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Katjana Ballantyne
Mayor

To: City Council
From: Captain Sean Sheehan Somerville Police Department (SPD)
Date: October 21, 2025
RE: Surveillance Technology Impact Reports (STIR) - Thermal Imaging Monocular, Under Door Camera and Ball Camera.

Prior to the passage of the City of Somerville Surveillance Technology Ordinance in October 2019, the Somerville Police Department (SPD) had acquired three devices, a Thermal Imaging Monocular, Under Door Camera and Ball Camera. During the course of our evaluation to determine the scope and breadth of the Surveillance Technology Ordinance in late 2019 and early 2020, these devices were not identified as possibly needing Surveillance Technology Impact Reports (STIR's). In June of 2025, funding was identified which could have allowed the SPD to purchase an updated version of the Ball Camera. At that point, the determination was made to re-evaluate these three devices to determine if STIR's were appropriate. It was determined the SPD would submit STIR's for all three devices. It is important to note, none of the devices have been used outside of training exercises

1. Thermal Imaging Monocular - The FLIR Scion PTM366 25mm Manual Thermal Imaging Monocular uses a Boson thermal core to detect infrared radiation (heat) and convert it into a visible image, allowing users to see in complete darkness and through obscurants like fog or smoke. The monocular is a hand held device which can be used to scan subject areas for heat signatures. This device was originally purchased for the Marine Unit (similar to the Thermal Imaging device on the Fire Marine Unit). The device was retained by the SPD when the Marine Unit was surplus back to the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) communities. This device has not been used for any purposes since being repurposed to the Special Response Team (SRT).
2. Under Door Camera – The AARDVARK CORE Under Door Camera from Tactical Electronics is a specialized surveillance tool designed for tactical operations, providing critical visual intelligence in challenging environments. The camera is used for breaching, reconnaissance, and hostage rescue scenarios. It provides a real-time video feed, wirelessly streaming to a CORE Monitor or to a CORE Grip, a 1.0-inch eyepiece that displays the video without needing a separate monitor. To date this device has only been used in training exercises.
3. Ball Camera – The Bounce Imaging Explorer Reece360 Mini Ball camera is a 360 degree throwable camera that allows first responders to gather vital information about confined spaces from a safe distance. The cameras see in all directions at the same time, in real time, to provide situational awareness. The camera provides instant video transmission and two-way audio. The device can also send pre-recorded commands in multiple languages. To date this device has only been used in training exercises.

All SRT officers will be trained in the use of these devices accordance with the policies and procedures of the SPD. These devices, although they have not been used outside of training exercises by the SRT, are vital to the overall operational rediness of the unit and in the unlikely event they will be needed to insure the safety of the community, safety of officers and to insure the safety of any potential SRT operation.

Sean Sheehan
Captain