

# Nassau County, PBA agree to \$3K annual body camera stipends

By [Robert Pelaez](#) - June 16, 2021



*Nassau County and its Police Benevolent Association agreed to \$3,000 annual stipends for officers to wear body cameras last week. (Photo courtesy of the county executive's office)*

Nassau County reached an agreement with its Police Benevolent Association Friday for union officers to receive \$3,000 to wear body cameras beginning this fall.

In late May, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran announced the purchase of 2,500 body cameras for officers as part of Nassau's commitment to decreasing major crime throughout the county. On Monday, the agreement for the annual stipends passed through the Legislature's Public Safety, Finance, and Rules committees, increasing the chances of full legislative approval before the end of June, according to Newsday.

"This is an important step that will promote greater transparency and accountability in policing and will help continue building trust in all our communities," Curran said in a statement.

“My members realized that body cameras are the future; it’s part of reform,” Police Benevolent Association President James McDermott told Newsday. “We were never against it.”

The agreement between the county and the union would provide officers with the \$3,000 annual stipend, with 26 payments made to officers throughout the year. Officials said the agreement would cost Nassau taxpayers an additional \$8 million annually, an increase of \$3 million from an estimate Curran announced in May. The county selected Ronkonkoma-based Island Tech Services to provide the camera technology and handle training and technical support for the officers

Despite the agreement, the county and the union are still in pending litigation for full contract negotiations. In December, the union rejected a contract that would provide police officers with a 25 percent raise over 8 1/2 years along with the annual body camera stipend.

Union President James McDermott said the proposed contract was defeated Dec. 23 by 143 votes, according to Newsday. McDermott did not provide further specifics on the action taken by the union. Efforts to reach McDermott or another representative of the union for comment were unavailing.

Body cameras were one of several measures included in a [424-page plan](#) to reform Nassau County’s policing that Curran released in February.

The plan, which the [county Legislature approved 16-3 in March](#), was submitted in accordance with an executive order that Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed in mid-June last year requiring police agencies to devise plans to “reinvent and modernize police strategies” after Minneapolis cops killed George Floyd.

Nassau County Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder said the body cameras will begin to appear on all patrol officers in one precinct by September before the initiative expands across the department by the end of the year.

“I do not believe police should be receiving additional funds for wearing a piece of equipment they claim is going to be a benefit to both the public and to police,” Hempstead-based civil rights attorney and Long Island Advocates for Police Accountability member Frederick K. Brewington told Newsday. “They’re not getting paid extra to wear their gun. They’re not getting paid extra to wear their bullet proof vest. But yet, they want to get paid for this.”

Nassau County spends \$1,148 per capita on police and fire protection while the national median is \$359, according to a U.S. News & World report this year that deemed Nassau County the safest community in America. Public safety professionals account for 1.26 percent of the county’s population, compared with the national median of 0.70 percent.