are also issued a body camera. Qpd has 5 “spare” cameras that are kept on hand in case an officer’s issued camera is not able to be used, or an officer not assigned a body camera, such as a detective or lieutenant, would need to use a body camera for any reason.

The Quincy Police Department also received 16 in-car camera systems, of which all 16 have been installed and are actively being used. The system consists of a forward facing camera, a camera and microphone to record individuals in the back seat during transport, a tablet to control the functions of the in-car camera system and recording hardware that is mounted in the trunk area of the squad cars. The cameras are automatically initiated to record if the overhead emergency lights are activated, the gun lock release is used, if a pre-determined speed of the vehicle is reached or the vehicle is involved in a crash which activates the crash sensors. The system will also automatically turn on if an officer drives into an action zone, whether it is their own call for service action zone or another officer’s on a separate call. Whenever the system is activated, it automatically records one additional minute prior to the system being activated. All videos are automatically uploaded to a secure server for storage and review.

**Technical Issues:**

Each officer employed by the Quincy Police Department at the time of initial camera deployment, or at the time of new officer training, received training in the operation of not only the body worn camera, but also the corresponding cloud based software (AvailWeb) where the recorded media is stored. Each individual officer has a specific username and password to access this website as well as to log into his or her body worn camera. All movement within the website is tracked by user in order to maintain evidentiary integrity of all media.

Given the scope of this program, including the number of officers utilizing body worn cameras, we have encountered only a few technical issues in year 2020. The technical support service provided by Utility is outstanding. Every Utility support employee is extremely knowledgeable in the functionality of the equipment and is always able and willing to assist the program administrator trouble shoot any reported problems.

BodyWorn body cameras utilize a wristwatch style Bluetooth controller that is the officers’ primary way of controlling the camera. The Bluetooth controller does not affect the media recorded by the body camera, but functions as the camera’s start/stop, mute, status indicator, and volume controller. As this is our third year using these Bluetooth controllers, we have had a couple of the controllers stop functioning. We have extras we distribute to the officer and have the defective ones replaced by Utility.

We had one, front in-car camera that stopped working properly in 2020. We immediately replaced that camera with an extra one and the defective camera was replaced by Utility.

Occasionally we will have a video that is not properly downloaded to the cloud storage and we have to contact Utility to correct the problem for it to be downloaded correctly. This occurrence is rare and is immediately fixed by Utility without and loss or destruction of the officer’s video.

The only other issue we have had is periodically an update will be sent to either the BWC or the tablet controlling the in car video system and officers haven’t checked each for the update, therefore the camera does not perform correctly. We have now instructed officers to update both their BWC and in car camera tablet at the beginning of each shift to ensure they have the latest firmware downloaded. This has mostly eliminated this particular problem.

Overall, this year the camera systems have performed extremely well with very little technically issues. We are extremely satisfied with the overall performance of the system we have chosen.

**Supervisor Review:**

All supervisors, Sergeant or above, have the ability to view all body worn camera footage recorded and uploaded to the AvailWeb website. That being said, Quincy Police Department policy limits the specific circumstances when a supervisor can review those recordings. Supervisors are allowed to view media specifically brought to their attention. This may occur in a multitude of ways. Some examples include; a citizen complaint, a review of tactics, an ongoing investigation, reported technical issues, for report writing purposes, reported or suspected misconduct, reported or suspected policy/procedure violations, internal affairs investigations, etc.

Supervisors are prohibited from reviewing body worn camera footage randomly for the sole purpose of locating infractions of policy/procedure in order to take disciplinary action against an officer.

**Additional Information:**

The Quincy Police Department implemented our body worn camera program in October, 2018. Since then, the overall acceptance by the officers has been good. Any police department would be disingenuous to not anticipate a certain level of reluctance from rank and file officers when implementing the use of new equipment like this. We are blessed to have found a product that helped to make our transition as smooth as possible.

At this point, the biggest concern our agency has with the use of this technology has to do with the costs associated with FOIA requests and the requirements mandated by the Body Worn Camera Use Report. Regarding the report, I am specifically referring to the portion of the report dealing with the use of videos for prosecution and the data we are required to provide in order to complete this portion of the report.

To date our department has had to hire one additional employee to handle the work load associated with copying videos for evidence and fulfilling FOIA requests. We anticipate that these requests will only increase as time goes on, which may cause us to have to hire additional employees to complete these tasks in the time frames mandated by law.

Regarding the, “Videos Used for Prosecution” section of this report, in 2020 officers submitted 417 digital video requests with a total of 659 videos downloaded. Each of these requests many times has videos for both the body worn camera and in car camera video. In addition, any given request may include videos from multiple officers at the same incident, which drastically increases the total number of videos requested to be downloaded to DVD for court proceedings. This report requirement puts an even greater strain on our Evidence Coordinator and Records Department Employees who are tasked with consolidating this information for the report. Our department has been using in car video cameras for decades and we have never been asked to provide this type of documentation before.

In summary, our department is happy with our decision to acquire and widely use body worn cameras. The prosecutor’s office has already commented about the increased number defendants who are pleading guilty after their defense attorney showed them the body worn camera footage from the incident. We firmly believe that these devices will certainly protect officers from false accusations of misconduct or use of excessive force, as well as aid with the prevention or quick disposition of frivolous lawsuits.

Body worn cameras would be an asset to any department and it would make sense that the Illinois State Legislature would want to make it as easy as possible for police departments to acquire and deploy body worn cameras. The current Illinois Law Enforcement Officer-Worn Body Camera Act and the Law Enforcement Camera Grant Act places several requirements that often make the costs above and beyond the initial purchase and deployment of body worn cameras. This may be one factor many departments do not use them. We would like to see the State of Illinois work in concert with all departments to make it as easy and as cost effective as possible for a department to initiate and maintain deployment of a body worn camera program. This would be a huge step forward for the safety of our officers as well as the transparency our citizens expect and deserve from their law enforcement agencies.