PA 19-11—sHB 6754
Planning and Development Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF BODY-WORN ELECTRONIC RECORDING EQUIPMENT

SUMMARY: Existing law requires the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to, within available resources, administer a grant program that reimburses municipalities for body-worn recording equipment (i.e., body cameras) and other law enforcement recording equipment and services they purchase.

This act allows OPM to reimburse municipalities, within available resources, for up to 100% of the costs associated with the body cameras they purchased during FYs 17 and 18 if they (1) paid for the equipment by August 31, 2018, and (2) purchased them in sufficient quantities.

The act also makes conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

BACKGROUND

Sufficient Quantity

As under existing law, sufficient quantity means purchasing enough body cameras to ensure that sworn police department members and certain others who perform criminal law enforcement duties (e.g., constables) are supplied with the equipment while interacting with the public in their law enforcement capacity.

The number of cameras sufficient for these purposes must be determined by (1) the municipality's police chief or (2) the first selectman or borough warden, if there is no police chief (CGS § 7-277b(b)(1)(A)).

Compliance with Body Camera Requirements

By law, sworn members of a municipal police department in a municipality that received OPM reimbursement for body cameras must generally comply with the state's body camera law. Among other things, this law (1) prescribes when body cameras must be used and how they must be worn, (2) requires body cameras to meet certain minimal technical specifications, (3) prohibits law enforcement officers from recording certain activities, (4) allows law enforcement to withhold certain images from disclosure to the public, and (5) requires officers to receive certain training on how to use the equipment (CGS § 29-6d).