



Bellingham City Council

MEMORANDUM

To: Bellingham Immigration Advisory Board
CC: Council President Hannah Stone
From: Mark Gardner, Council Legislative Analyst
Re.: Questions from the Immigration Advisory Board
Date: February 16, 2021

QUESTIONS FROM THE IMMIGRATION ADVISORY BOARD REGARDING POLICE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES

I. Translation Services

1. How does What-Comm and BPD provide language interpretation for non-English speakers?

Answer, What-Comm: [From Greg Erickson, Deputy Director, What-Comm] “We utilize a company called Voiance for non-English speaking callers. Voiance is an interpretive service utilized by many 911 centers. We have the ability to conference our caller with an interpreter through Voiance.”

[See: <https://interpret.voiance.com/>]

Answer, BPD: [From Lieutenant Claudia Murphy, Public Information Officer, Bellingham Police Department]

“We have several options to provide interpretation services for our limited proficiency English speaking community members. We use the Language Line telephone interpreter services and put the officer, community member and interpreter on a three-way call.

We also have a Language Line Solutions app on all our work cellphones which allows for video interpretation services to launch if needed. This service is exceptionally helpful for our deaf and hard of hearing community members. We launch the app, an interpreter appears on the screen and we can talk to the community member. While this app has many languages available, we use it mostly for American Sign Language interpretation. We collaborated with the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center in Bellingham with the launch of this app. That led to a news story with KIRO 7 about the collaboration and use of the app.

Here is a link to the [BPD facebook post](#) explaining this service.

Link to the [KIRO 7 news story](#)

If for some reason we were not able to use the phones, we also have local interpretation services which we can use, such as Hand Dancers and those who do interpretation for the courts. For the most part we use the phone language line or the app. Some of our officers are bi-lingual as well and can be used in an emergent situation.”

II. City Involvement with Fusion Centers

1. **Are there any City of Bellingham contracts or cooperation agreements of any sort between BPD and Washington State or other Fusion Centers, and if so can we get a copy of the agreement?** *[From Lieutenant Claudia Murphy, Public Information Officer, Bellingham Police Department]* “BPD does not have any contracts or cooperation agreements, so there are none to share.”

[For info. on WA State Fusion Center: <http://www.wsfc.wa.gov/About>]

III. 210 Lottie Street Removal of Encampment

1. **What were the costs for the Jan 28 camp removal at 210 Lottie Street (Bellingham only):** *[Costs reported by the Bellingham Herald and verified by the Bellingham Police Department]*

Labor costs: Approximately \$29,000

Public Works personnel, equipment, and material cost: \$45,352

Personnel: \$34,079.50

Equipment costs: \$8,458.37

Material costs: \$2,814.75

TOTAL, COB only: \$74,352.62

2. **Why were the Whatcom County Sheriff and U.S. Border Patrol present?** *[Statement from COB web site re: presence of CBP]* “The Whatcom County Sheriff was originally on site to protect the County Courthouse. Sheriff’s deputies assisted with protestors in support of Bellingham Police. The Sheriff requested mutual aid from the Border Patrol, who then also stepped in to assist the Sheriff’s Office.”

[COB official web page with FAQs etc.: <https://cob.org/services/safety/emergencies/covid-19/city-county-addressing-tent-encampment-and-emergency-winter-shelter-needs>]

3. **Was there any operational involvement between BPD and CBP officers?** *[From Lieutenant Claudia Murphy, Public Information Officer, Bellingham Police Department]* “Not to our knowledge. The scope of CBP involvement has been outlined by the Sheriff specifically several times. He requested CBP assistance in keeping the County Courthouse safe, when Chief Simon asked for mutual aid from WCSO (whose mission up until that point had been the courthouse security.)”
4. **Were CBP officers filming at the scene?** *[From Lieutenant Claudia Murphy, Public Information Officer, Bellingham Police Department]* “We have no knowledge of CBP personnel filming at the scene. They did not have a role in encampment removal, as that was done by COB PW, not law enforcement. Whether any CBP personnel were on city property, we would need more information on what those claims were. When CBP personnel initially arrived, some parked behind City Hall, but were quickly redirected to park closer to the county courthouse by WCSO leadership. That may be what is being referenced.”