

**Body Worn Camera Training and Technical Assistance
Brian White-Wichita Police Department**

Todd Maxwell: Hello again listeners. This is Todd Maxwell, member of the Bureau of Justice and Systems, Body Worn Camera Program and today, I'm speaking the Captain Brian White, Training Bureau Commander in the Wichita Police Department.

Brian White is a 27-year veteran with the Wichita Police Department. Captain White has seen assignments as (steel) training officer, a detective, and undercover operations, domestic violence and sex crimes units. As a sergeant, he supervised a street crimes unit that focused on gang and drug crimes. He's been a field bureau commander, and is currently the training commander

Captain White is a Body Worn Camera Project Manager for the Wichita Police Department. Thank you for speaking with us today Captain White.

Brian White: Thank you for having me Todd, I appreciate it.

Todd Maxwell: Let's get started. So why did your agency decide to implement Body Worn cameras?

Brian White: Essentially back in 2011 we had a dash mounted camera system, and it was beginning to become old and antiquated. And we were beginning to look at other solutions. Money was a factor for us then as well, and so we started on a very small scale of 20 Body Worn Cameras, to kind of dip our toe in this field. But we knew it was new – understood that it was new, and we were just learning about it. And we were slowly expanding that program from 2011 over the next few years we would buy five or ten more cameras, and we were in the neighborhood of 50 cameras in the fall of 2014 when the shooting happened in the Ferguson, Missouri.

And at that time, you know, we have a sworn strength of about 650 officers. So 50 cameras, was just a handful of cameras in our – in each bureau and we have a field bureau. We have about 100 officers in the field.

And so, you know, we might have 10 to 12 cameras in each bureau, and you spread those over the shifts, you'd only have a couple on each shift, on each

side of town in the four bureaus. So really it wasn't a very extensive program. And in 2014, obviously it became a more extensive look at Body Worn Cameras, and we had a public meeting where there was a real demand from the public to expand our program city-wide.

And so we started in earnest in 2014 and set a year goal to get the entire department deployed field operations by the end of 2015.

Todd Maxwell: Great. So, can you tell us based on your agency size, what were some of the particular challenges you had to implement in your body worn camera program?

Brian White: Really the biggest thing that – was an obstacle for us was communicating to all the people that were impacted by this, what the program was going to look like, but also in that communication, figure out what needs those different players had. An example would be, and obviously the officers were going to be impacted by that, and the union, the local police union, Wichita Police Department union, of course had a voice in that, and were an integral part of our policy development, but also the supervision - the staff of the Wichita Police Department, grouped within the community were very interested on what our policy was going to look like.

And when do we turn the camera on. When do we turn the camera off? How would they have access to the video? Local politicians - the mayor, they – the city council, the city manager, and then also state representatives also got involved and we were developing our program. And then all the other pieces too, IT, records, city prosecutors, judges, district attorneys and they all were very interested in the policy, the installation, the infrastructure, how was the system going to work day to day, and how would it impact their operations.

And so, learning about how this impacted them and then have – and coming back to our offices, coming back to my office, and trying to figure out a way to get this thing to work seamlessly. That was probably the biggest challenge, and then also making sure that any rumors that impacted any of these different pieces of the pie making sure that there was – knocking down those rumors and making sure that again, good communication existed.

Todd Maxwell: It sounds like you had a lot of input there which sort of leads us to our next topic which is around policy development, and we've got a lot of feedback through some of our (BJAs), Body Worn Camera regional meeting, national meetings involving the solicitation for Body Worn Cameras around hot topics and body – and policy. And one of those has been around the officer's right to review video before writing a report. And then when to release video by police department, can you tell us how your agency came to your policy decisions on these topics and what influenced those?

Brian White: Sure. Let me first talk to you about when officer's have an opportunity to review the video. You know, in diving into this subject, we kind of decided to split this in half. And really, looking back now where we're at today, I still feel like there's more research that needs to be done in this area, and we need to continually examine this.

But at any rate, what we had decided on was that in deadly force situation, when an officer is involved in a deadly – use of deadly force, we felt like the officer would review the video after they had their initial interview with an investigator. And then during that interview, they would have an opportunity to review the video, and then clear up any inconsistencies or talk about those inconsistencies, the investigator would work on those things.

So, that was one piece. And then the other piece was we felt like this was an exhausted piece, it was very time consuming to bring in an investigator, have them then review the officer. Obviously, you've got a lot of supervision involved in this as well and there's people watching, the district attorney is interested in how this investigation unfolds.

