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Officer Dave Burke Body-Worn Camera Interview

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Todd Maxwell: Hello, I'm Todd Maxwell, part of the Bureau of Justice Assistance Body-Worn Camera Team, and today I'm speaking with Officer Dave Burke as part of BJA's Body-Worn Camera Podcast Series. Dave Burke has been a member of the Oakland Police Department since 2000. Prior to his appointment, he was a police officer with the Oakland School Police Department from 1996 to 2000. With the Oakland Police Department, Officer Burke is currently assigned to the Information Technology Unit as the Acting Sergeant of Police and is a member of the Department's Entry Team, SWAT. His previous assignments included Lead Range Master for the Department and coordination of all training and curriculum development.

Teaching experiences include firearms for the base academy, in-service, and advanced officers schools, chemical agents, less lethal, flash bangs, and SWAT. Current responsibilities with the Department include research and development of all law enforcement technologies and supervision of the fleet for the Oakland Police Department to include procurement. Officer Burke, thank you for speaking with me today. To start, can you explain what technology considerations are most important for our listeners to consider when purchasing a body-worn camera system?

Officer David Burke: Good morning or good afternoon. Some of the important things that agencies must be aware of, number one, is storage. The storage component in itself could be a monster for most agencies when it considers body-worn cameras. The

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camera has to have somewhere to deposit the video footage it's actually taken. So agencies are looking at do we go to the cloud, or do we have an on-premise storage? But that's one of the biggest technical components that agencies must realize early on. And also, the next one is what type of cameras to actually purchase. They have to understand, you know, the camera system itself, how it works, how it functions, how is video uploaded. So agencies are faced with challenges not only on the storage side, but the camera system that they must purchase.

And some of the other components that go into the technical side of it is how do we support the backend? You know, the backend software to actually manage the video. So agencies have decisions and tough decisions to make as they proceed.

Maxwell: Great. Thank you. Can you explain the reasons behind and your point of view of using a local storage server versus a cloud storage system?

Burke: Sure. Cloud storage and on premise storage offer unique possibilities for agencies. Number one, if you have a robust system in place within the agency itself or in the city, then going to on premise storage is great. It's wonderful. You know, the Oakland Police Department, we currently use an on premise storage system that where the cost is not that tremendous. You know, look at buying 500 terabytes for less than \$150,000. That is a great storage solution if you plan on going that route, versus going to the cloud. The cloud offers additional

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challenges, and also, it can be quite pricey, depending on the model that you choose to go with or the camera system that you choose to go with.

So an agency has to weigh which direction they want to go based on cost and what your system or infrastructure within the city or within the department is capable of handling. Like I said, for the Oakland Police Department, it was a no-brainer. The on premise storage worked out well for us because we already had a system in place. But for most agencies, they had to make that tough decision. Do you go to the cloud, or do you say with on premise storage?

Maxwell: Great. Thank you again. What - and keeping that in mind, some of the storage and some of the other considerations that you mentioned earlier, what would you say that the biggest technical considerations the department should consider when developing a body-worn camera policy?

Burke: The biggest consideration would be the retention of video. How do you retain? And what do you retain as far as how much data is currently stored in the cloud already or on premise storage? It - most agencies will be bound by policy, of course, on what you have to keep and what you don't have to keep. So when you look at it holistically, you have to realize that the volume, sheer volume of video can be at great numbers. Like, for example, the Oakland Police Department, we currently have upwards of 120 terabytes of video stored. Well, not all that video is actually needed. However, we are bound by policy, which states that we will retain everything for five years. But other agencies, when you set your retention

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period, it's going to govern in how long you keep that and how long you're inundating the system with video storage. So your policy and your technical part all needs to work together.

So, for example, if you decide that you're not going to store everything for two years max, three years max, well, your retention policy's going to govern when video will fall off the server. So you save on the end. However, you're still going to be governed by that policy in place.

