

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	October 7, 2024
Action Required:	Approval of Resolution
Presenter:	Michael Kochis, Police Chief
Staff Contacts:	Holly Bittle, Budget and Management Analyst Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Title:	Resolution to appropriate Virginia State Police HEAT FY 25 Equipment Reimbursement Funding - \$12,500 (1 of 2 readings)

Background

The Virginia Department of State Police Help Eliminate Auto Theft (HEAT) Program reimburses Virginia law enforcement agencies for equipment, training, software, or recurring costs that support an agency's efforts to combat the theft of vehicles and vehicle parts in its jurisdiction.

Discussion

Over the past four years the Charlottesville Police Department (CPD) has seen a significant increase in motor vehicle thefts. Years 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 saw vehicle theft numbers of 47, 149, 168, and 172 respectively.

In FY 24 CPD purchased an updated Berla Toolkit and trained one detective on how to use the system using funds from the Virginia Department of State Police Help Eliminate Auto Theft (HEAT) Program.

The Berla Toolkit gives CPD the ability to perform forensic downloads from stolen vehicle computer systems to collect detailed evidence which leads to more effectively prosecuted stolen vehicle cases.

Through the Virginia Department of State Police HEAT Program, CPD was awarded \$12,500 in FY 25 to reimburse the City for the Berla Toolkit's annual fees and training expenses for additional detectives. Appropriation of these funds will allow CPD to expand the use of this valuable forensic tool by training additional detectives and covering the annual fees that were not included in its FY 25 budget request.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

This project supports Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan, to be a Healthy and Safe City.

Community Engagement

Increased use of the Berla Toolkit will allow detectives to more efficiently collect forensic data to prosecute vehicle thefts and hopefully reduce vehicle thefts overall, thus freeing up officers to spend more time engaging the community .

Budgetary Impact

This will not impact the General Fund. No matching funds are required. It will allow the Police Department to train additional detectives to use the Berla Toolkit and pay for the Berla Toolkit annual fees outside of its FY 25 appropriated General Fund operating budget.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval and appropriation of the funding.

Alternatives

If these funds are not appropriated, the Police Department will need to pay for the Berla Toolkit annual fees out of its existing General Fund operating budget and will restrict the number of detectives trained to use the this valuable forensic tool.

Attachments

1. VSP HEAT Resolution 2025