

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 27, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FOR A DIGITAL IMAGE MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM

ISSUE: Consideration of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice for the purchase of a Digital Image Management System (DIMS) for the Police Department's Crime Scene Investigation Section.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the grant application (due May 17, 2010) to the U.S. Department of Justice in the amount of \$175,000, which will provide funds to the Police Department to purchase a Digital Image Management System (DIMS);
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required; and
- (3) Affirm that no City funds would be available to fund this program in FY 2011 or future years.

DISCUSSION: The U.S. Department of Justice is offering funding under the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services. The Police Department plans to use these grant funds for the acquisition of a Digital Image Management System (DIMS).

BACKGROUND: Digital photography has now reached a point in technological advancements that makes it the industry standard in the forensic science community and the preferred choice for photo capture. Digital images of crime scenes and other items of physical evidence (e.g., latent prints) are currently stored on individual CD's and filed in a standard file cabinet. This has become problematic and it is increasingly apparent that digital image storage can be easily compromised by time and environmental storage conditions. Essentially, the CD medium storage is not a reliable form of storage and data retrieval.

Digital Imaging Management Systems (DIMS) are becoming the industry standard to preserve the evidentiary chain of custody and ensure image integrity. In an effort to stay current, grant funds will be used to purchase a Digital Image Management System with archival and retrieval capability. This system provides server storage capability which maintains historical chain of custody information. In addition, a Digital Information Management System would also allow us to incorporate crime scene data (digital photos) into our existing Records Management System to facilitate access by authorized parties. This system would also be beneficial for the Crime Scene Investigation Section's efforts to seek accreditation from the American Society of Crime Lab Directors (ASCLAD-Lab) and the International Association for Identification (IAI).

FISCAL IMPACT: No City match is required to receive grant funds. However, the City is responsible for the normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the administering agency, as well as by the Office of Management and Budget and the Finance Department.

STAFF:

Earl Cook, Police Chief

Charles Bailey, Commander, Police, Crime Scene Investigations

Elisabeth Wheel, Division Chief, Police, Fiscal Management

Steve Elliott, OMB, Analyst