



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Bloomington Police Establish Pilot Program for Electronic Control Weapons**

Bloomington, Ind. — After consideration and review by the five-member Public Safety Board, the Bloomington Police Department will soon begin a multi-month pilot program of deploying electronic control weapons (ECWs), commonly referred to as Tasers. The pilot will provide ECWs to some officers as an additional less-lethal option to study their effectiveness in reducing the number of injuries to both suspects and officers when officers encounter an individual who physically resists arrest.

The proposed pilot program was presented to the Board of Public Safety in two public meetings in July and August. The Board had earlier asked the Police Department to review all recommendations of President Obama's *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing*, and equipping officers with ECWs is the sole remaining action item that the Department is able to implement but has yet to complete.

The Board of Public Safety is a civilian oversight board for the police department with members appointed by the Mayor. In their review Board members provided suggestions regarding the program and requests for various data points to be shared publicly as the program is underway.

During the pilot program, ECWs will be issued to a limited number of officers on all three shifts. All uses of the ECWs will be reviewed and studied to determine the circumstances surrounding the usage and whether or not the ECW assisted in reaching pre-determined goals, which include reducing the number of events in which suspects and/or officers are injured during use of force encounters. This program will begin in 2023 and continue into 2024, when a recommendation will be made as to whether to

continue use of ECWs and whether all officers of the department should be equipped with the technology.

Currently, all other law enforcement agencies in Monroe County equip their officers with ECWs.

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