



**CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2023
DEPARTMENT: SALINAS POLICE DEPARTMENT
FROM: ROBERTO FILICE, CHIEF OF POLICE
BY: TONYA ERICKSON, POLICE SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR
TITLE: 2023 JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT, MOU WITH MONTEREY COUNTY, AND LEASE OF FLOCK LPR CAMERAS

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve Resolutions authorizing the following:

1. Acceptance of the 2023 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), execution of all grant acceptance documents, establishment of the 2023 JAG Grant appropriation of up to \$92,532 and corresponding revenue budget to support grant activities, and authorizing the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County of Monterey for activities related to the 2023 JAG; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute a 60-month lease renewal to include 20 License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras from Flock Group, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$250,000.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council accept the 2023 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) award, authorize the execution of all grant acceptance documents, authorize the 2023 JAG Grant appropriation of up to \$92,532 with corresponding revenue budget to support grant activities, and authorize execution of an MOU with County of Monterey related to grant funding. Staff further recommends that City Council authorize the execution of a 60-month lease renewal for 20 License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras from Flock Group, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$250,000 which will be partially funded through the 2023 JAG.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Salinas Police Department, serving as Fiscal Agent for the 2023 Justice Assistance Grant with sub-awardee Monterey County District Attorney's Office, has been selected to receive the grant award of \$92,532. The Department is requesting that City Council accept the grant, establish the appropriation and corresponding revenue budget, and execute the associated MOU with the County of Monterey. The Department also requests the City Council authorize the execution of a

60-month lease renewal for 20 LPR cameras from Flock Group, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$250,000 which will be partially funded through the 2023 JAG.

BACKGROUND:

The United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program allows local governments to support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime based on their local needs and conditions. The formula for allocating JAG funds is based on the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) crime data. The formula for JAG result in an allocation of funds referred to as a disparate allocation. This occurs when a city or municipality is scheduled to receive an amount one and one-half times greater than a county with concurrent jurisdiction. This JAG grant includes the City of Salinas and the County of Monterey. Jurisdictions certified as disparate must submit a joint application for the aggregate of funds allocated to them, specifying the amounts and purposes of the funds that are to be distributed to each of the units of local government. A Memorandum of Understanding must be completed, signed, and submitted to the Office of Justice Programs, indicating which agency will serve as the applicant/fiscal agent for the joint funds. The City of Salinas will serve as applicant/fiscal agent. The total allocation for both jurisdictions is \$92,532. The City of Salinas Police Department will receive \$72,379; and the Monterey County District Attorney's Office will receive \$20,153.

The prepared Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) details the distribution of funds and names the City of Salinas as the fiscal agent for the grant. One of the attached Resolutions authorize the execution of all grant approval documents, the establishment of the 2023 JAG appropriation and related revenue budget to support grant activities, and the execution of the MOU between the City and the County. The City of Salinas portion of the grant is planned to support the lease of License Plate Reader (LPR) camera systems to maintain our capabilities to solve a variety of crimes throughout the City. The District Attorney's Office portion of the grant is to be allocated to the ballistic vests to be used by law enforcement officials and investigators within the District Attorney's Office.

The Salinas Police Department has utilized LPR technology since 2018 and it has proven to be a beneficial tool for identifying and locating stolen vehicles and other vehicles linked to criminal activity. On December 7, 2021 the City Council approved the first lease of 20 LPR cameras from Flock Group, Inc. The initial lease was for 24 months and is coming up for renewal this fiscal year. The Salinas Police Department applied for the 2023 JAG Grant with the intent to use it to partially fund the lease extension for these initial 20 LPR cameras. Flock's cameras capture date, time, location, license plate (state, partial, paper, and no plate), vehicle details (type and color), as well as objects (bicycle, animals, and people). The system alerts police of wanted vehicles which are identified by the system. The key benefits of Flock are that they charge an annual flat rate lease per camera, which is wireless, free of infrastructure setup, and has the option for solar or direct power. They also include a two-year warranty, Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) compliant cloud-based hosting, unlimited user licenses, ongoing software enhancements, camera setup, mounting, shipping, handling, and a cellular connection. The Flock lease program prevents the City from being burdened with maintaining costly equipment at the end of the agreement, which could require replacement.

