
WAUKESHA POLICE MEMORANDUM



DATE: June 29th, 2020
TO: Daniel P. Thompson, Chief of Police
FROM: Sergeant Jake Trussoni #380
SUBJECT: Canine Unit Start Up

Sir:

I am requesting permission to start a Police Canine Unit at the Waukesha Police Department. Our agency has been relying on canine units from other departments to support our operations in the twenty years I have been employed at the Waukesha Police Department. Due to delayed response times or complete unavailability of a police canine, this often leaves the public and our officers without the use of a canine.

Background:

I have recently been able to connect with two foundations who are working together to provide a police canine and some associated gear to a Wisconsin police agency. Should this proposal get approved these foundations would award our agency with the dog and equipment. This dog would be a dual purpose (narcotics, protection & apprehension, evidence search, and tracking trained) patrol Dutch Shepherd who would be ready for her 4 weeks of final training with a WKPD handler in March of 2021. The foundation that is donating the dog would also be willing to provide a Labrador trained in locating electronic devices and searching for missing at risk persons (non-criminal person searches) at their cost of purchasing, caring for, and training the Labrador. The Labrador would be done with training and available to our agency in approximately 10 months. More information on both of these opportunities is detailed later in this proposal.

Justification:

The advantages of having a trained patrol canine and handler are numerous. Congruent with the number one department priority of Safety, an available trained canine team yields advantages in safety to both officers and citizens. Canines can be used to search dangerous and confined areas before human officers to help mitigate risk; they can also be used to search open and large areas for dangerous suspects providing an early warning of hidden suspects to officers on the scene. This also benefits citizens by reducing search times and increasing apprehension rates of suspects intent on avoiding detection to further their criminality. The use of a police canine can also lead to enhanced officer safety in other ways. Canines are trained to bite suspects who brandish weapons. The bite of a canine to an armed suspect is a de-escalation of force when compared to the alternative of an officer being forced to use deadly force. A canine team's physical presence will also act as a deterrence, preventing the need for force or other escalations of a situation. When a canine makes its presence known a suspect will often come out of hiding, stop running, or come out of their barricaded position and surrender with compliance.

As mentioned above, canines are much more efficient at searching areas than human officers. This benefits efficiency in operations when searching large buildings or large outside areas for evidence, suspects, or missing endangered persons. Due to this, less time is needed to search these types of areas which frees up officers and provides a shorter disruption to the lives of those who live and work in the area. A canine trained in drug detection can also increase efficiency in drug investigations at the patrol and detective levels. A properly trained canine is also able to sniff out small and well hidden electronic devices which child predators often store nefarious images on.

Police canine teams can also bridge barriers to provide more community engagement with citizens through canine demonstrations, school and civic group visits, and day to day canine and public interactions. The dog acts as a talking point for citizens to approach the handler and engage in non-enforcement interaction, helping to build rapport and trust between citizens and the department.

Need:

The key to realizing the benefits of police canines is to have canines readily available to serve the officers and citizens of Waukesha. Not having canines at our agency, we often do not realize the benefits described above. This is based on a delayed response from other agencies, or canines not being available to respond at all. No canine is available or a canine is not usable due to a delayed response **44.74%** of the time our officers self-reported canine requests. In speaking with our School Resource Officers they have also expressed difficulties in getting outside agency canines to do more than one school sniff a year.

Other benefits of having our own canine teams include the advantage of working with our own officers who are trained in our tactics and procedures. Our officers are more familiar with their co-workers, making it easier to communicate and understand what one another want in any given situation. This can be difficult with officers from other jurisdictions and may lead to issues caused by miscommunication. If canine teams are used from anywhere but Waukesha Sheriff we also incur the mutual aid liability of these outside officers, who are often times less trained and less predictable than our officers.

