

## **BJA Body Worn Camera Training & Technical Assistance Brooklyn Park Police Department**

Chip Coldren :Hello, I'm Chip Coldren. I serve as the managing director for justice programs at the CNA Institute for Public Research. I am the tech – I am the – I am the director of training and technical assistance for the Bureau of Justice Assistance-supported national body worn camera pilot implementation program.

Today, I'm speaking with Inspectors Bill Barritt and Shane DuPaul from the Brooklyn Park, Minnesota police department about their engagement with community members regarding the development of the department's body worn camera policy. We wanted to speak with representatives from the Brooklyn Park police department because of the reputation it has for a very strong community policing orientation.

Inspector Barritt has been with the Brooklyn police department for 17 years. He served in numerous positions prior to being promoted to precinct commander, including patrol officer, SWAT officer, school resource officer, investigator, investigative training officer, background investigator, patrol sergeant, safe street sergeant, patrol lieutenant and investigative lieutenant.

Inspector DuPaul has been a police officer for 20 years, and he's been with the Brooklyn police department for 16. He has served as a patrol officer, SWAT officer, undercover narcotics investigator, detective, patrol sergeant, safe street sergeant, patrol lieutenant, SWAT commander and tactical response unit commander. He currently oversees Brooklyn Park's south precinct along with the department's tactical response unit, canine unit and the training unit.

Inspector Barritt and Inspector DuPaul, thank you both for speaking with me today. To start, Inspector DuPaul, can you give our listeners an overview of how you approach the engagement of community members in the body worn camera policy-making process?

Inspector Shane DuPaul: Our main attempt to engage everybody was some committee meetings that we planned in reference to the body cameras being deployed. We also have what we call MAC, which is our multicultural advisory committee, which is a group of 12 people and we also approached them with the body cameras, wanting their feedback and any concerns. And we wanted to get across to them our feelings on the body camera – that we supported it and that we needed – we wanted their input on what they felt would best be serving the community with the body cameras.

Chip Coldren: Good, thanks. So did your agency actually share the policy for body worn cameras with the community and interested groups?

Inspector Shane DuPaul: Yes, we did. So we did our community meetings. We had a PowerPoint demonstration for them, and in that PowerPoint, we touched on the key points of the policy like (interactive), officer discretion for putting on and off the camera. So they knew what the policy was and what the expectations on the officers were and that we wanted their input on that as well as body cameras in general.

Chip Coldren: Sure, great. So in addition to sharing that information with them, would you say that the community members had an active role in policy development?

Inspector Shane DuPaul: Yes, so what we have in Minnesota is the League of Minnesota Cities, which is basically an insurance trust and insures the cities. They made a draft policy for – kind of a statewide policy. We're also Lexipol. We use Lexipol for our policies. We had two of those draft policies that we meshed together that we showed them, and then we took their concerns or their input on the meetings and then we made some changes and tweaks there to the policy after those follow-up two community meetings that we did.

Chip Coldren: So what – can you talk about some specific, you know, suggestions that came from the community?

Inspector Shane DuPaul: One of the major concerns was public or privacy of the data. That's something we couldn't control with policy because of (theft) by state law. However, their biggest thing that came up was some medical calls or calls that made (through) being inside the homes. So what – one of the changes we made was if there was a strictly medical situation and the officer was requested by the family, that the officer would be allowed to shut off the body camera if it was just while he was providing first aid, something like that, and there was no criminal nature or adversary atmosphere.

Chip Coldren: Good, thank you. And would you say that the community is still involved in any way in the policy process?

Inspector Shane DuPaul: Right now, the policy is pretty much (set) out there, but the Minnesota state legislature is going to address some of the privacy, public or private data classification. So depending upon what they come across and what laws they set and change, if there's some significant changes, we need to adjust the policy too. We've talked about going back, having another meeting with the community to get their input on how that would change our policy become a law.

Chip Coldren: Good, good. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that. Inspector Barritt, can we step back a little bit and can you talk in general about the, you know, the policy development process of the department?

Inspector Bill Barritt: Yes, I sure can. So kind of of what Inspector DuPaul had stated, our policy was really drafted in two components, mainly on the frontend. And the first one was through Lexipol. They already had a pre-written policy on body worn cameras but that policy is what I would call kind of the universal. And it didn't quite fit everything that we were looking for for our community and more importantly, what fits our needs as an agency within the state of Minnesota.

So we took that policy and reported to the League of Minnesota Cities here in Minnesota and had them review the policy as well. And we kind of combined both inputs from both sources, and once that was completed, we did hold two separate community meetings – one, which was held at our north precinct, our main police department and another one that was held at a community center in the south precinct area for residents and community members to come and view the PowerPoint.

And it was through that PowerPoint, as Inspector Shane DuPaul had stated, that we shared the components of the body worn camera policy. And we were able to vet through some concerns, gather some input and you know, provide some factual information as to what body cameras can and can't do. So we actually showed them actual footage from the body cameras that was done through our pilot program that ran for 60 days with our officers.

