

## Press Clippings 1/21/2018

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### Official: Body cams 'highly beneficial'

BY MIKE DANAHEY



Elgin ROPE Officer Heather Farrell, from left, Officer Bob Engelke and ROPE Officer Jonathan Rustay show the body cameras they use while on duty. Most sworn officers on the 180-member force have been using such cameras since May. (Mike Danahey / The Courier-News)

Having [body cameras](#) in use by most of the [Elgin](#) Police Department's 180 sworn officers has been a positive experience, Elgin Police Department officials said.

"The body cameras have been a used to review information and enhance cases. On the investigative side, they've been highly beneficial," Cmdr. Ana Lalley said.

Lalley said Elgin police officers already had a level of comfort with the equipment, which they began using in May. Elgin squad cars were previously equipped with cameras, which made the transition easier, she said.

Officers also were already well-aware that people can record what they do with their cell phone cameras, she said.

"It's almost like we've had them for 20 years. There was not that much of a learning curve, but it helped that we took our time with getting the cameras," said Lalley, who oversaw the effort.

The department field-tested several brands of body cameras and consulted with officers before making a recommendation for purchase. Senior public safety systems specialist Mike Bayard and Lt. Jim Bisceglie, who oversees the department's technical and research division, played roles in bringing the project to fruition. The department's senior management analyst and information officer, Kristie Hilton, handled matters related to a federal grant the department received to help pay for the body cameras.

In December 2016, the Elgin City Council, approved the purchase of 215 Taser Axon Body 2 cameras for sworn officers' use and 30 of Taser's Flex 2 cameras for the SWAT team. The 3-year agreement calls for using Taser International's Evidence.com to store the videos at no extra cost through 2020, Lalley said.

In September 2015, the Elgin Police Department was awarded a \$250,000 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The grant required Elgin to match any dollar amount awarded, and drug asset forfeiture money was put to this purpose.

Lalley said the only officers still without body cameras are the seven assigned to Elgin public schools and more than a dozen who serve as detectives.

Lalley said the department is still working with **School District U-46** to determine how the cameras will be used in the school system. Considering detectives wear street clothing and the nature of their work, the department also is working out details of how and when detectives will use the cameras.

"The detectives should have body cameras in a month or so," Lalley said.

Records Division Director of Administration Russ Matson said that Elgin provides video through the Evidence.com cloud system to prosecutors in Kane County and Cook County.

From May until the end of 2017, the records division provided video related to 303 cases to the Kane County State's Attorney's Office and filled requests for 74 videos from Cook County subpoenas, deputy director of records, Maureen Kehoe, said.

"Some cases have only one video while a greater number of cases have body cam video from multiple responding officers," Kehoe said.

Matson said the records divisions also has had six requests for body camera video through the FOIA system. Matson and Lalley said they thought there would be more requests for video than there have been so far.

Lalley said video also has been used by police to review how they have handled situations, what they could have done better and what they are doing well.

According to Lalley, body camera video has played a role in the process that led the department to discipline a police officer. Elgin Police Sgt. Travis Hooker served a 3-day suspension in the fall for conducting himself in an unprofessional manner while supervising the investigation of a loud music complaint the night of July 2.

Lalley said cameras may not capture everything that happened at an incident. On a couple occasions, the body cameras have dislodged from an officer in the line of duty, she said.

Police Public Information Officer Kristie Hilton said the state's police body camera act requires the city to log cases and the results of the cases. Police must provide that information to the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board.

That can be a time-consuming process, Hilton said, as the process is not automated and requires staff to check county records on the status of cases being reported.

Matson said another time-consuming process, and one staff is still learning, is how to remove information that should not be released, such as using technology to blur faces of minors and crime victims or undercover officers.

Lalley also noted that there will be continuing costs for having body camera videos.

Beyond the initial outlay, Elgin's agreement with Taser calls for three \$170,640 license payments for Evidence.com due a year, two years, then three years after the initial contract execution. Last year, the city also hired Kehoe to a full-time civilian position in the records division, at a salary of almost \$61,000 per year, to help oversee the video program.

