

Chico Police Department
Police Community Advisory Board



Wednesday, July 14, 2021

8:00am – 10:00am

Fire Training Center ~ 1466 Humboldt Road

Group Agreements

- Be Respectful • Stay Fully Present • Speak and Listen from the Heart • Expect and Accept Non-Closure •
 - Hold the Complexity of Other's Experiences Without Judgment • Maintain Confidentiality •

AGENDA

- I. Opening Remarks – Chief Madden
- II. Training (continued) – Gloria Halley & Tray Robinson
 - a. Axon Virtual Reality Training Webinar
- III. Schedule of Future Topics
 - a. August – Communication/Messaging
 - b. September – Support Service Units
 - c. October – Recruitment/Hiring/Retention
 - d. November – Officer Safety and Wellness
 - e. December – Final Report Review

Chico Police Department | Police Community Advisory Board (PCAB)

Fire Training Center Classroom ~ 1466 Humboldt Road

July 14, 2021 8:00am – 10:00am

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chief Matt Madden, Giovanni Tricerri, Antonio Arreguin-Bermudez, Gloria Halley, Scott Kennelly, Kasey Reynolds, Tray Robinson, Tom van Overbeek

ALSO PRESENT:

Admin Analyst Crystal Peppas

OPENING COMMENTS

Chief Madden opened the meeting. The discussion of virtual reality (VR) technology was introduced in the last PCAB meeting, and the idea is up and coming in law enforcement training. Recently, local agencies were able to view a demo of VirTra Police Training Simulator. This system provides a 300-degree, high-definition view on a screen for an immersive training experience. BCSO is interested in this simulator and has a potential donor for the equipment. Even more recently, Chief Madden was introduced to Axon VR Training. Axon has developed an all-in-one wireless headset and training modules with complex real-world situations. At this meeting, PCAB will view a portion of a webinar on Axon VR Training. The webinar is eye-opening to the future of training.

DISCUSSION

Axon's webinar stated that there are typically four methods of training. In-person training, simulators, dedicated training facilities, and scenario exercises utilizing role players. In-person training can be expensive and time consuming, especially if travel is involved. Simulators and dedicated training facilities are both expensive and require a lot of space. Scenario exercises may not feel realistic, dependent on the skill level of the role players.

Axon states their wireless all-in-one unit is simple to use, without large time or space constraints. Axon has developed Community Engagement and Simulator VR trainings with subject matter experts and community leaders. Axon's library includes over 10 modules and counting. The trainings are aimed at enhancing officers' ability to better address community needs with critical thinking, analytical, and de-escalation skills. Axon claims that retention rates are improved utilizing VR training with an 80% retention after one year, versus 20% retention after one week in a classroom setting.

Variables such as location, time of day, race, and socioeconomic status can be changed in the modules so training instructors can create different scenarios for officers to work through. The training sessions are recorded and provide after-action reports and analysis for enhanced training. Officers can view the session from their own perspective, as well as from the citizen's point of view; putting themselves in someone else's shoes. The VR unit is integrated with training firearms and Axon's Taser 7. Axon has plans to integrate the use of batons and pepper spray in future modules. There is no information on the cost of the unit yet.

Chief Madden stated he believes in VR training, and that it is a gamechanger. The fact that sessions with Axon VR are recorded and that the officer can see themselves in the scenario, as well as from the point of view of the citizen, is intriguing. This can reveal human traits and help officers with their communication skills. Great officers have received complaints based on their direct tone and guarded or rigid way in which they relate with community members. Perhaps officers seeing themselves from another point of view as they work through modules will reveal how they may be perceived by the public.

The City's Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget included funding for an all-inclusive body cam and taser lease through Axon. This lease will allow Chico PD to have the latest and greatest models of body cameras and tasers, including Axon's Taser 7. The body cams will automatically activate when a taser is pulled out of its holster, or when in proximity to other

activated body cams. These tasers have double cartridges and can be fired again if the first two darts do not initially engage to employ a stimulus override on a suspect. The use of Axon's Taser 7 is incorporated, with certified instructors, into their VR training. The VR training can take place at any time; even 10-15 minutes per day while rotating between the officers on a team. Then the focus shifts to the after-action plan with additional coaching.

Tom stated that overall, he believes VR training is a valuable tool. Pilots spend hours in simulators prior to taking an aircraft off the ground. Tom asked if the Axon's VR has a software license and, if so, is the licensing per agency or per VR headset unit. Contractually, the PD will want to know what is coming in future years. **Chief Madden** responded that software licensing costs are unknown at this time, but that is an important factor to consider. Companies can get you on the hook with product and then the technology becomes expensive down the road.