I have been gathering self-reported data from our officers on canine requests and usage since mid-December of 2018 through June 16, 2020. Officers were asked to email me whenever they requested a canine, and what the result was. A CAD disposition was considered to track this data; however, it was not a feasible option as it would make data collection in too many other areas nearly impossible. This has led to under reporting as the actual times officers request canines or canines are not available is not truly known. During the data collection timeframe officers were also told to all but stop self initiated activity for about two and a half months due to the COVID Pandemic. Additionally, this data does not represent times when an officer would have requested a canine response, however they heard on the air earlier in the shift that there were no canines on duty in our county, so they did not ask. Another limitation of this data collection is the amount of times an officer would have called for a canine response if they would have known our agency had a canine on duty in the city, making this tool more accessible in a timely manner.

Keeping in mind the limits of the data I have collected from officers through self-reporting, officers report they requested a canine 76 times in the above time frame. Of those 76 self-reported canine requests a canine was not available 21 times, or 27.63% of the time. Of the times a canine was said to be available and responding there were thirteen times a canine was cancelled before it's arrival due to the response taking too long. This equates to a canine not being able to respond in a timely manner, even though on duty on the county, 17.11% of the time.

If the times the canine was not available are combined with the times a canine had to be cancelled due to it taking too long to arrive, data indicates a canine was not available/usable **44.74%** of the time our officers self-reported canine requests.

Having a canine available to respond is more important now than in the past. In 2015 Rodriguez v. United States established a bright line ruling that in the absence of consent or the existence of facts that create a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity; officers cannot extend a traffic stop solely for the purposes of a canine sniff. As there is generally no police canine in the city this had lead to a reduction in the amount of time officers can have a canine perform a sniff of a vehicle on traffic stops.

Canines were requested by our agency for a myriad of incidents which include sniffs on traffic stops, armed barricaded subjects, fugitive searches and apprehensions, missing persons searches, school sniffs, armed robberies, evidence (article) searches, burglaries in progress, and tactical operations. Most requests (64%) were for canine sniffs on traffic stops highlighting how valuable of a tool a canine available in the city would be, especially considering time constraints due to the aforementioned Rodriguez case. Further underscoring how a canine can enhance community and officer safety nearly every other canine request was for a dynamic high-risk incident, the majority involving weapons.

I contacted the Waukesha County Communications Center (WCC) to see what data was available relating to WKPD canine requests. WCC dispatches other agencies in the county with police canines. WCC was able to provide me with some data, however their data is limited. The main limitation of the data is that WCC does not record the times when an agency requests a canine and there was no canine on duty in the county. WCC provided me with data from January of 2019 to June 15, 2020 of canine requests our agency made when there was a canine on duty in the county. This data period is only about two weeks shorter than the data collection I conducted with our officers. During this timeframe WCC recorded our agency requested an on duty canine a total of 85 times. Of the 85 times we requested a canine through WCC, it is noted that a canine was cancelled prior to arrival 15 times, or 17.64% of the time. This cancellation data from WCC closely correlates with the data I collected internally from our officers self-reporting canine requests to me. A reasonable conclusion to draw would be that, although WCC does not track when a canine is not available, this number would also closely correlate with the number derived from the in house self-reporting data I collected.

My data is available from both sources for your review should you need it.

Current Canine Opportunities:

I was recently connected with the Emma Loves Dogs Foundation of Hartland, WI which is run by Mr. Geoff Mertens. The Emma Loves Dogs Foundation provides financial and fundraising assistance to police canine units and no kill animal shelters. The Emma Loves Dogs Foundation was asked by the Crossroads K9's for Cops Program of Kronenwetter, WI to select a Wisconsin police department to receive a free trained police canine, handler training, and some related equipment in honor of Mr. Mertens' late daughter Emma, whom his foundation is named after. Crossroads Canine's for Cops has done this for two other agencies and is ran by Mr. Sean Dumais.

