TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: POLICE

DATE: DECEMBER 12, 2005 CMR:435:05

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE ACCEPTANCE OF CITIZEN OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY (COPS) FOR THE PURCHASE OF MOBILE AUDIO VISUAL (MAV) SYSTEMS FOR POLICE MOTORCYCLES, UPGRADE AND PURCHASE OF A COVERT VEHICLE TRACKING SYSTEM, UPGRADE OF LIGHT BARS FOR PATROL VEHICLES, UPGRADE OF THE PATROL VEHICLE PROGRAM AND ADOPT A BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE (BAO) TO APPROPRIATE COPS FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF $100,000 FOR DEPOSIT IN THE CITY’S SUPPLEMENTAL LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES FUND (SLESF)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the City Council to consider and approve the acceptances of Citizens Options for Public Safety (COPS) to purchase mobile audio visual systems (MAV) for police motorcycles; upgrade and purchase a covert vehicle tracking system; upgrade of light bars for patrol vehicles and upgrade of the patrol vehicle program, adopt a Budget Amendment Ordinance (BAO) to appropriate COPS funds in the amount of $100,000 for deposit in the City’s Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund.

BACKGROUND

Since 1997, the California State Budget Act has included allocations to counties and cities for the COPS program. This funding is intended to fill the need for additional resources at the local level to ensure public safety. Under the provisions of Government Code Section 30061, a minimum of $100,000 is allocated to counties and cities, based upon population, for law enforcement services. Funds must supplement existing services and cannot be used to supplant any existing funds. Each county is required to continue the operation of a Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund (SLESF) to receive the State funds and the county’s Supplemental Law Enforcement Oversight Committee (SLEOC) must approve each agency’s proposal for the use of the funds. Prior to sending the proposal to the SLEOC, the bill requires that each city conduct a public hearing for the purpose of reviewing and approving the Police Department’s request for expenditure of funds. Each city is also required to deposit the funds into a separate SLESF so that these funds are not intermingled with
General Fund dollars. The funds must be expended within two years after receipt. Council has approved accepting COPS funding for the last eight years.

Previous uses of COPS funds have included the purchase of safety equipment, surveillance equipment, mobile data terminals, Positive Alternatives for Youth (PAY) program activities, upgrades to the telecommunications infrastructure associated with the Computer Aided Dispatch system, upgrades to the traffic motorcycle program, and for an additional sergeant position for the Special Problems Team and a captain position and associated training to assist in the City’s homeland security efforts.

**DISCUSSION**

Staff proposes to use this year’s COPS funds in the following manner:

**Mobile Audio Visual (MAV) System for Police Motorcycles:** $35,000

Police departments throughout the United States, including Palo Alto, are realizing the value of video recording of officer-citizen contacts in the field, citizen transports, criminal investigations and citizen complaints. In November 2004, City Council authorized funding to purchase in-vehicle MAV systems for all 26 patrol vehicles. Due to funding considerations, there was not enough money approved by the Council to cover the installation of these devices on motorcycles. Until recently, installing these devices on the motorcycles has been difficult if not impossible, due to space limitations and power consumption. As the City purchases new replacement motorcycles during the normal rotation process, the new motorcycles will include the capability of handling the cameras. Staff proposes utilizing $35,000 to cover the purchase of hardware and software to extend this program to seven police motorcycles.

**Upgrade and Purchase of Covert Vehicle Tracking System:** $20,000

Vehicle location and tracking has become an integral part of conducting efficient and safe surveillance operations. With the use of a GPS receiver that operates over a cellular network, these portable systems provide the automatic display of moving vehicles on an easy-to-read map from a PC or other devices. Staff purchased a unit with previous COPS funds and it has been successful in tracking and apprehension of suspects involved in stolen property, purchase of drugs, sex crimes, and other criminal activities. Staff proposes using $20,000 funds to purchase an additional tracking system and to upgrade the current tracking device to the latest technology.

**Upgrade Light Bars On Patrol Vehicles:** $25,000

Police officers responding to emergencies with lights and sirens is currently one of the most dangerous activities for law enforcement and the public. In addition, with the installation video cameras and other new law enforcement tools such as computers, electronic tracking systems, and radar equipment, the
draw on police car batteries is substantial. For these reasons, new emergency lighting equipment, utilizing halogen lamp technology, is becoming an industry standard in law enforcement. These new units have better lighting quality and capacity, and draw significantly less power than the current emergency light bars. Deployment of these new light bars in other law enforcement agencies has demonstrated a reduction in the number of accidents as the emergency equipment is more visible to the public, while reducing the load on the vehicle battery by 30 percent. Staff proposes using $25,000 to begin outfitting the City’s patrol fleet with lower profile emergency lighting equipment as older vehicles are retired and new vehicles are outfitted. This amount will provide for the installation of up to fifteen light bars on new vehicles.

**Upgrade Patrol Vehicle Program: $20,000**

Police are often involved in critical incidents such as missing person and suspect searches, bomb threats, fatal and serious injury traffic accidents, and other tactical incidents. These incidents often necessitate the establishment of a central command post in the field to effectively supervise and coordinate the response. Field supervisors currently drive standard patrol vehicles. As they coordinate major incidents, they must use the hood or trunk of their vehicles. During inclement weather, the coordination is significantly hampered. The majority of law enforcement agencies have begun using light trucks such as the Chevy Tahoe for their supervisors in order to deal with this situation. While staff is pursuing outside funding for a full size mobile command post/Emergency Operations Center, until then staff proposes spending $20,000 to upgrade an existing field supervisor patrol vehicle to a Chevy Tahoe and purchasing a unit that would be installed into the rear of the vehicle. This request would not result in an increase in the total number of vehicles in the fleet. The truck will be equipped with a pre-fabricated unit in the rear of the vehicle that has several file cabinets, map pullout drawers and various storage compartments for tactical response equipment. The vehicle will be assigned to the on-duty watch commander or field supervisor and would therefore be available during all work shifts.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

The attached BAO (Attachment A), requests an increase in revenue and expenditure of $100,000 for the City’s Supplemental Law Enforcement Service Fund (SLESF). There will be minimal future year General Fund budget expense required to outfit the light truck. This expense will be accommodated within the existing Police Department budget.

**POLICY IMPlications**

Expenditures of funds associated with COPS funds are consistent with existing City policy.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**
This is not a project subject to CEQA requirements.

**ATTACHMENT**

Budget Amendment Ordinance

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