

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



Agenda Date:	June 20, 2023
Action Required:	Appropriation of Funding
Presenter:	Michael Kochis, Police Chief, Holly Bittle, Budget and Management Analyst
Staff Contacts:	Holly Bittle, Budget and Management Analyst Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Title:	Appropriating Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for Law Enforcement Equipment Grant 2023 - \$447,000 (2nd reading)

Background

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has awarded federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for law enforcement equipment to the Charlottesville Police Department (CPD) to address the dramatic increase in violent crimes that have occurred since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

As of March 20, 2023, the City of Charlottesville has seen a 150% increase in murder and nonnegligent manslaughter offenses in 2023 over the entire calendar year of 2022. Since 2019, annual violent crime offenses in the city have increased steadily year over year by a total of 59.3% from 2019 to the end of 2022. Over the same time period the Charlottesville Police Department's number of sworn staff has declined by 31.9% making it more difficult to prevent and address violent crime. The department currently has 28 vacant sworn positions.

Discussion

These grant funds will be used to address violent crime in at least one of these ways:

1. Analyze crime data to focus patrols in areas which are disproportionately effected by violent crime.
2. Facilitate rapid responses with the correct equipment to reported violent crime incidents and support scenes that include multiple agencies.
3. Provide tools to apprehend those involved in violent crime and secure weapons from violent crimes more quickly to keep them off the streets.
4. Improve the efficiency and accuracy of gathering evidence from violent crimes to build stronger cases for prosecution.
5. Increase the tools available to surveille large-scale events violent crime scenes, and to improve officer and citizen safety.

6. Support community involvement efforts that build trust and confidence between officers and community members which is necessary to interact effectively to prevent and solve violent crimes.

To support the implementation of these strategies, CPD requested funds to purchase the following equipment:

- A. A **total station** that digitally documents large or complex scenes in three dimensions to increase the efficiency of collecting more complete and accurate evidence to build stronger cases for prosecution and reduce the number of officer manhours needed to document crime scenes.
- B. Specialized **crime analysis software** to more efficiently analyze crime data, create heat maps, and other data visualizations to better utilize limited resources within the department and reduce manhours needed for crime analysis. This software will further improve the ability to develop data driven approaches to address emerging crime trends.
- C. An **Axon Cradle Point** and a **generator** to complete the final outfitting and deployment of a federal grant funded logistics trailer with mobile command capabilities (Bureau of Justice Assistance (JAG) Program Grant # 2020-VD-BX-1485) to facilitate quicker responses to major scenes and offer support for extended operations. It will also be used for community engagement activities.
- D. The purchase and outfitting of a **marked pickup truck** to serve as a tow vehicle for the logistics trailer and, alternatively, as a standalone mobile command center.
- E. The **Axon Cradle Point** and the **mobile tethered aerial unit** will support the integration of evidence gathering technologies using CPD's current Axon Evidence System which ensures integrity of evidence throughout the chain of custody.
- F. **Night Vision Systems** for up to 8 officers and mobile tethered aerial unit to increase surveillance capabilities in low light/nighttime situations to prevent crime, aid in the apprehension of suspects, and improve officer and citizen safety.
- G. The purchase and outfitting of a **highly visible marked community response vehicle** for CPD's new Community Involvement Coordinator to enable this Sergeant to build positive relationships with the community and not be perceived as being there for enforcement purposes.
- H. **Axon Virtual Reality System** to allow officers to train for multiple types of scenarios to include deescalation and less lethal use of force scenarios.
- I. Additional **marked patrol bicycles** and **trailer hitch bicycle racks** to enable more certified bicycle patrol officers to patrol the streets, allowing for rapid responses and better maneuverability in the City's urban environment.

Notification of award approval was received on May 11, 2023, to purchase law enforcement equipment totaling \$447,000.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

This project supports Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan, to be a Healthy and Safe City. Furthermore, this project supports the mission and vision of the Charlottesville Police Department, which states:

In partnership with our community, we strive to improve the quality of life of those who live, work, and visit our city. We will do this by creating a safe and secure environment through professional, empathetic, relational, and accountable policing practices. With community policing as our foundation, we strive to maintain trust and legitimacy through respectful, transparent, and impartial public safety practices.

Community Engagement

Budgetary Impact

This has no impact on the General Fund. No local match is required, and the funds will be expensed and reimbursed to a Grants Fund.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval and appropriation of grant funds.

Alternatives

If these grant funds are not appropriated, CPD will not have grant funds to reimburse for the purchase and installation of an Axon Cradle Point, a Truck Vault for its Mobile Aerial Unit and its Axon Virtual Reality System. In addition, if these grant funds are not appropriated, the rest of the equipment will not be purchased.

Attachments

1. Revised Resolution - DCJS ARPA Grant 2023