Maxwell: Great. If - keeping on that mode and keeping in that type of mindset, we're talking about storage, and we're talking about basically redaction, which leads to redactions. What type of design for the future of body-worn cameras, what features would you improve on or add based on some of the things you just mentioned?

Burke: It's going to be important looking forward that any system that comes online would be allowed to be scalable. So, for example, it has to almost mirror your policy, your retention period. Everything needs to work in sync. For - so if you look at a car stop, for example, something as simple as that, a car stop, how long does that car stop need to stay on the server? So the retention policy should be set around just that, if the department's policy says three months for a car stop, well, at that three-month period, after I make the annotation and I select the category of a car stop, that video falls off after that three-month period. So everything needs to work in sync, where it takes the guesswork out of the officers in the

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department. And once you have set policies in place, so the software and the management system or the video system, the body-worn system is also working in sync to all that to happen seamlessly.

Maxwell: Sounds like a good idea, sort of automate the series.

Burke: Correct.

Maxwell: And the system.

Burke: Correct.

Maxwell: What is the most important advice you would give someone who is, you know, considering implementing a body-worn camera program?

Burke: You know, if you decide that or agencies decide to implement a body-worn program, the first thing and foremost is you need to decide what your program should look like, what your camera system should look like. What is the end goal of your camera program? Not just going into it to say that we need to have a body-worn camera in place, so let's go grab something off the shelf. Not everything off the shelf will work. Not every company will work within your agency. So it's best to vet it out and figure out exactly what best works with the policies that you have in place. Design your policy around your technology also. Don't work backwards. Always work forwards, thinking about what's it going to

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be in the future. So two years from now, am I going to have to go buy a new system?

So select the system that's scalable and robust enough that's going to last you several years down the road. So I'm always looking forward to the next five years with our technology to see what is going to change in the next five years and can we grow what we currently have in place? And having a body-worn system that's been in place now for five years, we have grown it every year since the inception. So we're always looking forward to what is the next product coming down. And also, you have to engage the manufacturer and the company you're partners to ensure that. This is a program that can be scaled and can also be improved on to make better changes and make it easier for the officers in the field.

Every year, technologies change. So you also have to change with the changing times of technology.

Maxwell: That sounds like great advice. Thank you. If you were going to start your BWC program over from the beginning, based on what you've learned, is there anything you'd do differently today?

Burke: Sure, planning. Planning was the most important thing that - or lesson that we learned in the beginning, where we planned, but we didn't plan to the end, to the five-year mark in the beginning because body-worn cameras were new on the market, and you only had really two companies on the market producing body-

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worn cameras at the time when we started five years ago. So the ability to plan forward today - from today is very important. You need to look ahead to see where technology is going, the trends in the market and every place else. And you just plan on that. So for agencies coming into it, our lesson learned was not planning to the five years that I spoke about a few minutes ago, is now we're looking at it, once we got the program started, looking ahead into the five-year mark, looking ahead to the ten-year mark, where this program is going to be.

So, for me, planning is the most important. Once again, what does that body-worn camera program look like moving forward? And what technology is coming in to view in the next two, three, four, and five years that you could capitalize on to make your system more robust and more scalable and you could take advantage of it to make it easier for the officers to use in the field.

Maxwell:

Thank you, Officer Burke. We're grateful you could speak with us today to share your knowledge on this important topic. We encourage the law enforcement, justice, and public safety leaders whose agencies are interested in learning more about the implementation of body-worn camera programs to visit the Body-Worn Camera Toolkit at www.bja.gov/bwc. This toolkit offers a variety of resources that agencies can use to help with the adoption and use for community engagement, policy development, data collection, officer training, and educational purposes. We also encourage the listeners to share and promote these resources with your colleagues and staff. Lastly, all these resources, and especially the

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Body-Worn Camera Toolkit, have been designed as a national response - resource, sorry - your resource. Please submit your ideas for new content through the BWC support link at the bottom of the homepage.

This is Todd Maxwell at the Bureau of Justice Assistance signing off. Thank you to our listeners for joining us today.

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