



Memorandum

Date: 3/17/2026

Meeting of: Committee of the Whole - Public Safety and Human Services

File No. CM 26-196

Type: Committee Memo

TO: Committee of the Whole - Public Safety and Human Services

FROM: Mayor Angela Birney

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR CONTACT(S):

Police	Chief Darrell Lowe	425-556-2521
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DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Police	Mavic Hizon	Civilian Commander
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TITLE:

A Resolution Amending the City’s User Fee Schedule to Add a Bodyworn Camera Video Redaction Fee for Public Records Requests

OVERVIEW STATEMENT:

All commissioned officers are authorized to use and/or are equipped with Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs). Recordings captured by BWCs constitute public records and are subject to disclosure under the Washington Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW). The Department requests approval to establish a redaction fee for BWC video recordings in the amount of \$0.88 per minute.

Additional Background Information/Description of Proposal Attached

REQUESTED ACTION:

Receive Information Provide Direction Approve

REQUEST RATIONALE:

- **Relevant Plans/Policies:**
Washington Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW)
- **Required:**
RCW 42.56.070
RCW 42.56.120
RMC Chapter 1.03, Section 1.03.080 - Public access to records.
- **Council Request:**
N/A
- **Other Key Facts:**
This item is being presented to the City Council for approval of a cost recovery fee to cover the production costs associated with releasing public records that contain Body-Worn Camera (BWC) footage. The Police Department has experienced a significant increase in public records requests for BWC video, which has placed a growing

burden on the Records Division. This division is currently staffed by only two employees dedicated to processing these requests, resulting in a substantial backlog in production.

Public Records Requests for Redmond Police Department's BWC video footage:

2023 - 1,913

2024 - 2,111

2025 - 2,128

Under the Washington Public Records Act (PRA), Chapter 42.56 RCW, all BWC recordings are considered public records, subject to disclosure upon request, and may require redaction to protect privacy or other sensitive information. The PRA allows an agency to charge reasonable costs associated with redacting, altering, or obscuring portions of a BWC recording prior to disclosure, except for certain requesters such as individuals directly involved in the incident recorded, their attorneys, or other designated parties.

Proposed BWC Video Redaction Cost Recovery Fee. The Police Department has identified the need to set the cost of BWC video redaction at **\$0.88 per minute**, based on reasonable estimates of staff time. The Police Department proposes charging requesters for redaction costs based on the parameters outlined in the PRA and charging only for the actual staff time and costs incurred in the redaction process, using the salary and benefits of the lowest-paid employee assigned to the task. **A cost estimate will be provided to the requester before the records are produced.**

Financial Hardship: Requesters who cannot afford the Body-Worn Camera Redaction Fee may request a waiver or schedule an appointment to view materials at no cost. Individuals directly connected to the content—such as victims, accused parties, or their attorneys—are automatically exempt. To request a hardship waiver, provide documentation such as proof of participation in a government assistance program, recent pay stubs, or tax returns. Each request is reviewed individually, and waivers are granted when paying the fee would create an undue burden, ensuring equitable access while allowing the City to recover costs for general requests.

Fee Cap: Implementing a fee cap for large public records requests could conflict with the primary purpose of the Body-Worn Camera Redaction Fee, which is to offset the City's administrative costs. Large requests typically require more staff time and resources, and capping the fee could result in the City absorbing a significant portion of these costs. The current cost-based approach ensures that fees reflect the actual effort involved, while fee waivers and hardship accommodations maintain equitable access for those who cannot afford to pay.

Historical Data Tracking by Request Type: At this time, the Police Department does not have a tracking or reporting mechanism in place that categorizes body-worn camera (BWC) footage requests by requester type. Specifically, our records system has not historically distinguished between requests submitted by individuals who are exempt from fees under the PRA (such as victims, individuals directly involved in the incident, accused parties, their legal representatives or the Prosecutor's Office) and requests submitted by individuals or entities without a direct connection to the content (for example, members of the public seeking footage for personal use, media publication, social media platforms, or YouTube channels). **In one actual case, over a two-month period, a single requester with no connection to the incidents requested 26 separate video recordings for use on a monetized social media platform.**

Projected Cost Recovery Revenues: If the City Council approves the fee and a system for tracking request types is implemented, the City will be able to generate more accurate revenue projections during future budget planning cycles. This approach provides realistic estimates of potential collections while maintaining transparency and ensuring the fee does not create undue barriers for requesters. Revenues from the proposed

fee will be deposited into the City's general fund and can be paid in person at City Hall, by mail, or online.

