

## Minutes

### RTA Organizational, Services and Performance Monitoring Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m., October 12, 2021

**Committee Members:** Byrne (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Duarte, Serrano, Weiss

**Other Board members:** Joyce, Koomar, Lucas, McCall, Pellot      **Not present:** None

**Staff:** Birdsong, Burney, Caver, Coffey, Dangelo, Davidson, Fesler, Fields, Garofoli, Gautam, Gettings, Ghanem, Jones, Kirkland, Krecic, Miller, Peganoff, Penning, Rusnov, Schipper, Sutula, Talley, Tarka, Walker-Minor

**Public:** Gibbons, Lamb, Loh

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. There were five (5) committee members present.

This meeting was live-streamed on RTA's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/rideRTA](https://www.facebook.com/rideRTA)) for staff and members of the public. Members of the public were allowed to attend in-person.

Based on Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance to continue to avoid large events and gatherings and Ohio Department of Public Health advice that businesses and other entities may continue to require mitigation measures, as well as RTA's interest in protecting community and employee health and safety, several measures were put in place for in-person attendance, which are spelled out in the meeting notice.

#### Taser Program Equipment and Services

Chief Deirdre Jones, Transit Police and Vanessa Penning, Contract Administrator gave the presentation.

A taser is a conducted energy weapon that is used to incapacitate targets via shocks. It is less-lethal than a fire arm and two darts are used to deliver a charge. It is designed to disrupt voluntary control of muscles and allow the target to be handled in an unresisting manner. The benefits of taser deployment is that it decreases uses of lethal force in taking people into custody that would otherwise be subjected to more significant amounts/levels of force. It reduces the likelihood of officers being injured while dealing with violent/combatative subjects.

Transit Police currently uses the Model X26. They have 48 tasers that are shared between officers. Constant transfer of the tasers creates higher risk of damage to cartridges and tasers and they are outdated. There are 17 units 20+ years old and 31 units 10+ years old and there are no replacement parts. With the new taser program Model 7, 130 tasers will be issued to each officer. This will decrease wear/tear and costs associated with replacement. It limits chances of accidental discharge and creates a greater accountability for taser/parts damage. Cartridges/replacement tasers/parts are included in program.

The Model 7 taser is optimized for close range. There is an optimal spread when deployed in close quarters. It has a 12 – 22-foot reach. It has a higher velocity than the X26 Model and the contact stuns with a 5-second cycle. It has an automatic backup shot which removes the need to manually reload and improves safety and performance in case of a miss shot or closing disconnect. Additionally, it comes with a warning arc that issues audible and visual warning. It helps to stop conflicts from escalating and increase voluntary surrender with subjects. It also has improved technology. It removes need to manually reload, increasing officer safety. It improves performance with smart weapon and smart cartridges to optimize energy output to achieve incapacitation. Data is loaded and saved in AxonEvidence.com. Firmware and device optimization automatically updates when batteries are recharged. There is an improved cartridge design for optimal success of device. It may reduce need for additional exposure by the officer and it has unlimited cartridge replacement.

There was an incident in Minnesota where a police officer shot a male after mistaken her firearm for a taser. Under the Model 7, TP will use the yellow handle version. It allows officers the greatest chance of recognizing it as a nonlethal weapon and not a handgun.

This is a sole source with Axon Enterprise Inc. Procurement received proposal on September 14, 2021. A 0% DBE goal was assigned. Per Section 306.43 (H)(3) of the Ohio Revised Code states that a sole source procurement is authorized when "the expenditure is for a renewal or renegotiation of a lease or license for telecommunications or electronic data processing equipment, services, or systems, or for the upgrade of such equipment, services, or systems, or for the maintenance thereof as supplied by the original source or its successors or assigns".

This is a sole source because Axon Enterprise Inc. is the only vendor that manufactures and sells the Taser 7 Plan with Virtual reality. Also the upgrade is from the old taser models to new Taser 7. Total trade-in value - \$17,010.00 (31 Model X26P Tasers - \$450 Each and 17 Model 26 Tasers - \$180 Each).

Company Strengths and Experience include:

- Extensive work with law enforcement agencies
- Thorough understanding of conducted energy equipment and related services
- Prior experience with GCRTA
- Understanding of the Authority's needs and expectations

Clients include:

- Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA)
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NYCMTA)
- Maryland Transit Authority (MTA)
- Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)
- Houston Metro Transit (HMT)

Staff requests that the Organizational, Services & Performance Monitoring Committee recommend an award to Axon Enterprise Inc. for Taser 7 Program Equipment and Services in an amount not to exceed \$515,890.00 for a period of five years.

Ms. Pellot asked for the life span of the taser. The Chief said it is 5 years. President Lucas complemented the staff and said it feels secure to have this weapon as an option compared to a handgun. Mayor Byrne asked what the difference is between the red light and green light. The officer said the green light identifies where the top dart will place. The red light is where the bottom dart will place. Ms. Moss understands that it is a sole source, but asked if we explored other product options outside of transit and if we are getting any money back. Vanessa said this is a sole source because this is an upgrade. They previously went through this vendor to purchase the old tasers. We're getting about \$17,000 back.

Ms. Dangelo said when she used to purchase these as a contract administrator, there was a competitive solicitation in 2010-2011. They were purchased originally off a competitive solicitation. They were offered under the State contract for a while. They are replacing tasers from 2014. They are competitive to the rates on the State contract. The fact that we have the Axon model and they offered replacement and software and their experience with other agencies of our size or greater is why they moved forward. The officer said Axon was formed in 1994. They were the first to manufacture the weapon. Now they are the leader in this technology. Other companies are behind compared to Axon. There are approximately 18,000 police departments in the country. Ninety percent use energy weapons from Axon. Ms. Moss asked how often do the officers use the tasers. The Chief said the usage is tracked in the Use of Force policy. Because the current tasers are outdated, there may be some issues if and when the officer has to

resort to using the taser. Chief Jones said that since she joined the department in May, no officer has had to use them.

Mayor Weiss asked if the warranty will allow swap outs if there are any defects. Chief Jones said it includes unlimited parts, replacement and repair. Chief McCall asked if this item and body cameras can be presented on during the capital budget process so they will know when equipment is being replaced. She asked how tasers and other technology speaks to better policing. Getting behind on replacing equipment impacts public safety. Chief Jones said she is proud of TP efforts to deescalate situations. One improvement of the new taser is the warning arc, which lets subjects know that this is the last resort after non-compliance. Any efforts that they make to deescalate are exhausted before they resort to using a weapon, including the taser. They are crises intervention trained. RTA deals with a lot of unsheltered people and people with mental issues.

It was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Moss and approved to move this to the full Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.



Rajan D. Gautam  
Secretary/Treasurer



Theresa A. Burrage  
Executive Assistant