And we can't – we didn't feel like we had the ability to have that same kind of scrutiny on every use of force situation. Now of course, any time an officer uses force, they have to document it, not only through the report, but through a special use of force documentation that gets the supervisor review at a later time. But we didn't know if we could have supervisors examine or investigators examine the detail of those cases that were not deadly force cases.

So again, we kind of split it in half, and even a third piece of this is – if someone's involved in an internal affairs investigation as well and clearly, they would be especially and deadly force situation, maybe not always in those cases that aren't deadly force.

So, we – and based on our past practice in our agreement with our union, officers have an opportunity to review the evidence against them in an internal – internal affairs review. So, it really breaks down into three separate pieces. But we felt like the officers needed to give a statement before they watch the video in a deadly force situation based on current trends, current science, we felt like that would give us the best information about the decisions that they made and the actions that they took.

Todd Maxwell: Great. And I'd like to - you made a really good point at the beginning, talking about how policy is - needs to be reviewed and updated from time to time because it's a living, breathing document, and I appreciate you bringing up that point.

Brian White: Absolutely.

Todd Maxwell: We've also heard a lot about compliance with policy regarding BWCs, and how do you all address compliance?

Brian White: Really what we have done is we've broke that down into two pieces. What we have is that we've created a Body Worn Camera clerk position within our agency, and those clerks not only manage the day to day logistics for the cameras, if there's password problem or they need a new mount for their camera, or the docking station isn't working, or whatever it might be that's part of the clerk's duties. But also, the other part of the clerk's duty is to ensure that all the video is being tag properly. So they'll go through everyday and they have to review all the videos that all the officers submit or – and then they have to make sure that all that tagging is taking place.

As a part of that process, we also are looking to see if the officers are using the equipment. If there's a time where someone is working and they're not using the equipment, that's a red flag that has to be reported to supervision.

And then going hand and hand with that, the – we randomly pick officers every month to do a more close scrutiny of what their usage is on a particular day. So each day that – each day, we do – we check officers and it's random. But as part of that random check, we make sure that every officer is checked every month.

So while it may be random, you're going to get checked every month regardless of how, whether your name pops up if we – as it moves towards the end of the month, we'll look for those officers that have not been checked as a routine. And we'll be checking the video to ensure again that everything is marked properly that it's – that the length of the video is proper based on the situation

An example of that would be, are they involved in a car stop and it comes on halfway through the car stop? So we're checking that information against the video times, and date stamps. So, again there's – it's kind of a two piece review.

Todd Maxwell: Right. Got you. Thank you for explaining that. That is one of our topics we covered on our last regional meeting that agencies were asking for how different people dealt (with this). So thank you for sharing your insight. Can you explain your training process for your Body Worn Cameras and the policy attached with it?

Brian White: Right. So again, this is something that you have to think about as it relates not only to the officers that are using the equipment but supervision that are – that may not be wearing the equipment, but need to be familiar with it.

Again, prosecutors – you know, city prosecutors for us, and the district attorney's office. And so, we wanted to include them in the training process. We also did – we also helped train judges, and then we also in the early stages of us expanding this program, I invited a defense attorneys to our training programs.

So when we train the officers, which was the bulk of our training, what we decided to do was do it on a smaller scale where we had maybe about 10 to 15

at the most officers in any given training session, because there were a lot of questions about hardware use, there were a lot of questions about how the policy impacted them, and we also wanted to make sure that there was consistency in our training.

So just two of us did all the training. And we co-taught it at the beginning so that we could understand a lot of the questions that were coming up in the early stages of this program, but it took us a couple of months to get it – and we also did a staged roll-out, so not everyone got cameras immediately. It took us about six months to deploy 429 cameras.

Todd Maxwell: So do you – OK, thank you for including all the different agency. That's a good point to – for agencies to remember when they're discussing training is all the different agencies and components and chair holders that will end up having their hands on the evidence, it might need some background especially on the policy and the video cameras themselves.

So, can you talk about some of your biggest challenges with vendors in choosing the right solution for your department?

Brian White: Yes. When we started in 2011, the particular vendor that we selected was – just happened to have the right gear that we were looking for. Now obviously, there's a lot more players involved now, a lot more companies that are involved in the Body Worn Camera business.

