



Legislation Text

File #: 2167-2023, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND: The policing of First Amendment crowd events has been a major driver of recent challenges to police legitimacy both in Columbus and nationwide. In response to the civil unrest of 2020, police agencies across the US have therefore been re-evaluating their crowd management strategies. Accordingly, the Columbus Division of Police has developed 'ENABLE Columbus' which is a partnership project between Crowd and Conflict Management Ltd (CCM Ltd), the Columbus Division of Police (CDP), The Ohio State University (OSU), Keele University, and the City of Columbus.

ENABLE Columbus aims to utilize this knowledge production partnership to embed and enhance the CDP's new science led approach to crowd policing, develop new research expertise based at OSU, gather primary data on the effectiveness and limitations of the new approach, use this evidence to further enhance CDP's crowd management strategies, foster dialogue between police and demonstrators, help safeguard First Amendment rights, and position the City of Columbus as providing the nationally leading approach to crowd management policing.

This legislation authorizes the Director of the Department of Public Safety to enter into a contract with Crowd and Conflict Management Ltd. for the implementation of phase one of the 'ENABLE Columbus' project.

The purpose of phase one is to undertake preliminary consultancy, training and research that will constitute the development work that is necessary to undertake phase two of the project. Both phases are designed to position Columbus as a national leader in evidence-based crowd management, while also establishing the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at OSU as a globally renowned research center in this field.

Professor Stott is the Director of CCM Ltd and is the world-leading expert in crowd psychology and policing. He has worked with governments and police forces internationally and is at the forefront globally of developing new science-based approaches to crowd management utilizing specialized units of Dialogue Police.

The CDP has been working with CCM Ltd to develop new ways of policing crowds. Consequently, the CDP has developed a new Police Dialogue Unit which focuses on building positive relationships with protesters to facilitate peaceful demonstrations and protect First Amendment rights. CDP's groundbreaking policing approach in the US draws directly on the principles of crowd psychology developed by Professor Stott, taking its inspiration from similar researched initiatives he has led in Europe.

The CDP Dialogue Unit has been operational since October 2022 and is now the primary tactic of the agency's new science-led operational response to First Amendment events. Their mission is to facilitate the freedom of expression by building community partnerships, enhancing two-way communication and police legitimacy, improving problem-solving capacity, augmenting command decision making, and deescalating tensions.

Preliminary deployments of the new unit indicate the new approach is likely to prove highly beneficial; however, more work is required to evaluate, embed, and expand the approach.

ENABLE Columbus is a two-stage research, consultancy and training project that aims to establish a crowd policing research capacity at OSU's John Glenn College, solidify the presence of a Dialogue Unit within the CPD's crowd management response, and foster a collaborative knowledge-sharing partnership nationally. ENABLE Columbus is designed to establish the City of Columbus and OSU as providing the leading US 'best practice' model for the research-based policing of crowd events and, in so doing, support the export of the CDP model into the broader US context.

The project will facilitate collaboration with various stakeholders including community groups, police oversight agencies, police agencies, the Department of Justice, research centers and higher education institutes as well as City authorities.

Given the complexities involved, and importance of the work, there is a pressing requirement to begin the project as quickly as possible. This contract is to implement phase one which is designed to allow the project to assist CDP in embedding and expanding the new Dialogue Unit locally. Phase one will help support effective interoperability with other agencies, undertake pilot work to develop the necessary methodologies, provide training, develop a formal relationship between OSU, CDP, and other Universities, develop the contracts, agreements, and approvals necessary to advance the project to phase two.

Fiscal Impact: This legislation authorizes the expenditure of \$94,200.00 from the General Fund with Crowd and Conflict Management to implement Phase one of ENABLE Columbus: a science-based approach to policing crowd events. Funding is available in Public Safety's 2023 General Fund Budget for this contract.

Emergency Action: There is a pressing need to begin the project as quickly as possible given the complexities and importance of the work involved. It is requested that a contract can be entered into immediately so that project activities can begin without delay.

To authorize the Director of the Department of Public Safety to enter into a contract with Crowd and Conflict Management Ltd. to implement the first phase of "ENABLE Columbus," a project that aims to develop research expertise and enhance crowd management strategies, foster dialogue between police and demonstrators and safeguard First Amendment rights in the City of Columbus; to authorize the expenditure of \$94,200.00 from the General Fund; to waive the competitive bidding provisions of the Columbus City Codes; and to declare an emergency. (\$94,200.00)

WHEREAS, the City has a need to implement "ENABLE Columbus" by building a science-based approach to policing crowd events in Columbus; and,

WHEREAS, this initiative is designed to position the City of Columbus and The Ohio State University at the forefront within the US with respect to building a 'best practice' model for research-based policing of crowd events; and,

WHEREAS, a waiver of the competitive bidding provisions of the Columbus City Code is necessary as Professor Stott of Crowd and Conflict Management Ltd is uniquely well-suited to serve as consultant to Columbus' law enforcement and community partners in their implementation efforts; and,

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Public Safety in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to enter into contract with Crowd and Conflict Management Ltd to implement a science-based approach to policing crowd events and help CDP re-evaluate their crowd management strategies without delay due to the complexities and importance of work involved, for the preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; **NOW, THEREFORE**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of the Department of Public Safety is hereby authorized to enter into contract with Crowd and Conflict Management Ltd to help the Division of Police to implement the first phase of a science-based approach to policing crowd events in the City of Columbus.

SECTION 2. That this Council finds it is in the best interests of the City to waive the competitive bidding provisions of Chapter 329 of the Columbus City Code to enter into this contract, and hereby waives such provision.

SECTION 3. That the expenditure of up to \$94,200.00, or so much thereof as may be needed pursuant to the action authorized in SECTION 1, is hereby authorized in the General Fund 1000, in Object Class 03 - Contractual Services, per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 4. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 5. That the monies appropriated in the foregoing sections shall be paid upon the order of the Director of the Department of Public Safety, and that no order shall be drawn or money paid except by voucher, the form of which shall be approved by the City Auditor.

SECTION 6. That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

SECTION 7. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part thereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.