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Resolution/Ordinance Cover Memo

Meeting Date: October 14, 2025

Subject/Title: Skydio Drone as First Responder (DFR) and Axon Draft One dictation and report writing software

Submitted By: Kerry Cronin-Jones

Recommendation: Approve

Background: In 2014, the Duluth Police Department became the first department in the state to adopt a body worn camera program, a cutting-edge technology, and after a great deal of research and the development of a policy, we determined that Axon Enterprises (formerly TASER), was the clear leader in the industry. Since that time, we have realigned all of our video solutions equipment (body, in-car, and interview room cameras) as well as our taser and evidence platforms, to Axon. Just last year, our Council approved a 7-year contract extension with Axon.

With your approval, DPD will be among the first in the state to adopt a Drone as First Responder (DFR) program. DFR technology is a game-changer for public safety, allowing drones to be deployed immediately to emergency scenes, often arriving before ground units. Skydio has partnered with Axon Enterprises to deliver a scalable DFR program to Public Safety agencies. By integrating Skydio's autonomous drones and flight software with Axon's ecosystem, to include real-time operations, command center tools, and evidence management, this collaboration streamlines data workflows and enhances situational awareness.

DFR dramatically improves situational awareness by providing real-time aerial views, helping first responders make faster, safer, and more informed decisions. When drones arrive before officers, every call begins with time and distance not otherwise available, providing our officers many critical advantages: dangerous pursuits are avoided, blind entries become informed entries, and real-time visibility continues day or night. By better understanding the scene before sending officers in, we make space to increase the opportunities for de-escalation techniques to be utilized, while reducing the need for direct confrontations.



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Each one of these factors leads to better use of resources, quicker response times, and increased safety for both the public and our emergency personnel. DFR will enhance our ability to protect our community members and tourists, while maximizing the efficiency of our public safety operations.

In keeping with our commitment to public trust and transparency, this technology incorporates a Public-Facing Transparency Dashboard which can be linked to our website. At any time, members of the public can navigate to this dashboard and gain access to flight data. In addition, no part of the DFR hardware or software is equipped with facial recognition or biometric-matching technology.

Draft One dictation and report-generating software is proving to be a force multiplier among law enforcement agencies across the country. By leveraging artificial intelligence, Draft One generates a comprehensive police report from the recorded body camera video. To maintain the integrity and accountability of the reporting process, Draft One incorporates multiple checks and balances that are managed by department administration to ensure that the generated report accurately represents the officer's observations and involvement in the incident. For instance, the program requires editing, review, and verification by the officer who generated the report. All reports will continue to be sent to supervisors for final review and approval.

Early adopters are reporting that officers are saving an average of 25 minutes per report when using Draft One.

Even under a conservative scenario of one report per officer per shift, the time savings are substantial:

- 12 officers working per shift
- 2 shifts per 24-hour day
- 1 report per officer per shift
- 25 minutes saved:

10 hours per day; 70 hours per week; 3,640 hours per year

This reclaimed time represents a meaningful reduction in administrative burden. In a hiring climate where departments nationwide are facing challenges in recruiting and retaining quality candidates, maximizing the efficiency of current personnel is critical.

Draft One in Duluth will not only provide an increase in officer efficiency, it will also enhance the consistency, quality, and detail in reports provided to our city and county attorneys, which in turn can lead to more successful prosecutions and offender accountability. Less time spent behind a computer means more time for officers to engage with the community, conduct proactive policing, and perform the meaningful work that drew them to the Duluth Police Department. This shift in focus will not only boost morale but can also help combat officer burnout.

Both Drone as First Responder and Draft One are a part of Axon's integrated public safety technology suite and aligns with DPD's ongoing commitment to innovation, transparency, and effective resource management. Its adoption represents a forward-thinking investment in both officer capacity and community trust.

Budget/Fiscal Impact: The funding plan for this purchase does not require any additional funds be added to our budget. DPD will use funds already allocated to our general budget, position vacancy savings, and capital equipment funds.

Necessary Action: Please approve.

Attachments: Axon Amendment to Master Service Agreement