



Legislation Text

File #: ID#16-2828, **Version:** 1

SUBJECT/RECOMMENDATION:

Accept a Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (DOJ/BJA) Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant award in the amount of \$51,192, for purchase of computer tablets, portable printers, and accessories and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same.

SUMMARY:

On August 4, 2016, Council approved submission of a grant application for a \$51,192 allocation under the federal Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program to purchase 14 computer tablets, 18 portable printers and accessories. That grant has been officially awarded and the Clearwater Police Department (CPD) now seeks approval to accept it.

CPD's Motorcycle Unit is a part of the department's Traffic Enforcement Team, which supplements uniform patrol operations by providing selective traffic enforcement, preventing crashes, saving lives, reducing injuries, and promoting voluntary compliance with the traffic laws of the State of Florida and the City of Clearwater. The Unit members are often called upon to monitor and enforce applicable speed laws, deploy at high crash intersections and DUI sobriety roadblocks, perform selective enforcement during peak traffic hours, and participate in multi-jurisdictional enforcement activities.

The Bike Team supplements uniform patrol operations by addressing specific problems related to the downtown corridor, city parks, nuisance ordinances, Clearwater Beach, and other areas of the City where bicycles are easier to maneuver, such as shopping centers, special events or concerts, parades and festivals. The Bike Team is also utilized to address the growing number of pedestrians and bicyclists on the streets throughout Clearwater and works to ensure public safety through the active enforcement of the state's bicycle and pedestrian laws.

Community Problem Response (CPR) Teams address those specific problems of a neighborhood, which may not respond to traditional police patrol. Using a predictability driven policing approach, CPR Teams respond to identified crime problems by utilizing a variety of police tactics including (but not limited to) uniform, plainclothes, decoy, saturation, and other creative problem-solving methods. These teams serve as a flexible, supplemental patrol resource to be utilized to suit the needs of the community and CPD. CPR Team Officers patrol the community on foot, bicycle, cruiser or other special purpose vehicle, such as an ATV.

Officers assigned to the Motorcycle, Bike, or CPR teams are by their very nature more mobile and often do not have ready access to the standard issued laptop computers and printers that are now part of each CPD patrol car. Currently, if an officer assigned to the Bike or CPR team confronts a person who has violated a city

ordinance or Florida statute, the officer cannot issue an electronic citation on the spot, but must complete the citations manually or escort the individual to a patrol cruiser or call for another officer with a vehicle that has a laptop computer and printer. From an officer safety and efficiency standpoint, the current system is not in the best interest of police or the public.

Due to the nature of the work of the Motorcycle, Bike and CPR Teams, CPD wishes to purchase a number of computer tablets and portable printers for use by these officers. It is proposed that CPD purchase 14 tablets, 18 portable printers, and accessories.

Law enforcement technology has changed dramatically over the years and CPD has always been at the forefront in incorporating new technology into its day-to-day operations. Not long ago, mobile laptops in police cruisers were the cutting edge for law enforcement agencies. The tech revolution has now advanced to the next step - tablet computers. Smaller and more portable than a laptop, tablets offer the handheld portability, security, power and durability that is desired by the police officer on the beat. The tablets are now featured in a ruggedized version especially for use by law enforcement and are designed to withstand drops, shock, spills, moisture, extreme temperatures, and other on-duty hazards. Because the tablets are smaller and more portable than a laptop, they can provide increased productivity and efficiency for officers who operate outside of the traditional patrol vehicle.

Currently, the officers assigned to the Bike or CPR Teams have no capability to complete an electronic citation or report while on the scene of an incident, such as an alcoholic ordinance or traffic violation. Officers are required to have a patrol vehicle respond or return to a patrol vehicle in order to access the laptop and printer that is accessible in the car or write the violation manually. The current system is neither efficient nor conducive for officers in these specialty units. It is proposed that the utilization of tablets and portable printers that the officer can carry on his/her person, motorcycle, or bicycle will allow the officer to cite a violator on the spot and then resume patrol duties immediately. This will provide much greater coverage of the city, making the patrol officers more efficient and providing a safer environment for Clearwater's residents.

Officers assigned to the Motorcycle Unit will be able to move to the same electronic citation system and have increased connectivity and access that would mirror the capabilities of the mobile solution currently in place in the patrol cars.

There is no mandatory match for this grant. The only impact to the Police Department operating budget is the monthly cost for air card service.

APPROPRIATION CODE AND AMOUNT:

Special Project #181-99217, 2016 JAG Grant (Tablets) will be established at first quarter to track grant revenues.

The monthly air card service, an annual total of \$6,000, will be charged to the Police Department General

Operations funding code 010-01155-530300-521, Other Contractual Services.

USE OF RESERVE FUNDS: N/A