



July 14, 2016

To the residents and communities of Minneapolis:

For a number of years, residents and community have repeatedly asked for Minneapolis police officers to wear body-worn cameras in order preserve video evidence of interactions between police officers and residents. Body cameras are now a recommended best practice for 21<sup>st</sup>-century policing. They can be a tool for building and enhancing accountability, transparency, and public trust. In other cities, the adoption of body cameras has also resulted in fewer use-of-force complaints.

Officer-worn body cameras are merely a tool for improving police-community relations; they are not a solution in themselves. But body cameras are an important tool, one that will help us continue to transform the relationship between police and community for the better. They are not the final step in transparency, but they are a big step toward it.

We have heard residents' requests and concerns. For more than three years, we in Minneapolis have been studying, testing, evaluating, and funding body cameras for our police officers. In doing so, we have been in the forefront of cities across the country.

Now body cameras are finally here. Earlier this month, officers in the 1<sup>st</sup> Precinct in downtown Minneapolis began wearing them. Later this month, officers in the 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct in North Minneapolis will be wearing them, and over the course of the summer and fall, officers in all parts of Minneapolis will be wearing them.

Body cameras can only achieve the goals of accountability and public trust if they are accompanied by clear policy governing their use, accessibility, and storage. Today, we are releasing a detailed explanation of the considerations that went into the key points of interest and concern about body camera policy that community and the public have repeatedly raised. The document attached here lays out the considerations that were brought to bear on these key issues; it explains where the policy landed on them, and why. We worked to create a policy that strikes a balance between transparency and privacy, while ensuring that accountability remains the central focus. We also worked to balance those goals while complying with new Minnesota state law governing body cameras.

We used much feedback from community to draft the policy (which is available here, at section 4-223: [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/policy/mpdpolicy\\_4-200\\_4-200](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/policy/mpdpolicy_4-200_4-200)). The Police Conduct Oversight Commission (PCOC) held four community meetings to discuss body cameras, and the Minneapolis Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) held six more public meetings earlier this year. We took the public feedback from those sessions and from other public comments, studied body camera policies and best practices from peer cities around the country, evaluated the results of the 2014-15 MPD body camera pilot program, and sought recommendations from The Leadership Council on Civil & Human Rights. We weighed heavily the recommendations of the PCOC and the conclusions of the President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing, took input from the City Council, and made sure that the

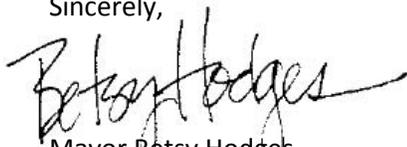
policy is in line with the goals of the National Initiative for Building Trust and Justice, of which Minneapolis is the leading participating city.

We do owe the community an apology. It was our intention to release the attached document before the body camera policy itself was made public; however, the policy was posted before we were able to explain fully to the community the considerations that went into the policy. We apologize for this mistake.

As body cameras continue to make their way onto officers, the Police Department will be meeting with community and neighborhood organizations across the city to explain the policy and demonstrate how body cameras work. We look forward to continuing to engage with community around this important step toward 21<sup>st</sup>-century policing.

There are many people to thank for the long-awaited launch of body-worn cameras, including all those officers involved in the body camera pilot program, the Department of Justice, and everyone who has provided feedback on the policy. We thank you as well, and we encourage you to review the policy and the explanatory document attached to this letter. Together, we are entering the age of 21<sup>st</sup>-century policing, and together, we will transform police–community relations in Minneapolis.

Sincerely,



Mayor Betsy Hodges  
City of Minneapolis



Chief Janeé Harteau  
Minneapolis Police Department