

Gainesville Police Department

Inter-Office Communication

Chief Norman B. Botsford

To: Chief Norman B. Botsford **Date:** 4/3/07

From: Captain Richard W. Hanna

Subject: Taser Proposal

The Taser International X 26E Advanced Tasers provide a safer, more effective tool for law enforcement officers facing situations that pose threats to their safety and the safety of others. The Tasers are reliable devices that utilize innovative technology to stop resistive suspects and provide effective alternatives to other types of force.

The proposal consists of requesting the City Commission appropriate and expend an amount not to exceed \$60,000.00 from the State Law Enforcement Contraband Forfeiture Fund for the purchase of thirty six (36) Taser International X 26E Advanced Tasers and associated holsters, cartridges, replacement batteries and audio/video recording cameras for the Gainesville Police Department. This amount would also include costs associated with training.

Tasers utilize compressed nitrogen to project two small probes, which are connected to the Taser device. An electrical signal is transmitted through the wires to where the probes make contact with the body or clothing, resulting in an immediate loss of the person's neuromuscular control and the ability to perform coordinated action for the duration of the impulse. The Taser has a built in Data Port so that discharge duration and frequency statistics can be downloaded and recorded. The Taser cam audio/video recording device enhances accountability. 7,000 Police Departments in the United States utilize Tasers including the following local agencies; the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, the University of Florida Police Department, the Alachua Police Department, the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office, the Lake City Police Department, the Ocala Police Department, the Marion County Sheriff's Office and the Levi County Sheriff's Office.

As of 2006, Florida State Statue (FSS) 943.1717 mandates what Use of Force level a Taser must be placed and also mandates the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Committee create specific training topics, hours of training and recertification requirements. The Gainesville Police Department will follow or exceed both the Florida State Statue and CJSTC requirements in both policy and training.

The Gainesville Police Department has kept abreast of the issues surrounding Taser use for several years and has conducted research into those issues. The Department feels the Taser is an effective tool and will benefit the City by reducing both officer and suspect injuries during violent situations. The thirty six (36) Tasers will be carried by a select group of officers and supervisors within the Operations Bureau during uniform patrol activities. Those personnel, along with Command Staff, will assess the Tasers for practicality, effectiveness and force review.

Concerns or questions that might arise:

Low placement on the Use of Force continuum

- Our policy will follow or exceed Florida State Statute.

Death resulting from Taser use

- Since 2001, there have been 70 deaths to people after being subjected to Tasers.
- Only 1 death was attributed solely to the Taser (2005 case in Chicago).
- Of all the deaths where a medical examiner or coroner lists the Taser as a contributing cause, there has always been either drug overdose, excited delirium or a pre-existing heart/health condition.
- No one has died while being shocked or immediately thereafter.
- Over 150,000 law enforcement officers have been subjected to Tasers during training with no deaths or injuries.

Abuse of Tasers

- Occur from lack of or improper training.
- GPD will follow or exceed both Florida State Statute and CJSTC which mandates training hours, topics and recertification.
- The X 26E has a built in Data Port so that discharge duration and frequency statistics can be downloaded and recorded. In addition, the Taser cam audio/video recording device provides enhanced accountability. All Taser use will be monitored by the Operational Skills Unit and Internal Affairs.

Lack of medical treatment to those exposed

- GPD's policy will dictate Emergency Medical Services are requested and respond to those exposed to the Taser.

A report completed by Taser International compiling statistics from agencies currently using Tasers lists the following decreases;

- Officers Injuries (down 80%)
- Suspect's Injuries (down 67%)
- Lethal Force (down 78%)
- Baton Strikes (down 56%)

Information sources utilized for this proposal consisted of an Amnesty International report, the Arizona Republic and Taser International.