



Troy D. Berry
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff

Charles County, Maryland

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Board of Charles County Commissioners

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Dear Board of County Commissioners,

The FY2022 budget will be finalized in a few days and I appreciated the opportunity to present the Charles County Sheriff's Office budget to you, on April 20, 2021. In my presentation, I expressed that one of the major priorities for our agency is establishing a body worn camera program. I realize, as the Board of Commissioners, you have a duty and responsibility to meet the financial needs of the fine citizens of the County as we emerge from the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we must consider the national conversation relating to police accountability and trust.

Nationally, there is a strained relationship between communities and law enforcement. There are various communities experiencing civil unrest, protests and demands for social justice. People from many different cultures, ethnicities, political ideologies, socioeconomic backgrounds and hues are demanding criminal justice reform throughout the country. In addition, the echo of change and discussion are centered around: defunding the police, mandatory body worn cameras, qualified immunity, de-escalation, implicit and racial bias trainings and legislative mandates.

The community and law enforcement relationship is crucial to the success of any law enforcement organization and public safety. It is critical we establish a relationship built on mutual respect, communication and trust. It is important for the community to view their law enforcement agency as a partner, not an occupying para-military force.

For the FY2022 budget, the Charles County Sheriff's Office is requesting 1.4 million dollars to fully fund a body worn camera program, which includes: equipment, staffing and data storage. This important initiative cannot wait until a significant incident occurs in our county. The criminal justice reform advocates want and expect accountability and transparency from all law enforcement organizations. As evidence shows, fully implementing a body worn camera program will bring some comfort and reassurance to the citizens and other elected officials that the Charles County Sheriff's Office is committed to transparency and accountability.

Thank you for your attention and consideration to this extremely important budgetary request.

Respectfully,

Sheriff Troy Berry

cc: Michael Belton