The Sheriff's Department first began pursuing body worn cameras in 2011 by performing a study in our custody division. After the testing in Custody Division, in 2013, the Department moved forward with testing body worn cameras for patrol operations. In 2014, the department initiated a test and evaluation of body worn cameras in our patrol divisions. In 2015, the LASD created an unfunded team of personnel to pursue a department wide BWC program.

During the previous administration, the department developed an implementation plan in 2017 with an estimated annual cost for maintaining a body worn camera program at $55 million per year and necessitating an additional 239 personnel.

On August 7th, 2018, the Board directed the CEO in consultation with the Sheriff, County Counsel, OIG, and the COC, to engage a consultant to review and assess previous County reports on BWC’s and evaluate the Sheriff’s proposed policies, procedures, deployment plan, staffing and corresponding operational impact on the LASD and the community. The consultant was not hired following this motion.

On December 3, 2018, Sheriff Alex Villanueva was sworn into office as the 33rd Sheriff of the LASD. On his third day in office, Sheriff Villanueva convened a meeting with the BWC team with the direction to expedite implementation of the Department’s BWC Plan. In December of 2018, Sheriff Villanueva began meeting with Supervisors and the CEO to move the project forward with a reduced cost of approximately $14 million dollar-per-year and additional costs for one time infrastructure upgrades.

In January 2019 the CEO then acted on the Board motion from August 7, 2018 and hired a BWC consultant to evaluate a Body Worn Camera program for the LASD. The LASD expressed concerns that this would delay the project. The consultant was retained and the LASD closely worked with the BWC consultant and CEO staff until the completion of the report on June 12, 2019. The consultant’s final report largely supported the LASD implementation strategies and policies.

Sheriff Villanueva submitted a new implementation with the promised reduction in costs and additional personnel.

On August 30th, 2019, the CEO submitted its analysis of Sheriff Villanueva’s proposed $34.6 million implementation budget for the BWC program. On September 19th, 2019, the BOS allocated $20.5 million in one-time infrastructure and $14.2 million in ongoing funds that were placed into the PFU account that is held by the CEO.

On September 24th, 2019, the BOS moved to approve the implementation of the BWC program, and submitted revised recommendations. The CEO directed the LASD to submit a new budget request for funds that could be spent in the remainder of FY 2019/2020 on infrastructure.
LASD Body Worn Camera Timeline

On October 31st, 2019, the Internal Services Department (ISD) released the Request for Proposal (RFP) for BWC solicitation. The solicitations were due to ISD on December 12, 2019.

On December 19th, 2019, the BOS approved a new motion to provide $5.63 million dollars from the PFU account for the use of BWC program infrastructure upgrades to the LASD.

The LASD encumbered the funds on January 21, 2020. The LASD began the purchasing process for infrastructure equipment for the BWC deployment. The LASD also began staffing the new BWC Unit personnel.

The infrastructure funding that was provided to the LASD in the December Board motion was removed from the LASD budget during the month of April due to budget restrictions imposed by the Board of Supervisors on the Sheriff's budget. The LASD was only able to have a portion of the funds returned to the Sheriff's budget after notifying the CEO of the actions taken. The loss of funds during the month of April created conflicts with current County spending regulations and approval processes. The removal of the funds caused LASD to cancel equipment orders, then create new orders following the reinstatement of funds.

The Board's desire to constrict the Sheriff's budget, combined with the mandates from the type of funding (Provisional Funding Unit), has created a very difficult environment for such a large project.

The Sheriff's Department's IT infrastructure requires major upgrades. Much of the infrastructure equipment was scheduled to have been purchased and installed for the first 15 stations and some units that support patrol. The budget process that requires the LASD to make multiple funding requests is daunting and makes a smooth cadence of deployment difficult for the LASD.

Presently, the Department is working with the ISD to announce an agreement for a BWC vendor. Once an agreement is announced, the department will receive a formal estimate of the BWC costs and has requested the entire budget in the 2020/2021 fiscal year to try and alleviate the need to continually go back for funding. This seems to be the only way to prevent interruptions in the deployment. Since a motion was already moved to return unused funds back to PFU, for use in future years, it stands to reason this is the best way to improve the Department’s ability to deploy the cameras as fast as monetary and personnel resources allow.

The Department is also awaiting the CEO to finalize a lease space agreement for the BWC Unit.