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Re: Where are the body cameras that Anchorage residents paid \$1.8 million for?

Mayor Bronson, Chief Kerle, and Assembly Chair LaFrance:

In April 2021, the residents of Anchorage voted to tax themselves \$1.8 million so that the Anchorage Police Department (“APD”) would have body cameras. The APD told the community that it would have body cameras by the end of 2021.¹

Now, more than sixteen months later, the residents of Anchorage are still waiting. In fact, it appears that the APD has yet to even purchase body cameras. And has yet to resolve any issues with the police union to agree on a body camera policy.

¹ “I’m embarrassed that we’ve sat here and said a year ago that we expected body cameras at the end of 2021, where we’re here a year later and today, the truth is we’re not that much closer to having body cameras.” – Anchorage Police Chief Michael Kerle on February 18, 2022.

Over these fifteen months, the municipality and the APD have repeatedly delayed any action on this issue. From discussing “privacy interests,” to dragging their feet on simply meeting with the police union, the municipality and the APD are effectively ignoring the will of the voters.

None of this delay needs to be happening. Per the Bureau of Justice Statistics, back in 2016, 80% of large police departments in the U.S. had already acquired body cameras. Anchorage and the APD are sorely behind the times.

Nor is this a divisive issue. As the president of the Anchorage Police Department Employees Association (“APDEA”) has stated, the APD union is in favor of body cameras. Just like the residents of Anchorage are.

We want the MOA to come up with some firm timelines to move forward on body cameras, in order to avoid formal legal action. It is our understanding that APD has started negotiations with APDEA. If the APD and the municipality cannot agree in its negotiations with APDEA by **September 15, 2022**, we expect that they will initiate grievance and arbitration procedures on the following day.

Please advise us if you will agree to this timeline. The residents of Anchorage have waited long enough for their voices to be heard. Yet fifteen months and \$1.8 million later, we still have no closure on a final date for when body cameras will finally be on APD officers. We cannot wait for another death to spur Anchorage into action.

Very Truly Yours,

James J. Davis, Jr.

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