



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

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Bainbridge Police Department to Get Surplus Helmets

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, December 8, 2009 – The City of Bainbridge Island Police Department has made arrangements to acquire used riot helmets from the Los Angeles Police Department. Private citizens have come forward and are paying for the cost of the helmets and shipping, so that there will be no cost to the Police Department for replacing their existing, outdated helmets. 26 helmets will be used by the Bainbridge Island Police; 25 will go to the Poulsbo Police Department and 15 to the Suquamish Tribal Police.

“The helmets the department owns are over 10 years old, and the lining and padding are deteriorating,” said Police Chief Jon Fehlman. “At \$300 apiece, we don’t have room in our budget for new helmets; we’ve been able to get these for just \$1 each plus shipping and handling.”

While it may seem surprising that Bainbridge Police need riot helmets, the department can be called in to help other jurisdictions, as happened during the 1999 WTO riots in Seattle. When that takes place, they are expected to provide their own equipment. In addition, Chief Fehlman noted that the helmets may be useful in local situations with high-risk suspects. The new helmets are Kevlar-based, ballistic helmets, offering much better protection than the department’s old hard plastic helmets.

Chief Fehlman estimates that the participating departments saved \$22,425 in the exchange. “It would have cost the Los Angeles Police \$415 to unload the helmets, so this is a win for everyone.”

“I’m pleased by Chief Fehlman’s resourcefulness,” said Interim City Manager Lee Walton. “Given the budgetary restrictions our City is facing, we’re fortunate to have staff who look for and pursue creative solutions to help us better serve the community.”

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