



MEMORANDUM

RESPECT PROFESSIONALISM HONESTY INTEGRITY FAIRNESS

TO: Finance Committee Members

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager
 Eddie M. Buffaloe, Jr. Chief of Police *EMB*

SUBJECT: Consideration – Application for SWAT Equipment

DATE: May 20, 2013

Background:

The Elizabeth City Police Department's 12 member SWAT Team trains on a monthly basis and is prepared to respond in critical incidents including escape of fugitives, felony search warrants, and potential hostage and/or kidnapping/barricade situations. The ECPD SWAT Team is the only tactical team within the seven-county region and provides assistance to all surrounding counties and jurisdictions in the event their assistance is needed. The ECPD SWAT Team could benefit from additional equipment and, due to budget restraints, is seeking to acquire equipment through one-time grants offered by the National Tactical Officers Association which the Elizabeth City Police Department is a member of. The equipment grants the Elizabeth City Police Department are seeking require no matching funds on the part of the City.

Analysis:

The Elizabeth City Police Department is currently seeking equipment grant opportunities for its SWAT team, to include acquisition of up to two SLR15 rifles and a rescue "throw" phone (see grant applications attached).

Police Department
City of Elizabeth City, P. O. Box 347, Elizabeth City, NC 27907-0347
Phone: (252) 335-4321 – Fax (252) 338-0128

SLR15 (Sully AR 15 stock) rifles have better stopping capabilities than departmental issued handguns and would be beneficial in perimeter security in the event a barricaded hostage situation occurs. In addition, SLR15 rifles also give enhanced ability of extended range in open terrain areas.

Rescue "throw" phones allow for conversation to be established in hostage situations and create a controlled environment which gives control to law enforcement and prohibits the perpetrator/offender from establishing outside communications. Both the SLR15 rifles and the rescue phone would increase safety for law enforcement in the event of a critical situation occurring within Elizabeth City or the seven county surrounding area.

Acquisition of said equipment would give a strategic, life-saving advantage to the law enforcement and increases the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Finance Committee make a recommendation to submit a grant application for SWAT equipment (i.e. SLR15 rifles and rescue phone) via the National Tactical Officers Association grant program.

Rescue Phone Grant

INTENT:

The Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team is currently seeking funding opportunities to procure a rescue phone to be used in SWAT training and in the event a hostage situation occurs. The Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team has no specific allotted budget, other than the department's general budget which allows only for the purchase of uniforms, minimal equipment purchases not to exceed \$500.00, and training/travel expenses. Budget restraints in small/medium governments often do not allow for maximum funding opportunities for SWAT teams and therefore outside funding sources must be actively pursued. In applying for this grant, the Elizabeth City Police Department will adhere to all practices, mandates, and guidelines established by the National Tactical Officers Association as it relates to use of the rescue phone. Although not defined as a multi-jurisdictional team, the Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team is the only tactical team within the seven-county surrounding area and provides mutual aid assistance to all surrounding counties and jurisdictions.

BACKGROUND:

A river based city also known as the "The Harbor of Hospitality", Elizabeth City (located in Pasquotank County) serves as the geographical hub of Northeastern, North Carolina, being the largest city east of Greenville. Located approximately 45 minutes from the greater Hampton Roads Virginia area, the City has a resident population of 20,000 people, but extended daily population equates to 40,000 people who either live, work, or are traveling through the City. Elizabeth City is faced with the typical challenges of gang, drug, and gun violence. The Police Department has 59 sworn officers who respond to approximately 45,000 calls for service on a yearly basis. Seventy-five percent of the city's population is lower to moderate income and court statistics showed that at the end of 2012, there were a total of 520 individuals on probation who reside in Elizabeth City. There are two universities located in the city, Elizabeth City State University and Mid-Atlantic Christian University, and also a two-year community college, College of the Albemarle. Elizabeth City is also home of the largest military base on the east coast, the United States Coast Guard base which is located approximately two miles outside the City limits.

