



OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
CITY OF ST. LOUIS



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TO: Ms. Darlene Green, Comptroller

FROM: Elaine Harris Spearman, ESQ
Chief of Staff/Legal Advisor

DATE: August 26, 2015

RE: Utilizing Ward Capital for Body Camera Funding

Attached please find a recommendation for the use of Ward Capital to fund the purchase of "Body Cameras" for SLMPD usage.

Community leaders, organizations, law enforcement and the general public have made the use of "Body Cameras" a serious concern that must be addressed. This issue has continued due to a need for funding to pay for such a critical item.

It appears that a large segment of the population support the use of a portion of the \$30,792,478.59 cash balance in the Ward Accounts to fund the purchase.

Thank you for your consideration.

EHS:ns

Attachments



BODY CAMERA PURCHASE ISSUE

Issue Presented: Reallocation of a sufficient portion of the Ward Capital Account to fund "Body Cameras" for the Officers of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (hereinafter SLMPD).

Brief Answer: The most expeditious and clearly visible manner of making a purchase of "Body Cameras" for the SLMPD would be for a majority of all of the members of the Board of Aldermen to meet and agree to the proposed allocation for the purchase of "Body Cameras". Should that not occur, other measures, such as use of Emergency Authority as characterized in the St. Louis City Charter should be considered to make the necessary purchase of "Body Cameras" for the SLMPD.

Expanded Answer: As stated above, agreement by the majority of the members of the Board of Aldermen would be the most expeditious and transparent method of facilitating the purchase of the "Body Cameras" for the SLMPD.

However, if such agreement does not occur, Emergency measures should be given due consideration.

There are two (2) Emergency measures that are focused upon in this discussion.

Article XV, Department of Finance, Section 2

This section states in pertinent part:

"[The Comptroller] shall preserve the credit of the city and for that purpose, or in the case of any extraordinary emergency and kind [h]e may, with the approval of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, and with or without any ordinance or other authority or appropriation therefore draw warrants on the treasurer, or effect temporary loans."

The City of St. Louis recently received a downgrade in its credit rating by Moodys, a credit rating agency. According to Moodys the credit rating downgrade "reflects the city's weak socioeconomic profile", among other factors. "Socioeconomics is a social science that studies how economic activity affects and is shaped by social processes" [Wikipedia \(the free encyclopedia\)](#). Analysis is made of how societies progress or regress based upon a relationship between economic factors (such as a factory closing), and social philosophy, ethics, human dignity, social reconstruction, education, family and other factors that affect daily living. Moodys clearly stated that "strengthening socioeconomic indices can make the rating go up".

The spate of gun violence and murders in the St. Louis community has had an extremely negative impact upon the socioeconomic status of the City of St. Louis. Three (3) recent questionable killings involving Police has drawn the attention of the St. Louis City Chapter of the NAACP, an investigation by the St. Louis City Circuit Attorney's Office, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, countless other agencies and a public outcry for "Body Cameras" to minimize social unrest regarding questionable police shootings.

The issue has continued to be the cost to the city to purchase such a desperately needed item to ensure that the rights of all citizens are protected including law enforcement.

Article IV, Board of Aldermen, Section 20

This section defines an emergency measure as "any ordinance necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety, or providing for public work or improvement of any kind"...as well as "for current expenses of the city government; any general appropriation ordinance"...

The Board of Aldermen are clearly able to pass an emergency measure to provide for the health and safety of the citizens of St. Louis. The \$30,792,478.59 contained within the Ward Capital Improvement Program (CIP) clearly is a source for the purchase of "Body Cameras" for the preservation of the City's public peace, health and safety. A reallocation of a sufficient portion for purchase of "Body Cameras" would be in the best interest of the citizens and would have a major impact upon the social instability facing the St. Louis region.

In summary, the authority to utilize emergency measures is clearly within the purview of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, which includes the emergency authority of the Comptroller to proclaim such emergency.

The funds can be refunded and restored to the Ward Capital Accounts when other funds become available. Under Article XVI, Board of Estimate and Apportionment, Section 6, the board may appropriate city revenue "to any other purpose or purposes".