Manchester police looking at body cameras for officers

Under review:
Police Chief Carlo Capano said he has spoken to body camera vendors, and the price tag could be as much as $900,000.

By PAUL FEELY
New Hampshire Union Leader

MANCHESTER — As city police seriously consider adopting body cameras, they’re looking at a potential price tag of $900,000, according to Police Chief Carlo Capano.

“I’m an advocate for body cameras,” Capano told members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen last Tuesday, just days after a video showing the use of police force and the arrest of four people outside the Bonfire Restaurant & Country Bar in downtown Manchester was posted on social media.

“It offered the most.” Mayor Joyce Craig said the use of force and subsequent arrests are under review after a video of the Nov. 18 incident appearing on social media and media websites drew comments from city officials and residents. The video shows police striking and using a stun gun on two people as they struggle during an arrest.

A crowd watches, and some tell police they will end up in jail for their actions. Both police officers and suspects shout profanities during the struggle.

On Tuesday, Alderman Keith Hirschmann of Ward 12 made a motion supporting the use of body cameras by city police, and referring the matter to committee to discuss possible funding sources. That’s when Capano told board members he has already had preliminary discussions with at

“I want to protect these police officers, with what they have to go through,” said Levasseur. “I see these people using these videos on social media. They start them at the point when police officers are putting someone on the ground, not showing what precipitated the issue.”

As of two years ago, 10 police departments in the state had body cameras. Weare and Dunbarton have been using cameras for some time.

The two largest law enforcement agencies — the Manchester police department and state police — do not use body cameras.

Portsmouth is considering adding cameras, while Hanover police started using them last summer. Claremont police are bringing them online as well.

The effect that body cameras have on
“We’ve looked at different vendors the past year or so,” the chief added. “They’ve been coming in from $250,000 up to $900,000 — and I cringe to say it, but the $900,000 is the one we liked best.

Craig refused to accept Hirschmann’s motion, saying the issue was already being reviewed.

“We would have to go out to bid on this,” said Capano. “Given the number of officers we have, we would get a lot of interest.”

A study by The Lab @ DC, found the use of body cameras did not result in large-scale shifts in police behavior or reductions in the use of force or complaints.

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