NEED:

By acquiring a rescue "throw" phone, the Elizabeth City Police Department SWAT Team would be able to establish communications in a hostage situation that occurred within Elizabeth City or the seven county surrounding areas. After telephone lines are cut and a perimeter is established in the hostage area, the ECPD SWAT Team negotiators would be able to talk directly to the offender/kidnapper in a controlled environment without the perpetrator having

access to any other means of outside communication. Without this capability, the offender/kidnapper could contact outside sources which would potentially be to the police department's detriment and cause a hindrance in achieving a successful outcome. In the event of a hostage kidnapping or barricade situation, police officers would have a greater degree of safety by using a rescue "throw" phone for a centralized communications device. Rescue phone allows law enforcement to be in control of the conversation and increases the chances of safe retrieval of all parties involved. The Elizabeth City Police Department would also train with the rescue phone in its usual monthly training in preparation of a hostage or barricaded situation occurring. The Elizabeth City Police Department has never had an actual rescue phone for its SWAT Team and this grant would be a great opportunity to acquire the much needed device.

CLOSING:

Any consideration given the Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team in the funding and acquisition of a rescue phone is greatly appreciated. The rescue "throw" phone will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of the SWAT team and give them a strategic, life-saving advantage in the event a hostage situation occurs in the City of Elizabeth City, as well as the seven counties that the Department provides mutual aid assistance to. Protecting its citizens and reducing crime and the fear of crime is the number one goal of the Elizabeth City Police Department.

SLR15 Rifle Grant

INTENT:

The Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team is currently seeking funding opportunities to procure up to two SLR 15 rifles to be used in SWAT call-outs/deployment. The Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team has no specific allotted budget, other than the department's general budget which allows only for the purchase of uniforms, minimal equipment purchases not to exceed \$500.00, and training/travel expenses. Budget restraints in small/medium governments often do not allow for maximum funding opportunities for SWAT teams and therefore outside funding sources must be actively pursued. In applying for this grant, the Elizabeth City Police Department will adhere to all practices, mandates, and guidelines established by the National Tactical Officers Association as it relates to use of the SLR15 rifle. Although not defined as a multi-jurisdictional team, the Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team is the only tactical team within the seven-county surrounding area and provides mutual aid assistance to all surrounding counties and jurisdictions.

BACKGROUND:

A river based city also known as the "The Harbor of Hospitality", Elizabeth City (located in Pasquotank County) serves as the geographical hub of Northeastern, North Carolina, being the largest city east of Greenville. Located approximately 45 minutes from the greater Hampton Roads Virginia area, the City has a resident population of 20,000 people, but extended daily population equates to 40,000 people who either live, work, or are traveling through the City. Elizabeth City is faced with the typical challenges of gang, drug, and gun violence. The Police Department has 59 sworn officers who respond to approximately 45,000 calls for service on a yearly basis. Seventy-five percent of the city's population is lower to moderate income and court statistics showed that at the end of 2012, there were a total of 520 individuals on probation who reside in Elizabeth City. There are two universities located in the city, Elizabeth City State University and Mid-Atlantic Christian University, and also a two-year community college, College of the Albemarle. Elizabeth City is also home of the largest military base on the east coast, the United States Coast Guard base which is located approximately two miles outside the City limits.

NEED:

By acquiring up to two SLR15 rifles, the Elizabeth City SWAT Team would have possession of two long guns which have better stopping capabilities than the standard departmentally issued Glock 31 handguns assigned to each team member. SLR15's would be useful in perimeter security in the event of barricaded hostages. The Elizabeth City Police Department SWAT Team has been called out on at least one occasion for a school lock-down that resulted in

the apprehension of suspect and seizure of weapons. Located in partially rural area with many open fields and low-lands, the Elizabeth City Police Department SWAT Team has been called out on numerous occasions to track fleeing felons who were traveling on foot in open terrain areas. Providing assistance to the smaller populated surrounding counties, there is a large area of open terrain to cover. In these instances, SLR's would give the enhanced ability of extended ranges that could not be achieved with use of the standard, departmentally issued Glock 31 handguns.

CLOSING:

Any consideration given the Elizabeth City Police Department's SWAT Team in the funding and acquisition of up to two SLR15 rifles is greatly appreciated. The rifles will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of the SWAT team and give them a strategic, life-saving advantage in the event a hostage situation occurs in the City of Elizabeth City, as well as the seven counties that the Department provides mutual aid assistance to. Protecting its citizens and reducing crime and the fear of crime is the number one goal of the Elizabeth City Police Department.