Proposed Tracking and Reporting Improvements: The Department recognizes the value of greater transparency and more detailed reporting. To better track this information, we could implement a standardized classification system within our records management process. This could include:

- Adding a required requester category field at the time a public records request is submitted (e.g., victim, involved party, attorney, media, general public, commercial/social media use, etc.).
- Recording whether the requester qualifies for a statutory fee exemption.
- Tracking staff redaction time, production costs, and fees assessed and collected.
- Generating periodic summary reports (quarterly or annually) that provide anonymized statistical data on request volume, requester categories, and fee impacts.

Establishing this type of structured tracking system would allow the Department to provide clearer data regarding request patterns, exemption rates, and potential revenue projections in the future, while maintaining compliance with applicable privacy and public records laws.

Annual Public Reporting:

Since 2018, state law (RCW 40.14.026) has required government agencies to report each year to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) on their public records activities. These reports include information such as the number of requests received, how long it took to respond, and the costs of handling the requests. The data is compiled into statewide summaries by JLARC to provide transparency about how public records laws are being followed. Agencies are responsible for the accuracy of the information they submit.

Other Agencies with Existing Body-Worn Camera Redaction Fees

Several cities and counties in Washington have already implemented a body-worn camera (BWC) redaction fee. These include cities such as Kirkland, Bellevue, Bellingham, Black Diamond, Blaine, Chehalis, Everett, Fircrest, Issaquah, Kent, Lake Stevens, Lakewood, Marysville, Medina, Monroe, Mount Vernon, Mukilteo, Olympia, Pacific, Port Townsend, Selah, Sequim, Steilacoom, Sumner, Tacoma, Tukwila, and Vancouver; counties including Clallam, Cowlitz, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, Whatcom, and Yakima; and state agencies such as the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Washington State Patrol (WSP).

OUTCOMES:

1. Cost Recovery for Processing Public Records Requests:

The implementation of the redaction fee will address the growing burden placed on the Police Department's Records Division, which has been experiencing a significant increase in public records requests for BWC footage. With only two dedicated employees currently handling these requests, the new fee will help offset the costs associated with managing the increasing volume and ensure that resources are allocated appropriately to process these requests in a timely manner.

2. Public and Requester Communication:

By establishing this fee, the City is aiming to improve the efficiency of processing public records requests. The fee structure helps to recover the costs of providing redacted BWC footage, while also ensuring that the Records Division is adequately funded to handle the increased workload. This will allow the department to continue fulfilling requests in a timely manner while managing the operational challenges posed by the growing number of requests.

3. Improved Access to Public Records:

The adoption of the redaction fee will also ensure that the Police Department remains able to fulfill public records

requests for BWC footage without compromising the City's ability to adhere to budgetary constraints or operational needs.

COMMUNITY/STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT:

- **Timeline (previous or planned):**
N/A
- **Outreach Methods and Results:**
N/A
- **Feedback Summary:**
N/A

BUDGET IMPACT:

Total Cost:

The revenues generated from the BWC redaction fee will be incorporated into the current fiscal year's adopted budget as appropriated revenues.

Approved in current biennial budget: Yes No N/A

Budget Offer Number:
228

Budget Priority:
Safe and Resilient

Other budget impacts or additional costs: Yes No N/A
If yes, explain:
N/A

Funding source(s):
General Fund

Budget/Funding Constraints:
N/A

Additional budget details attached

COUNCIL REVIEW:

Previous Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
2/17/2026	Committee of the Whole - Public Safety and Human Services	Provide Direction

Proposed Upcoming Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
N/A	None proposed at this time	N/A

Time Constraints:

N/A

ANTICIPATED RESULT IF NOT APPROVED:

If the Body-Worn Camera (BWC) redaction fee is not adopted, the Police Department will face ongoing challenges in managing the increasing volume of public records requests for BWC footage. Without a dedicated fee to recover the costs associated with redacting these videos, the financial burden of processing these requests will continue to fall on the General Fund. The Records Division will likely experience further delays and backlogs, resulting in longer response times to records requests and diminished service quality.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: BWC Redaction Fee Resolution

Attachment B: BWC Redaction Fee Cost Study