

## **Body-Worn Camera Training and Technical Assistance Twin Falls PD**

Todd Maxwell: Hello listeners, this is Todd Maxwell again, a member of the Bureau of Justice Assistance Body-Worn Camera Team, and today I'm speaking with Captain Anthony Barnhart and Staff Sergeant Brent Wright of Twin Falls Police Department, located in Idaho.

Captain Barnhart and Staff Sergeant (Wright) work in the Administrative Services Division. It was created in the fiscal year 2001, when (the) Support Service Division was expanded to provide all Police Department administrative and support services.

Captain Anthony Barnhart leads this division. Primary function of the ASD is to support and assist all operations within the organization. ASD's past (and) responsibilities include the Records Bureau, City 911 and 311 Communication Center, Juvenile Crime Unit, Animal Control Unit, Community Service Officers and the Bomb Squad. Captain Barnhart and Staff Sergeant Wright, thank you for speaking with me today.

Anthony Barnhart: Well thanks for having us, (Todd).

Todd Maxwell: Let's go ahead and get right into it. Why did your department decide to implement body-worn cameras?

Anthony Barnhart: Absolutely. So, we really started looking at body-worn cameras back in 2010 - 2011. We did an initial study of it, and we looked at several cameras. But what we quickly realized was that the camera technology was pretty decent back then, but our ability to stand up an infrastructure to store and manage body camera footage was just not in place, and we weren't prepared to stand one up.

So, we fast forward to 2015, and I think we went along with the national trend in looking at body cameras at that point in time. And, organizationally — and not just within the Police Department — but I'm talking our city made a decision that we, as a Police Department, would implement body-worn cameras in 2016.

And, really, you know they run along the same lines as most organizations are looking at, as far as reasons. We want to be a professional Police Department, and we believe that our citizens expect us to be a professional Police Department. And, we want to live up to those standards.

We also believe that transparency is important. We recognize that the cameras will bring value to training, and obviously they will bring value to evidence capturing.

Todd Maxwell: For our listeners, can you tell them how many officers are in your agency?

Anthony Barnhart: Absolutely. So, the Twin Falls police department is made up of 70 police officers and about 20 civilian employees. We're not too large, but we're kind of in that mid-size range. We police a population of about 49,000 sleeping. And probably during the daytime we have roughly 70 to 75,000 people in our community.

Anthony Barnhart: I'm sorry (Todd), we do have a little bit of an influx during the day time.

Todd Maxwell: (So you said.) So, what are the biggest challenges to implementing a body-worn camera program for an agency your size?

Brent Wright: Well, obviously I think the number one challenge Captain Barnhart alluded to is just the infrastructure concerns - - being able to match the data that you collect and store it, and obviously there's public records requests that have to be dealt with.

And how do you get that footage to court for evidentiary purposes, those are some of the biggest challenges that we faced in recent times, as well as the first time we looked at these.

Todd Maxwell: Understood. So, you guys are part of the pilot (program) project. How did you guys all decide on which officers or districts would wear the cameras?

Anthony Barnhart: You know, we kind of took a look at best practices. We visited with some other police departments that have already implemented body-worn cameras. And we decided that all of our uniformed personnel would wear body-worn

cameras. We're also going to outfit our School Resource Officers with body cameras.

Our Traffic Team will wear body cameras. And, we're also going to make body cameras available to our Narcotics Unit when they go out and do uniformed interdiction.

And, we do have some cameras there will also be available to detectives, if they choose to take those out and use them. We also provide digital audio recorders to our detectives when they go out and work on the streets, as well.

Todd Maxwell: When your department was meeting with vendors, what would you say was the biggest hurdle or obstacle, and in choosing the right solution for your agency?

(Anthony Barnhart): I don't necessarily know that there was a biggest hurdle or obstacle. We did a lot of — we did a ton — of research. And, we've been moving very slow and deliberate, and we identified exactly what we wanted in a body camera. And the back and the infrastructure that we would use to manage, store, redact and disseminate that data.

And after doing that research, visiting with other organizations and identifying exactly what we wanted, we actually went out to bid. And, we were very specific in our specs. And, then we had those vendors actually put in bids through the bid process.

Todd Maxwell: So, were you able to find one vendor that met all the needs that you were looking for?

