

Bobbie Walthall

To: Jonathan Douglass
Subject: RE: Comment on patrol rifle lease program

From: caver_doc@hotmail.com
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Subject: comment regarding consent agenda item
Date: Mon, 5 Dec 2011 11:23:38 -0600

Dear Commissioners;

I support the purchase of patrol rifles (with optional optic sights) for our police department.

As the father of two elementary school-aged children, I am concerned about the possibility of an active shooter incident similar to Columbine or Virginia Tech. I want responding officers to be equipped with the best possible tools necessary to end such a tragic event. This response would rely heavily upon those officers being equipped with patrol rifles.

I served nearly ten years in the United States Army, the majority of that time in elite special operations units. While training my soldiers in small arms marksmanship, we used scenarios ranging from room combat (Close Quarters Battle, or "CQB") to precision shooting to 800 meters or more. In all instances, the standardized marksmanship scores ("qualification") were higher with our rifles and carbines (similar to today's police patrol rifle) than with pistols. These were high-stress exercises with a soldier's continued service in these respected units at stake.

We also were tasked with training allied troops in marksmanship skills. Again, the rifle/carbine scores on standardized testing were significantly higher with rifles/carbines than with pistols. Most of these soldiers had pistol training exceeding police standards.

The patrol rifle is inherently easier to shoot accurately under stress than either a handgun or a police (short barrel) shotgun. The qualification scores of departments who equip their officers with patrol rifles are invariably higher than pistol scores, especially under timed drills. At distances greater than 25 meters the average officer will have difficulty in keeping 100% of his shots on a qualification target. The shotgun is a challenge after 100 meters, and then it must be equipped with rifled slugs and appropriate sights (rather than the brass bead found on most shotguns). The patrol rifle permits the average officer, when the rifle sights are properly adjusted for him, to hit a criminal at 300 meters. With an optical sight, shots can be made within strict time limits with 100% accuracy. This is due to the superior ergonomics of the patrol rifle compared with the handgun each officer now carries. Such clear superiority will aid the officer in an incident requiring armed response.

The liability concerns of issuing patrol rifles to individual officers is obvious. Today there is increasing sophistication of criminals, as seen in the narco-terrorists along our southern border or the North Hollywood bank robbery committed by two criminals equipped with body armor and multiple automatic weapons. A criminal/active shooter at distance greater than 100 meters is best neutralized with a well-placed shot from a patrol rifle. The liability of the city not to equip officers to decisively end such an incident is, in my opinion, much greater than the risk of equipping them with patrol rifles.

My understanding is that patrol rifles will be purchased initially by the city and then payments deducted from an officer's pay, to make the rifle his personal property. Allowance will include an optical sight if the officer desires one. I find this to be a financially sound proposal since the city budget already includes police force salaries.

To increase the safety of our town, including the campuses of two universities and a host of schools, please approve the purchase of patrol rifles for our police department as previously proposed by the leadership of the department.

You may make my concerns herein a part of the public record.

Sincerely,

Jay P. Kennedy MD