



Legislation Text

File #: 2061-2019, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this ordinance is to appropriate \$81,000.00 in the Public Safety Initiative subfund for the Department of Public Safety to establish a virtual reality (VR) pilot program and purchase associated software and hardware for the purposes of Police and Fire training. In order to pilot VR training within the Columbus Division of Police and Fire, Council worked with the divisions to identify projects that will prove the effectiveness of VR in the training environment.

The Division of Police has identified recruit firearms proficiency requirement to be the focus of their pilot. Each year, recruits from the Division are required to demonstrate proficiency with a firearm as a requirement for graduation. The identified pilot program would create a virtual shooting range in which recruits and training staff could identify weaknesses and approve upon mistakes. The virtual component will provide recruits with a realistic training scenario in which to improve their abilities while reducing the use of expensive ammunition. In addition, training staff will have the capability to insert variables into the module (i.e. weather, lighting, visibility) to best prepare recruits for the variables they will face as officers.

The Division of Fire has identified arson and fire investigation training to be the focus of their pilot. Fires are destructive and consume the evidence of their initiation as they grow. Investigators examine the fire scene and collect physical evidence to determine the cause of the fire, whether arson or accidental. Much of the expertise needed to successfully execute these difficult tasks relies on on-the-job, in-field training. Thus, investigators are dependent on real-life fires to train and further enhance their skills. Training in mock environments using VR will provide investigators much greater flexibility, both in place and time, to conduct training. VR training will allow trainees to examine multiple virtual fire scenes, and improve the ways that they detect and identify fire accelerants. In addition, VR training is exponentially safer for those participating than the current field training performed by the division, especially in regards to risk of exposure to hazardous carcinogens.

With this ordinance, Council reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that our safety forces have the most up-to-date and effective training possible. This ordinance authorizes the appropriation of \$81,000.00 within the Public Safety Initiative subfund.

EMERGENCY DESIGNATION: Emergency action is requested to ensure that the Department of Public Safety can immediately purchase equipment in time for the upcoming Police and Fire academy classes to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Columbus.

FISCAL IMPACT: Total appropriation is \$81,000.00 and is available in the 2019 budget within the Public Safety Initiative subfund, Fund 1000-100016.

To appropriate \$81,000.00 within the Public Safety Initiative subfund for the Department of Public Safety to establish a virtual reality pilot program and purchase associated software and hardware, for the purposes of Police and Fire training, and to declare an emergency. (\$81,000.00)

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety places top priority on the quality of training for Police and Fire academy classes; and,

WHEREAS, the Divisions of Police and Fire have identified areas of need where virtual reality can assist the training of recruits; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety has decided to contract for a virtual reality pilot program, and to purchase the necessary hardware and software to initiate this pilot; and,

WHEREAS, \$81,000.00 is available in the Public Safety Initiative Fund for appropriation to provide for this need; and,

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Public Safety, in that it is necessary to ensure that the Department of Public Safety can immediately purchase equipment in time for the upcoming Police and Fire academy classes for the immediate 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 \$81,000.00 is hereby appropriated within Fund 1000-100016 Public Safety Initiative subfund per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 2: 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 3: That for reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is 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.