The Emma Loves Dogs Foundation has selected the Waukesha Police Department to receive the trained dual purpose (patrol) police canine and related equipment, should our agency be willing to accept the donation. This patrol canine, named Emma, would be ready to be paired with our selected handler in March of 2021 to attend Emma's final four weeks of training and certification at Steinig Tal Police K9 Academy in Campellsport, WI. This four-week final training and certification is included with the donation. The only stipulation for our agency accepting the donation is a guarantee that K9 Emma will stay with her handler upon retirement and not be given to a shelter.

Generally with normal health a police canine works until they are about 10 years old, dependent on genetics. K9 Emma will be about 2 years old when we receive her. Emma will be able to provide an estimated eight years of service to our city. In meeting with Mr. Mertens, Mr. Dumais, and K9 Emma I learned that she is being trained in scent work for drugs, evidence, and persons; handler protection and suspect apprehension; and hard and soft surface tracking. Her indication method is passive for evidence searches. K9 Emma's disposition is suitable for community engagement events as she is very friendly when she is not in work mode. A local police K9 expert and I have an appointment scheduled in the near future to see K9 Emma work to ensure she is capable, at this point in her training, of doing what is described and there are no indications of problems with her work.

Should this program get approved and we accept K9 Emma the following equipment is included with her through this endowment:

K9 Emma, value \$15,000

K9 Tactical Vest, value \$3000

K9 Medical Kit, value \$995

Hot and Pop K9 heat sensor system and remote case, value \$3,029

Handler Training & Certification, with 1 year of drop in training at Steinig Tal, value \$3000

Patrol leash, tracking lead, flat collar, pinch collar, e-collar, tracking harness, muzzle, Rex Specs, travel water bowl, & 4 stainless dog dishes, total value \$831

Total Value: \$25,855

In addition to the above donation there is also an opportunity available for an electronics detection Labrador Retriever who can be trained in searching for non-criminal related persons searches such as missing children and cognitively disabled adults. Crossroads K9's for Cops is willing to sell one of these Labradors to our agency for the cost of what they will have into the purchase, care, and feeding of the dog. Essentially the initial training of the dog would be free leaving us to only have to pay for the dog's certification testing. The cost of this Labrador would be \$2500. This dog would be available in approximately 10 months. To put the cost of that dog in perspective a Labrador puppy of decent hunting stock runs generally from \$1000-\$2000 depending on pedigree, making this an exceptional low cost opportunity.

A dog of this breed and training is able to leverage community engagement and donations to fund and sustain a canine program while representing our agency. The Computer Forensics Detectives have called for the WI DCI electronic detection canine for use on many warrants due to child predators who engage in child pornography being able to hide small electronic devices in small places. The WI DCI electronic detection canine is the only one available in our area, making it's availability limited. A trained electronics canine would be a great asset to our community by assisting in holding those who victimize children accountable in the criminal justice system. It would be an added investment in helping our communities most at risk populations that this dog would be able to search for missing persons. A local police K9 expert and I can also do an early evaluation of the Labrador puppies when we evaluate Emma.

A specialized dog such as this Labrador who is not trained to bite requires less equipment and training, and as such costs less to have. No special car enclosure or outdoor home kennel is needed.

Budgeting:

If approved the canine unit would operate solely on donations, absent the officer's wages and ongoing training costs. When the program becomes solvent enough, the ongoing officer training may also be able to be payed through canine program donations. More canine teams could be added to the program as the donations increase. The Waukesha Police Citizens Academy Alumni Board has been consulted and they have agreed that they would be able to accept and administer any donations for the canine program through their 501(c)(3) organization.

As more money is raised it would be best if we can send an officer to decoy training, as an improperly trained decoy can hurt dogs physically and ruin their will to work. This is not an immediate need as I have reached out to other agencies canine programs and they are willing to work with us until we become solvent. Down the road costs for this decoy training and bite suit and sleeves is estimated to be \$4000.

Estimated upfront costs in addition to the donated items would include the below for each dog.