And it really kind of put – gave them the perspective of what body cameras actually capture and the benefit of having those body camera. And more importantly, it wasn't, it wasn't all – it wasn't a catch-all either. There were certain things that the body camera did not record, but it also showed the benefits of having that versus our traditional squad car cameras and mics that we had for the past 20-plus years from the event of that.

Chip Coldren: Do you recall how well attended these community meetings were? You know, were there, were there a lot of people attending?

Inspector Bill Barritt: I think we did get the information out through Tip 411, which is a notification alert that we used here in the city. People need to lined up to get that service but it did go out through Tip 411. And we used the media as well to advertise the first community meeting. And I think the response with the residents and community members – and we did have a state legislature come up – our mayor, a lot of community members came up to the first meeting, which was held.

And I think the attendance was over 50 people with first meeting and then the second meeting that took place a couple of weeks later at a more neutral location, not inside the police department but by one of our community centers. And I think there was probably 30-plus additional new people that showed up for that community meeting as well.

Chip Coldren: Good, good. Thank you. Another question – having implemented body worn cameras in your agency for some time now, what can you say are some differences when it comes to community relations as a result of the cameras?

Inspector Bill Barritt: I think honestly the answer to that question right now, we expect for that to be positive. But being that the program is still pretty new and our policy really went into effect about a month and a half, two months ago, I think it's still too new to gauge that. I can tell you that there is – each day that goes by, there is more and more knowledge that we as an agency are utilizing body worn cameras. I still think there's a good populous of the residents here in the city that really don't know about that.

And I can tell you that because of the request. We haven't been getting, we haven't been inundated with a lot of requests from the (inaudible) for body worn cameras that other agencies have experienced that had done this as a pilot program. We have gotten a few. We're working on a system on actually tracking these to find out what the demand actually is.

Although we have seen internally as an agency is the body worn cameras have been very beneficial because some of the complaints that have come into our agency, we've really been able to easily determine that those complaints were basically unfounded. And we can find that the officers were exonerated because we have this body cam footage now that, that, that takes the officer, takes the viewer away from the patrol car into an apartment or into a home or around the corner where we can actually capture the video. And more importantly, the audio and hear what people are saying.

So that has already come to light over the past month where the body cameras have been additional resource and a tool that has been found to be a benefit. And I think the transparency of that, being able to share that with the people who are filing the complaints, let them know that we have that. We're giving them copies of that video footage so that they can see it.

Chip Coldren: Yes.

Inspector Bill Barritt: And they could actually see what happened versus their perception. So not – to this point in time right now, it hasn't been negative whatsoever but we haven't been inundated yet with requests.

That will change. It's very similar to when we instituted squad car cameras back in – I believe it was 1998. We were one of the first agencies in Minnesota to ever do that with all of our squad, with all of our squad cars. And it took several years before it took a lot of community members to understand, hey, Brooklyn Park has got squad car cameras. As well as the court systems and the attorneys.

Now, we did share with the head of the county attorney's office as well as our city prosecutor that we now have body worn cameras. So that information is also getting off through the judicial system as well.

Chip Coldren: Yes. Good, thank you. Back to Inspector DuPaul, how would you recommend an agency that is considering implementing body worn cameras do their outreach to get community and advocacy groups involved in the policy process?

Inspector Shane DuPaul: The meetings were really good and the reason we wanted the meetings is we wanted to highlight that the cameras are great tools but they don't replace a thorough investigation, physical evidence, an officer's report, et cetera.

And we really wanted to use that meeting to show them some videos. We made a couple up to show certain plans and we also have some real life footage that we adapt or in the pilot program to show them that just because someone's wearing a camera, that does not mean the entire incident or the important part of that incident is going to be caught on camera. And that was huge for a lot of people in the audience to see and finally understand that just because someone has a body camera you can't expect that to be the solve – the sole solving thing or the way to tell tell what happened.

However, the other part we found out of that meeting was one of the biggest concerns law enforcement had was difference with public and private data. And pretty much between those two meetings, I think there was a total of three people out of everybody there that understood this video was public. Everybody else thought the video was private and nobody else would see it if an officer came into their homes. So that was kind of an eye opening for the citizens to understand what some of the reasons law enforcement was brought up to the media, to the legislature about the possible classification of this data and what it can mean to privacy.

Chip Coldren: Good, good. Thank you very much. And thanks to both of you for joining us on this podcast today. We're grateful of you to speak with us today and share your knowledge on this important topic.

We encourage law enforcement, justice and public safety leaders whose agencies are interested in learning more about the implementation of body worn cameras, to visit the body worn camera toolkit at [www.bja.gov./bwc](http://www.bja.gov./bwc). This toolkit offers a variety of resources that agencies can use to help with adoption and use for community engagement, policy development, data collection, officer training and educational purposes.

We also encourage listeners to share and promote these resources with your colleagues and staff. Lastly, all these resources and especially the body worn camera toolkit have been designed as a national resource, as your resource, please submit your ideas for new content through the BWC support link at the bottom of the home page.

This is Chip Coldren of CNA's body worn camera team signing off. Thank you to our listeners for joining us today.

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