



HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE

Semi-Annual Body Worn Camera Update

MARCH 2021

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Executive Summary:

Since 2015, the Hamilton Police Service has endeavoured to use academic research and the experiences of other policing agencies to assist with its determination as to the efficacy of body worn cameras.

Consideration has been made as to the impact that the technology has on the relationship with the public, issues of privacy and financial ramifications for adoption. As our reports have consistently conveyed, the academic and policing community and the community in general is unable to come to a clear consensus on whether or not body worn cameras offer the solution for police and public relations that is expected.

During the presentation of the 2020 BWC report to the Service Board, it was suggested by a Board Member that while body worn cameras were an inevitability, there were financial pressures preventing the immediate adoption of the technology. Further information as to the experiences of the numerous agencies that have moved forward with pilots or deployment was requested for March of 2021.

To that end, the Service has spent the last six months reviewing the experiences and decisions of Canadian agencies, as well as to move forward with infrastructure impact reviews and improvements. This has allowed us to begin to identify weaknesses with our systems and the future proof of our Service's infrastructure, for when the time comes to make a final decision regarding moving forward with camera adoption.

External Agency Update:

Amherstburg Police (Now Windsor Police Service)

Since last reported in September 2020, the Windsor Police Service has not changed their position on adoption of body worn cameras and have no immediate plans at the time of this report to deploy them.

Barrie Police Service (BPS)

In October 2020 the BPS began a 25-camera pilot program which ended on February 4, 2021. On February 18, during a verbal update on the pilot to at their Police Service Board meeting, it was disclosed that the Service observed an improvement in interaction between the public and the police. No details as to how this was measured was provided, but the Service is moving forward with budget matters and a request for quotes to provide their front-line officers with the technology by the end of the year (Bruineman 2021).

Calgary Police Service (CPS)

The Calgary Police Service has deployed body worn cameras to their front-line members, with no further changes from what was reported in September 2020. Of note, Sergeant Harnett's death related to a fleeing automobile was captured on his body worn camera, assisting the investigation and identifying the accused.

Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS)

Durham Regional Police Service completed a body worn camera pilot, in partnership with Lakehead University, in early 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the final report was delayed but finally released in late September 2020.

The report is thorough in its evaluation on the impact of cameras for the Durham Regional Police. Its findings indicate the following:

- There is no discernable benefit for criminal court proceedings and guilty pleas
- Body worn cameras provide useful evidence for criminal matters
- Observed increased positive community perception of body worn camera use
- Insufficient data to judge complaint and use of force impact
- Recommends adoption and deployment

(Bagg and Liard 2020)

Edmonton Police Service (EPS)

In the academic community, the belief is that the EPS had the most thorough pilot program of body worn cameras in Canada. The result, the Edmonton Police Service did not feel that the technology made an impact for the Service that could justify the expense.

Despite this, in 2021 it was announced that they are in the beginning stages of evaluating in-car camera technology for a possible pilot (Edmonton Police Service 2021).

Guelph Police Service (GPS)

The Guelph Police partnered with Dr. Saulnier to continue her BWC research started with the Durham Regional Police. In September 2020, a 21-camera pilot program started that will run through August 2021. Expected metrics will include a better understanding of how the cameras will affect the relationship with public perceptions, court outcomes and efficiencies. (Carty 2020).

The Service has indicated that their expected operating costs for the program if implemented post-pilot would be \$366,000 annually, which includes two new staffing positions (Guelph Police Services Board 2020).

Halifax Regional Police Service (HRPS)

In December 2020, a presentation made to the Police Services Board indicated that the Service felt that moving ahead with deployment of cameras instead of engaging in a pilot program was the best practice. They suggested that deployment occur with their traffic unit receiving cameras and moving to full deployment over five years at a cost of \$3.7 million.

Despite this however, the Services Board unanimously decided to defer the decision until more clarity around policies and procedures was researched. The Board was specifically concerned

with managing expectations and ensuring that rigorous policy existed to help improve issues of race and community outreach (Thomas 2020).

Montreal Police Service (MPS)

Despite Mayoral promise to reconsider a decision to not deploy BWC, there has been no further movement on this.

Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS)

No further consideration from 2020.

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)

No change in adoption from 2020.

Ottawa Police Service (OPS)

OPS Chief of Police Sloly indicated that research was not clear regarding the efficacy of body-worn camera technology. Chief Sloly further recommended, that should the Board wish to proceed with camera deployment, then the 2021 budget deliberations would be the time to begin discussing the issue, as the Service would need to re-evaluate current projects and priorities (Yogaretnam 2020).

