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# MEMORANDUM

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**To:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Montré Freeman, City Manager  
J. Phillip Webster, Chief of Police

**Date:** April 19, 2024

**Subject:** Consideration - Purchase of New Handguns for the Police Department using Equitable Sharing Funds.

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***BACKGROUND:***

The law enforcement handgun is an important tool to protect both the officers and our citizens from individuals who wish to kill or inflict serious injury on others. The department's current handguns are 10 years old and require replacement of night sights to continue allowing an aiming reference in low-light situations, as well as internal spring replacement to ensure reliable operation. The Elizabeth City Police Department purchased the current Glock handguns in 2014, which were received in 2015. Prior to that, the previous Glock handgun purchase occurred in 2004. It has been the custom of the Elizabeth City Police Department to purchase new handguns every 10 years. The following proposal provides insight into upgrading the department handguns in addition to illustrating the plan to fund the project.

***ANALYSIS:***

Traditionally, the Elizabeth City Police Department, along with numerous other law enforcement agencies, purchased Glock iron-sighted handguns for duty use. Officers using the traditional iron-sighted handgun must align their iron sights on the target/threat and continually change focus between the target/threat and transition back to the iron sights then back to the target in a continuous cycle until the handgun is discharged. This constant focal change is because the human eye can only focus on a single plane at any given time.

The law enforcement industry standard is transitioning to new handguns equipped with a Micro Red Dot Optical Sight (MRDS). Law enforcement agencies across the United States have issued MRDS handguns to their officers for use while on duty. Local agencies issuing MRDS handguns include Kitty Hawk Police Department, Camden County Sheriff's Office, and Edenton Police Department. MRDS is a self-enclosed

electronic sight that projects a red dot on a glass window used to aim a handgun. An MRDS handgun enables an officer to better aim his/her weapon and the MRDS handgun provides an unobstructed view of the incident occurring in front of their weapon. The MRDS handgun allows an officer's eye to stay on the same focal plane as the target/threat throughout the aiming process, eliminating the need for focal plane changes as required when using front and rear iron sights.

In life-threatening circumstances, an officer can lose near-sight focus due to a release of cortisol; this situation is commonly known as tunnel vision. When the sympathetic nervous system activates, it becomes difficult to achieve front-sight focus on handgun iron sights. An officer's age can exaggerate tunnel vision as the human eye becomes less flexible in older individuals as evidenced by people needing reading glasses to focus on close objects. Life-threatening circumstances induce stress, which causes the body to divert blood flow to large muscle groups to critically needed functions while trying to escape or combat the stressor. This reduces fine motor skills such as aiming and aligning handgun iron sights. An MRDS handgun will allow an officer to align a red dot on the threat instead of aligning a front and a rear sight. MRDS handgun usage in a life-threatening situation allows officers to use better judgment as their eyes never move from the threat that caused the deadly force incident. The officer's eyes stay focused on the threat throughout the aiming process. This threat focus allows consistency with our natural human fight or flight stress response, which is to focus on the person threatening the officer. Allowing both eyes to remain open increases the opportunity for peripheral vision and decreases the chances of tunnel vision affecting the person. MRDS handguns allow the officer an increased view of the threat through the MRDS window. Better vision will allow an officer to make a better determination if the use of deadly force is required.

MRDS handguns allow officers to be more accurate on their annual qualifications. The officers can visually see the red dot and determine weaknesses in their grip or movement of the handgun during the firing process. MRDS handguns simplify the sight picture allowing the officer to concentrate on all other factors involved in firing a handgun. The MRDS handguns are equipped with a weapon-mounted light, which will assist officers in low-light and dark conditions. The two-handed grip is taught during all firearms instruction. Currently, officers have to fire their handguns with one hand when they use a flashlight during night qualifications. MRDS handguns, equipped with a weapon-mounted light, will allow the officers to use the same two-hand grip each time they use the handgun ensuring better accuracy.

The Police Department proposes to trade seventy-one (71) Glock generation-4 handguns, thirty-one (31) Remington 870 12-gauge shotguns, eleven (11) seized weapons, and fifty-one (51) current duty holsters, and use asset forfeiture funds to purchase these new MRDS handguns. The new MRDS handguns purchase will consist of the following items:

- Fifty-five (55) Glock model-45 MOS6 generation-5 handguns equipped with a Holosun 509T

- Fifteen (15) Glock model-47 MOS7 generation-5 handguns equipped with an Aimpoint Acro P2 site
- Seventy (70) Streamlight TLR-1 HL lights
- Seventy (70) Blackhawk T-series holsters and attachment screws.

The total cost, minus the traded items, is \$56,942.20. It is staff's recommendation to allow the trade of the current handguns, Remington 870 shotguns, duty holsters, and the seized weapons, and to use asset forfeiture funds to purchase the new handguns with MRDS sights as well as Streamlight tactical lights and Blackhawk Holsters.

On December 14, 2023, the department received a total of \$68,762.51 equitable sharing funds, which will cover the cost of this project.

***STAFF RECOMMENDATION:***

By motion, authorize the purchase of the new handguns for the Elizabeth City Police Department using trade and equitable sharing funds to mitigate the cost of \$68,762.51.

Aimpoint Acro P2



Holosun 509T