In less than two years, Salinas Police Officers have conducted 1,691 searches of the Flock system related to wanted vehicles, and Flock LPR cameras have identified 3,456 hits on wanted vehicles. The Police Department is working to develop formal evaluation systems related to the LPR cameras, and recently added a label to our Records Management System (RMS) to more easily identify cases for which LPR cameras were integral to the investigation and ultimately lead to an arrest. In reviewing these labels, we were able to verify that LPR cameras have assisted in over 100 investigations involving missing persons, domestic violence, child abuse, human trafficking, robberies, shootings, and homicides. Below are four recent case examples:

1. In July 2022, a murder victim was found in her vehicle suffering from a gunshot wound. The vehicle was in an area with few to no surveillance cameras and there were no witnesses. Flock LPR cameras were used to determine where the victim was just before the homicide and was one of the tools that ultimately led to the identification of the suspect.
2. In December 2022, a man was shot and killed in Salinas. Flock LPR cameras were used in combination with other digital evidence to identify the suspect who was eventually charged with murder.
3. In February 2023, three armed suspects entered an apartment and conducted a home invasion robbery. Flock was the only tool available that led to identifying a suspect and arresting him for the robbery.
4. In April 2023, a victim was raped by a suspect who had slipped a date rape drug into her water. Detectives were not able to locate the suspect and the only lead was that the suspect's vehicle drove by a Flock LPR camera every day at a specific time. Detectives were able to monitor the area at the designated time to successfully stop and arrest the suspect.

In mid-November 2023, the Department was contacted by Flock Group, Inc. with an offer to extend the initial LPR cameras leases for an additional 60-months at the price of \$2,500 per camera per year, which is a savings of \$500 per year per camera when compared to current pricing. Flock further offered that with execution of this lease renewal by the end of the calendar year, they would honor the \$2,500 per camera per year price for any camera additions. Given the recently awarded \$3.57M Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Grant, approved by City Council on October 10, 2023, includes funding for 36-month leases for 60 Flock LPR cameras, executing this lease extension will result in a savings of \$30,000 per year for the ORT Grant-funded LPR leases.

The Police Department will pay for the initial 2-years of the LPR camera lease agreement with \$27,621 in current fiscal year budgeted funds along with the \$72,379 allocation from the 2023 JAG Grant. The Police Department will work to identify funding for the \$50,000 per year cost for lease years 3-5, but will maintain \$150,000 in Asset Forfeiture funds to ensure the lease costs are covered.

As Flock Safety is the sole manufacturer and developer of the Flock Safety Camera, and here are no local vendors available to provide this service. The City Council has the authority to approve this direct purchase under Salinas Municipal code Section 12-27 and without application of the local purchasing preference pursuant to Salinas Municipal Code Section 12-28.080.

POLICE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On November 29, 2023, the Police Chief discussed the acceptance of the 2023 JAG and the intent to use grant funds to support the 60-month lease extension of 20 Flock LPR cameras during his Chief's Report to the Police Community Advisory Committee. The Committee had an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments or concerns in response to this grant award and LPR lease.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

Not a Project. The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378).

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Approving the proposed Resolution will support the City Council's Strategic Plan Goal of Public Safety.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Police Department has coordinated with the Legal Department on the MOU and Flock Group, Inc. LPR Lease, and will coordinate with the Legal and Finance Department during implementation.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The recommended action will recognize and appropriate 2023 JAG Grant funding in the amount of \$72,379 for the LPR camera lease agreement. The additional \$27,621 is available and appropriated in 1000.40.4130.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution 1 – 2023 JAG Acceptance and MOU
Resolution 2 – 2023 JAG Flock
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – 2023 JAG
Flock – Existing Camera Renewal