To date, there has been no update as to this discussion.

Peel Regional Police Service (PRPS)

PRPS began rollout of body-worn cameras to front-line officers in November 2020, at their Airport Division at Pearson International Airport. The cameras have live stream capability, giving supervisors access to events as they are happening.

A further phased deployment was set to take place in early 2021 (Peel Regional Police Service 2020).

Toronto Police Service (TPS)

As of fall 2020, two divisions of the Toronto Police Service have received body-worn cameras, with an additional deployment to two additional divisions expected early 2021.

The target date for full deployment is November 2021. If met, 2350 cameras will be deployed to members, as well as the implementation of a Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) for a cost of \$34 million over five years (Lord 2021).

Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS)

In October 2020, the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board approved a six-to-nine-month pilot program for body-worn cameras and in-car cameras. Chief Larkin acknowledged that the program is meant to provide a more accurate record of interactions with the public, which can

better foster community relations and trust. He further indicated that he understood that there were groups within the community that were opposed to the deployment of the technology, but that he hoped that they would see their commitment to improving relations as authentic engagement. The pilot is set to begin in early 2021 (Monteiro 2020).

Winnipeg Police Service (WPS)

No change from 2020 report.

York Regional Police Service (YRPS)

In late 2019, the York Regional Police Service began deployment of 270 in-car cameras, as well as integration of a Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) (Axon 2020).

There has been no public update as to the efficacy or cost of the program.

Additional Considerations:

Throughout the review of academic literature and the experience of outside agencies, in addition to a strong set of policies outlining the use of cameras, an identified requirement for deployment is a strong and established infrastructure. With the large amounts of data that can be generated by body worn cameras, there is a need to ensure that existing infrastructure can support the uploading of video through strong and secure networks, that the data can be properly managed: to meet the challenges of long-term efficient storage and ensure ease of accessing items as required.

In 2021, the Hamilton Police Service has begun the process to move to a more mobile work platform for front-line patrol officers. Changes to our mobile workstations in the cruisers are currently under review to take advantage of options offered in our NICHE RMS reporting system. These changes will create opportunities for officers to complete their reports on their mobile workstations, including the taking of statements and notes, negating the need for officers to return to the station. This expected increase in efficiency, will however increase the data strain felt by the Service in their current network structure.

Additionally, the Service has become an early adopter of the provincial digital evidence management system (DEMS) contract with Axon. Axon's DEMS platform will give our officers the ability to easily manage the growing amount of digital evidence, such as 911 calls and security video. As indicated in previous body worn camera reports, DEMS is vital for a BWC program. Using the Axon DEMS platform prior to any adoption of cameras, the Service will be able to fine tune and future proof the processes for handling digital evidence prior to being in receipt of large amounts of camera footage from any deployment of the technology.

With DEMS comes a need to also review storage requirements and retention policies for this evidence. Cameras running 24 hours a day may generate as much as 1 TB (Terabyte) of storage needs a month, which could have a drastic impact on the Service's existing infrastructure.

By being an early adopter of DEMS and increasing the mobility of the Service's reporting system, it is expected that weaknesses can be identified, and improvements properly budgeted for, prior to any adoption of camera deployment. This will ensure that if deployment occurs, the system is stable, secure and the data is able to be managed effectively. This has been the experience of other neighbouring Services, such as Guelph and York, who have ensured that their infrastructure was ready to accept this data heavy technology, and thereby guarantee success of the program once deployed.

Recommendation:

Since 2015, the Hamilton Police Service has used academic review and updates regarding other jurisdictions to report on the evolution of body-worn technology. This work continues to help mould the Service's understanding of the technology and how deployment would impact infrastructure and staffing concerns.

In 2021, the Service has committed to move forward with the use of Axon's DEMS platform for the managing of digital evidence. Currently, the service is finalizing details on the platform's implementation and will begin using it in a pilot by April 2021. Understanding the impact of the platform for things like video upload will continue to assist the Service in understanding how the use of cameras by Hamilton Police Service officers would impact the Service through financial and workload concerns. This is a key component in any future deployment of cameras for the Service.

While the rollout and review of DEMS is completed, the Service will continue to explore opportunities for potential grants and funding for possible adoption of the technology. Additionally, exploration will continue for opportunities that may present themselves regarding increasing the capturing of evidence and improving the transparency and accountability of our actions with the public.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding the impact that DEMS will have on the Service, we are recommending an additional six months review period prior to further consideration of adopting body-worn cameras.

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