

Minor, Beth

From: Rice, Danille
Sent: Friday, May 1, 2020 4:13 PM
To: Council, City; Council Agenda Email; Clerk, City
Cc: Executive Leadership Team
Subject: Council Agenda Consent Questions for May 4: Item 6

**Council Question Response**

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

On behalf of City Manager Ed Shikada, please find below the staff responses to inquiries made by Council Member Tanaka in regard to the May 4, 2020 Council Meeting agenda.

Item 6: Approval for COPS

- 1. How flexible is the COPS grant? “Fill[ing] the need for additional resources at the local level to ensure public safety” and “The funds must be used to benefit front-line law enforcement efforts” are quite vague.**

The California State Budget Act has included allocations to counties and cities for the COPS program since 1997. This funding is intended to fill the need for additional resources at the local level to ensure public safety. Funds must supplement existing services and cannot be used to supplant any existing funds. The U.S. Department of Justice website for details on how the COPS grant program is administered: <https://cops.usdoj.gov/grants> with further direction provided at the state level in [Government Code 30061](#).

- 2. What has been the effect of COVID-19 on police resources? Specifically, is upgrading tasers and communication technologies going to be very beneficial to the police force in the months during the stay-at-home order?**

The effect of COVID-19 on police resources is still to be determined. One thing that has become clear are the challenges associated with law enforcement and social distancing. The Taser is a device specifically designed to maintain distance from a combative/high-risk suspect during a confrontation. Conductive electronic weapons are a less lethal force option that all of our field officers carry. The tactical communication equipment allows our personnel to more effectively communicate with suspects and victims during critical incidents. As our officers are continuing to respond to calls for service and contact the public on a daily basis, the current global health emergency and stay-at-home orders do not have an effect on either of these proposals.

- 3. What research has been done on the effectiveness of tasers?**

The City conducted its own research in 2007 utilizing the task force model. Prior to City Council authorizing the Palo Alto Police Department to purchase conductive electronic weapons more than a decade ago, the Council convened a TASER Task Force of subject matter experts (to include a medical doctor) and community members to examine that research and help Council make an informed decision. All of their public documents and findings can be referenced here:

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/agendas/past_committees_task_forces_and_working_groups/ttf.asp

Thank you.



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