Brent Wright: We were. We actually awarded our bid to TASER International.

Todd Maxwell: OK. Do you feel like your agency is quick to handle all the costs that come with the day-to-day operations? You mentioned infrastructure was sort of a challenge.

Anthony Barnhart: You know what? In this last budget process, when we were preparing for fiscal year '17, we had a position in there - - a body camera management position. And, due to budgetary restraints, we had to eliminate that position.

We do think that moving forward in the future, we're probably going to need that position to help manage the program. But, I think initially, our project team that we put together a year ago is going to take on those responsibilities.

Todd Maxwell: Right. So, the vendor you mentioned offers a Cloud and — for some of our larger agencies — on-premise. Did you guys choose the Cloud solution?

Anthony Barnhart: We did. We went with the unlimited storage Cloud solution.

Todd Maxwell: And could you talk to, tell our listeners why you decided to go Cloud versus premise?

Anthony Barnhart: Well, you know, one of the members of our project team is actually from our Information Services Division within the city, which handles all of our IT needs, for all city departments.

And, one of the things that we looked at — again, we're that kind of that mid-sized agency — and, frankly, our Information Services Division just wasn't necessarily in a position to be able to handle expanding their equipment needs to meet our storage needs.

And really, the Cloud-based storage for us was the best solution to be able to stand that up immediately, and be able to get it to do the things that we needed to do. Again, to be able to share it with the courts and be able to handle requests in a timely manner.

Todd Maxwell: Understood. So I, based on that vendor, I would assume that you're using their video analytics and redaction tools, is that correct?

Male: Yes it is.

Todd Maxwell: And so, this final question — for an agency your size, mid-size agency, would you — what recommendations would you have for our listeners that might be just getting into the market, and starting to look around? What

recommendations could you offer them on selecting a vendor, and doing their research?

Anthony Barnhart: You know, I probably have a couple, and then I'll let Staff Sergeant Wright chime in. Probably the first recommendation that I would have is pull together a team of employees — a cross-section of employees — from your Information Services, or Information Technology group, police officers, administrators. And put together a team to move forward in standing up a body-worn camera program.

And then, probably the second recommendation that I would have is move (so), move deliberate and slowly in the process. Do your research and identify exactly what you want in your program.

And also make sure that you're getting out within your community and having those discussions, as well, with your stakeholders, your strategic stakeholders, and just the community at large, as far as what they want to see in a body-worn camera program. I would let - - ask - - Brent to give any ideas that he may have, as well.

Brent Wright: You know, I think Captain Barnhart said it perfectly. That community outreach in the very beginning is something that we took very serious, and I think it's paid dividends for us as we move forward.

We've been very transparent (and) open with everyone in the community, the individual civic groups, the judges, the prosecutors, the public defender's office, the victim advocacy groups. We've shared our program with anybody that would listen, and I would strongly encourage anyone undertaking this to follow that course.

Anthony Barnhart: So, (Todd), just as an example, we've actually been doing this for just over a year now. And, primarily that year encompassed research, development, community outreach and going out to bid for the camera system.

We do not have any cameras out on the street as of yet. Our first training will be next week, and we're going to implement this on a small scale - - basically on a squad-level scale.

So, we'll put a squad out on the streets with the camera, initially for a month to two months, to work out any bugs that may come up. And, keeping that on a small scale, so that we can handle that. That's what I'm talking about when we talk about moving slowly and deliberately.

Todd Maxwell: Oh, understood, understood. It allows you to not only work out any kinks with the hardware/software, but also any policy issues that might come up. That's a smart approach.

Anthony Barnhart: Thanks, Todd.

Todd Maxwell: I would like to thank you both for joining us today. We're grateful you could speak and share your experience and knowledge on this important topic.

Anthony Barnhart: Thanks for having us (Todd), we appreciate it.

Brent Wright: Thank you.

Todd Maxwell: We encourage 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](http://www.bja.gov/bwc).

This toolkit offers a variety of resources that agencies can use to help with the adoption and use of community engagement, policy development, data collection, officer training, and educational purposes. They 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, your resource. Please submit your ideas for new content to us through BWC's port link at the bottom of the help page.

This is Todd Maxwell with the Bureau of Justice System's Body-Worn Camera Team signing off. Thank you for joining us today.

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