All told, though, Lalley said having the body cameras is an integral part of keeping up with the times and how police work is done.

"You have to embrace the technology, or you will be behind the curve," Lalley said.

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## **Officials say bomb threat not credible**

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

South [Elgin](#) police and **School District U46** officials said a Wednesday bomb threat to Kenyon Woods Middle School was not credible.

Police conducted a search of the school Thursday evening and found nothing, officials said in a news release. On Friday, a canine search was conducted with the same results.

"At this time, there does not seem to be any reason to believe there is any validity to the threat as police or school administration has not received any further threats," the release said.

South Elgin Sgt. Mike Doty said the threat was found written on a bathroom wall. No arrests have been made, and police are still attempting to identify the person responsible, he said.

Parents were notified by Kenyon Woods of the situation Thursday evening, Doty said. Classes ran as normal Friday, he said.

John Heiderscheidt, U46's director of safety and culture, said a second notification was sent out Friday, informing parents that canines swept the school hallways while school was in session that morning.

Doty said he recommends parents discuss safety issues such as bomb threats with their children. He also suggested that if anyone "sees something, say something" and to refrain from spreading information to anyone other than police or school staff.

Heiderscheidt said in instances like this, young students may not be thinking of the consequences of making such a statement, whether it be online or on a bathroom wall.

"It's like shouting fire in a theater or bomb on an airplane," he said. "You are going to get a lot of attention, but it's against the law and against our (U46) code of conduct."

South Elgin Police were assisted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Bloomingdale Police Department and the Kane County Sheriff's Office.

## **SPORTS SECTION**

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### **Ready, willing, able**

Senior Lynch provides early spark with key 3-pointers as Larkin rolls past Elgin

BY BILL STONE



Larkin's Jalen Shaw (40) grabs a rebound over Elgin's Michael Weatherburn during the second quarter Friday. (Brian O'Mahoney/The Courier-News)

Larkin senior Anthony Lynch was not pleased with what he felt was a lackluster performance the first time the Royals faced Elgin.

In Friday's rematch, the 6-foot-3 guard made sure that would not happen again. He drilled a pair of 3-pointers as part of a 12-0 run to open the game, and Larkin never looked back in a 75-48 Upstate Eight River win.

The Royals (14-5, 7-0) were locked in from the start, ready to be better than a 51-43 win over Elgin in the teams' first meeting.

"I just think we came out ready," Lynch said. "In practice we were ready to play and anxious. We just didn't want to have the same game that we had last time. I think that set in a little bit."

Senior guard Kindrel Morris had four assists for the Royals in their opening run, setting up both of Lynch's 3-pointers. Senior center Jalen Shaw capped the run with a putback and a dunk.

"That was a great feeling," Lynch said of his early threes. "I didn't expect that, but I knew I was going to be aggressive coming in. I was just lucky it went in. (Morris) is a great facilitator."

Morris said that's just the team's mentality.

"Everybody wants to get everybody involved," he said. "Before every game we always say easy, unselfish plays. We don't care who scores as long as we score."

Lynch led a balanced attack for Larkin with 16 points, all coming in the first three quarters.

"I think he's finally found a comfort zone in what we do," Larkin coach Deryn Carter said of Lynch. "It's going to be big down the stretch trying to close out conference, that's for sure."

Shaw added 12 points and 14 rebounds. Making his first start of the season, Chris Rose had 11 points.

Elgin (6-13, 0-7) never could dig out of the hole, even though senior Dan Toolsie led all scorers with 29 points. He scored 21 in the second half with the game out of reach.

"I think we took several steps back (Friday)," Elgin coach Mike Sitter said. "We had a terrible practice (Thursday) and it carried over to the game, so we deserve what we get.

"We have St. Charles North (next Friday), so if we don't have four good practices, then it's going to be Groundhog Day."

Carter was happy to see his team put away Elgin away quickly, something he hopes will be a trend the rest of the way.

"You have to be proud of that," Carter said. "We just had to play Larkin basketball. We didn't feel like we did the last time we played these guys. The locker room feels a lot better than it did the first time."