

# Town of Windsor

## Memorandum

February 8, 2022

**TO:** The Honorable Mayor and Town Council

**FROM:** William G. Saunders, IV, Town Manager *WGS IV*

**SUBJECT:** digiTICKET Electronic Ticketing System Update

### Background

Town Council has been briefed on the digiTICKET system at work sessions and has requested an update.

### Specifics

The Windsor Police Department is considering an electronic ticketing system, digiTICKET, to modernize and streamline the issuance of citations and the corresponding data collection related thereto.

This is a program that can potentially be done in concert with the Isle of Wight County Sherriff's Department for an overall cost savings due to an economy of scale. The IOWC Sherriff's Department has the implementation of the system in their FY23 budget.

An ordinance provision is required to authorize the collection of a five dollar fee per citation in order to fund the ongoing maintenance of the system. A draft ordinance will be going before the IOWC Board of Supervisors within the next two months for their review and approval in order to begin the building of the maintenance fund. We intend to have an ordinance provision before Town Council within the next two months for review, as well.

This initiation of this program could be funded by American Rescue Plan Act Funds, due to the minimization of person to person interaction and corresponding prevention of the spread of the COVID pandemic on traffic stops.

### Enclosures

-ARPA Memo from Chief Riddle

### Recommended Action

For your consideration



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**To:** William Saunders, Town Manager

**From:** Chief R.D. Riddle

**Date:** 10/21/2021

**Ref:** ARPA Funds for WPD Use

With the recent addition of ARPA funding to the town's operating budget, the WPD has number of initiatives and projects that it is trying to fund. WPD would like the following projects to be considered for funding under ARPA.

### **1. Electronic/Digital Ticketing**

WPD is requesting consideration for funding of a digital ticketing system. The digiTICKET proposal is attached to this memo for your consideration. Currently WPD hand writes citations to violators, with each traffic stop lasting between eight to ten minutes on average; further, clipboards, ticket forms, and ink pens are physically transferred between officers and motorists during these events. There are often issues that arise with data entry at the clerk of the court because of the inability to read an officers handwriting. In addition, data related to stop numbers, violation types, vehicle data and violator is not entered into our current records management system because of the volume of data and lack of manpower. Data collection and management provides not only valuable information on the departments' activities, it also a valuable piece of data that can assist officers in conducting criminal investigations. Current data collected under the Community Policing Data Act does not capture every piece of information that a digital ticketing system would. In addition, the data to be gathered is electronic and should lead to more accurate and complete data for input to records management system. In addition to more complete and accurate data being gathered, the digiTICKET solution should lead decreased time that violators are detained and reduce the overall interactions between officers and citizens. This would help to mitigate and prevent the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to officer interactions with the motoring public.

The initial cost of the hardware, software, related equipment and training, in partnership with the Isle of Wight County Sheriff's Office, would cost approximately \$31,709.41 for the first year. The maintenance fees in additional years would cost an

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estimated \$4318.00 annually. Under the Code of Virginia the Town can move to adopt an e-citation ordinance that would add a surcharge of five dollars per citation to the cost of court. This fee would be collected by the clerk and paid directly to the town. These funds would allow the town to pay the annual maintenance fees and replace equipment with no additional funds needed from the town or ARPA funds.

### **2. COVID-19 Bonuses**

WPD is asking that the town consider funding COVID-19 bonuses for our law enforcement personnel, under the ARPA allowance for premium pay for essential public safety workers. While WPD recently benefitted from a pay study and decompression pay adjustments this fiscal year, the law enforcement salaries throughout the Tidewater area and the Commonwealth are continuing to increase. The recent pay study increased starting officer pay to around \$44,000 per year, brought our midpoint salary to around \$51,000, and pushed our top out pay to around \$62,000. At the time the pay study was conducted, and later implemented, those were extremely competitive numbers. Recently, local municipalities have entered into almost a bidding war in order to attract experienced law enforcement officers. Experienced officers are able to apply to these localities that will match years of service in their own pay plans with 5-10 years officers often commanding salaries over \$62,000.00 per year and officers with 10+ years commanding salaries in excess of \$70,000.00. In addition to the intense competition for these officers' services and talents, these agencies are also offering signing bonuses in the \$3,000.00 - \$5,000.00 range. Additionally, these municipalities have increased starting police recruit pay to the range of \$50,000.00 to \$51,500.00 per year matching our officers' midpoint pay range.

In addition to the rapidly evolving salary changes, the current environment of modern policing and continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our law enforcement officers, we are asking that council consider implementing a bonus program utilizing ARPA funds to increase morale among WPD officers, create an incentive to remain with the agency, and recognize their efforts as they continue to perform within the COVID-19 pandemic environment. WPD is proposing a \$5,000.00 bonus to be paid out to all seven WPD sworn personnel for fiscal years 2022 and 2023. The bonuses would be paid out in four \$2,500.00 installments over a two fiscal year period. This money would strictly come from the ARPA funding and would require no additional funding from the town.

### **3. VRS Hazardous Duty Retirement / LEOS**

We are awaiting the results of the actuary study from the Virginia Retirement System for Council's consideration. While it is unknown at this time whether Town Council will choose to upgrade the retirement package for WPD officers, the related increase in premiums could be paid by ARPA funds for premium pay for essential public safety workers through December 2024 should it be approved.