What I think is important, and what works well for us, was that we needed to decide what was the right solution for us. And instead of start shopping, what we decided to do was kind of look at what other people were using. Before we even really reached out, we wanted to see what other people were using, how they were using it, and was that solution a right one for us. And really what we found was, is that for us here in Wichita, we were phasing out our dash mounted camera system

And again, as I mentioned earlier it was becoming antiquated, and what we felt like was a good solution for us was cameras that we wore on our hat. And we wanted to – we wanted that solution because as you're driving down the

road, you could see out of the vehicle easier with your camera, and it better documents the incident. There are also some other pieces to that particular solution that we felt again were right for us.

So, that helped narrow the choices. And I think that was good – that could be good for other agencies that are looking at starting up, is first decide what is the right solution for you and then start to identify there's businesses or those companies that fit that solution.

Todd Maxwell: And when you were going through that process, did you – was – what having the storage onsite or in the cloud, was that important to you, and why?

Brian White: Our original dash mounted system, we had a hard drive at the four different station - four different field station.

So you would bring your – you would capture the video. You would take the memory out of your car, and you would bring it into the station, and you would download it into the hard drive. So if you – things were needed for court, we would have to burn a disk. We would have to run it downtown for court, whether that be for the city prosecutor's office, or for the district attorney's office.

And it just became – as the system – more memory was needed to house all the videos, it became kind of a logistics nightmare for us to get those videos to the prosecutors, or even detectives that were interested in the video. And this was on a smaller scale, we didn't have dash mounted cameras on all our cars, but what we recognized was based on the size of our agency, the fact that we had a lot of different stations, the fact that – the detectives were in a different place, back to the prosecutors, were in two different places, it became difficult for us to manage that.

And so again, what we looked at as part of our solution was it felt like the cloud based solution was really going to work better for us. And that's what we ended up going with.

Todd Maxwell: Thank you. So, do you feel that your agency, you know, we talked about a lot of different components that went into this, all the different training

components, all the different vendor solutions, the storage. Can you explain how you feel your agency is equipped to handle all the costs that come with the day to day operations of the cameras and the video?

Brian White: Yes. You know, I think to be very frank with you, I think - I don't know that we did a good job with that. You know, we were politically pressed to make some decisions, and expand our program probably a little bit quicker than we were comfortable with from a financial perspective. I think that we were definitely ready to bring the cameras on board, but financially it was going to be a stretch for us.

Now, we've been able to make things work, but it's been difficult. And it continues to be because, it's, you know, there are yearly cost that are a part of the program.

Now, I don't think that means we shouldn't have done it, it just, you know, in today's tight budgets, it is very difficult to manage the budget. In addition to that, storage costs, the improved video quality, so if you're moving up to a 1080 camera, increases the size of the storage you'll need.

One thing that we felt like we made a good decision on is that we did unlimited storage in our cloud based system.

So, we average around 15,000 to 20,000 videos a month, and we're also looking at upgrading our cameras, and that is not going to be an expense that is built into our regional deal. So, and you know, I think we made some good decisions there, but managing the cost, and looking at that long term was definitely something that is a challenge today for us, and was early on.

Todd Maxwell: What is – just for our listeners, what is your retention policy on your videos and evidence – video evidence?

Brian White: The, you know, anything that is like a traffic based or a stop based video - the earliest that we would delete anything there would be two years. Anything that's a misdemeanor crime, it's typically going to be a three year retention. Felony crimes are a ten year retention, and then officer involved shootings, use of deadly force, that's going to be unlimited, we'll retain that forever.

So, there are few other categories in there, but essentially that's – that's our retention policy. So, also if you're involved in a particular case, involved in an internal investigation, we slide it over to a place where it will not be deleted. But then based on a review, it could be managed in different ways. It may be held unlimited or it may be slid back to if it was a particular crime, two, five or a ten year retention.

Todd Maxwell: Great. Thank you. And just so that our listeners would know to just sort of factor that in when you're looking at your ongoing costs, because you will have to maintain that – that data in your storage cycle. Or come up with options like you did.

I just want to say thank you for participating in our call today. We appreciate all the valuable feedback you provided.

Brian White: Glad to do it. Thank you so much for having me.

Todd Maxwell: We encourage law enforcement, justice, 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.bjs.gov/bwc. Toolkit office is 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.

We encourage our listeners to share and come up with these resources with your colleagues and staff. All of these resources in the toolkit have been designed as your resource, so please submit any ideas you have for new content through the BWC support link at the bottom of the homepage. This is Todd Maxwell with the Bureau of Justice Systems, Body Worn Camera team, signing off. Thanks for joining us today.

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