Jovanni was curious if Axon would tailor the training modules to different states, as each state may have different standards, policies, and laws. **Chief Madden** stated that Axon may have to adapt the modules for different states. Or, sometime in the future, there may be a move to standardizing policing as an industry across the board, throughout the country.

Jovanni asked if there was any consistency in the training between various law enforcement agencies with Butte County. **Chief Madden** responded that most training is in-house, so it is hard to know what each agency teaches. Some agencies work in rural areas and back up may be far away, so their specific training, practices and culture may be different than that of an agency working within a city. Training is a continuation of what is taught in the academy, so there is a common baseline. Taser training is certified, so that is standardized as well. However, different agencies may subscribe to different concepts for control techniques and handcuffing; Chico PD teaches the Koga Method. Also, the types of skills that are taught must evolve over time. When MMA fighting and wrestling takedowns became popular fifteen years ago, training had to evolve so officers could be ready if they encountered that situation in the field.

Jovanni also asked if the cost of contracts for VR training could be shared across agencies. **Chief Madden** stated there will be a discussion at the quarterly LEA meeting regarding this. If the larger agencies can bring it together, then the smaller agencies may benefit too. If a simulator is shared, then the future of training is shared. Interoperability between agencies is becoming key. PD's Dispatch and Records system is moving to RIMS for interoperability throughout the county. The idea of interoperability could potentially apply to training as well.

Every agency in the county, except for Chico PD, is currently on RIMS. Chico PD has some one-time funding to transfer to this system. When setting up RIMS, Chico PD is looking to become a "super agency". As a super agency, Chico PD would assimilate in with the county's system, creating redundancy by backing up each agency's server with the other agency. This will take some collaboration as each agency currently has their own permissions, call types, disposition codes, etc. Chico PD would need to utilize the Sheriff's Office conventions or work to adapt the program to fit our standards. This will create interoperability within all of Butte County for Dispatch and Records. In an emergency, if a dispatch center went down, those dispatchers could login at any other agency in the county, re-route calls, and get to work. RIMS will also standardize the way data and reports are sent to the District Attorney's Office within the county. Our process will be a lot less manual as it can be done with the push of a button.

Kasey asked what the ETA is on the move to RIMS. **Chief Madden** said that Chico PD is hopeful to have the contract negotiated and signed this fall, and to be operational by the first of the year. There are some hurdles to overcome, like the call types and dispositions. We are working with the Chico Fire department to address some concerns they have as to if the dispatch system will work for their needs.

Chief Madden said that the next step with Axon's VR is to have an in-person demo with the unit, then and the various modules can be viewed and evaluated. **Scott** asked if there was a Crisis Intervention Training module, or if mental health scenarios were just sprinkled in. **Tray** was curious if there were any additional minority pieces to the training. **Chief Madden** responded that it is unknown at this time, however it is known that you can change the race, gender, and socioeconomic status within the modules. Axon's library will continue to grow and adapt along with law enforcement events that occur in the real world. The virtual training environment is the next generation's way to train. If an officer

fails in their interaction during VR training, they are failing in a secure environment rather than in real life. The experience then becomes a training moment.

Kasey noted that it would be nice if any contract for VR included free upgrades. VR systems have gotten lighter and better in recent years. If you invest in a system, it would be beneficial to have the option to upgrade and stay up to date with technology.

Chief Madden said it is time for Chico PD to become a regional leader in training. The Training Unit has been developed with Sgt. Joel Schmid and Administrative Assistant Carly Gott. To provide additional structure and accountability, Lt. Mike Williams is starting his role as the Administrative Lieutenant and the Training Unit will report to him. Training is an insurance policy, and this re-structure is an opportunity to strengthen and raise the level of Chico PD training. Chico PD has started “Inner Perspectives”, a 3-month POST certified leadership course for Chico PD sworn and non-sworn employees. This program could expand, as could other training courses, to include seats for other agencies.

Kasey asked the Chief about the recent MOU with Chico State’s University Police Department (UPD). **Chief Madden** said that the new UPD Chief Matthew Dillon is engaged and has a background with university and city relations. Chico State President Gayle Hutchinson is supportive of the agency’s relationship and assistance. UPD has typically worked on campus and kept a low-key profile outside of the university. With this MOU, the University Police Department has agreed to help patrol the Bidwell Amphitheater along Little Chico Creek and Lost Park in addition to the terms of a Joint Public Safety Agreement originally signed in 2016.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Gloria and Tray will start a Google document for PCAB members to collaborate in drafting recommendations for the Chief regarding training. An outline will be completed and ready to share, receive feedback, and fill in the gaps at the next meeting.