Patrol K9 Emma:

Miscellaneous reward tugs/toys: \$200

Bite sleeve: \$200

Police Interceptor SUV Utility Dog Kennel Box & Prisoner Transport System: \$2800

Dedicated take home vehicle for patrol canine: use one from current fleet

Home Kennel with concrete slab: \$1400 (might be cheaper using city garage)

Portable plastic kennel: \$200

Total: \$4800

Electronics and endangered persons Labrador:

Collar and leashes: \$300

Reward toys: \$100

Portable plastic kennel: \$200

Dog: \$2500

Total: \$3100

With these generous opportunities our agency has we can start a two canine unit for an estimated total of only **\$7900**

This would be done through fundraising as mentioned above. I am confident with my passion for this program and our strong community support this can be accomplished.

Annual costs include food and veterinarian care. I am confident I can obtain donations in these areas for each dog, as that is what all canine units do in southeastern Wisconsin. Pet World supplies one bag of dog food per police canine each month to every agency I have contacted.

Other annual costs (per dog) include:

Equipment replacement due to wear: \$300

Annual trainings and recertification: \$2500

Total: \$2800 (not needed the first year of any dog)

Implementation:

If this program is approved, it would be my honor and privilege to serve as the canine unit supervisor/coordinator as a collateral duty. I am passionate about this topic due to its ability to increase safety for our officers and citizens while also providing more community engagement.

If this program is approved I would also like to start publicly fundraising for the canine unit by using personal and agency contacts in addition to our agencies social media. I would like to leverage personal and agency contacts at the inception to quickly develop a nest egg for the program which would provide the estimated \$7900 needed to start this two canine program as well as a cushion for the unit as we move forward and continue to fundraise while we grow.

Long term fundraising would include annual canine fundraising events (as other canine units do) while continuing to leverage personal relationships to solicit monetary and in-kind donations. If this proposal is approved Mr. Mertens has also expressed his desire to continue working with our agency to assist in fundraising for the canine unit and provide donations when his foundation is able to. I will also continue to seek out and apply for other endowments and grants for canine units such as the one I have presented in this memo.

I have already had a preliminary discussion with the Union President and he assures me the Union Board wants this program to succeed as much as I do. He is willing to work with me to develop a memorandum of understanding as well as any applicable contract language. State law requires some sort of compensation for represented handlers care of the dogs off duty. Generally, a shorter work shift or comp time being given to them each month for the time spent caring for the dog so there is no impact on the agencies budget. My preference would be to provide comp time off rather than shortening the shift of the canine team.

I have multiple canine polices from other agencies and would work with Command Staff to develop our General Order which represents best practices and case law while keeping in mind the needs of our city and agency. My initial vision would be, working with the union and Command Staff, any patrol canine would be assigned to a shift spanning our tradition Early and Late Shifts. An example would be 7pm-3am. As more patrol canines are added it could be considered that the team works Early or Late Shift. To keep the canine useful to the community and the agency the General Order and/or contract should also specify that any patrol canine handler would have to surrender their canine for reselection to a different handler should they ever promote to any rank or assignment other than patrol officer. A specialty dog such as the Labrador described in this proposal could be assigned to any rank or assignment due to the highly specialized nature of it's work. Having a specialty dog assigned to any rank or assignment could offer increased flexibility for the program. However, for the program to succeed, a patrol dog must be assigned to a patrol officer.

I would also work with Command Staff to develop and implement a canine handler selection criteria and process. This process at a minimum would be comprised of an interview panel while considering work history and other traits of the candidates.

If you have any questions or concerns or need any clarification or documentation on anything please do not hesitate to ask me. I strongly believe the Waukesha Police Department has a need to start a police canine program. I strongly believe this program will benefit our agency and community through increased efficiency, safety, and public engagement. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration in this matter.

Respectfully submitted:

Jake Trussoni
Sergeant of Police



K9 Candidate Emma