



Legislation Text

File #: 04667, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

The City is responsible for funding the maintenance and fuel for the K9 vehicles, some ongoing training expenses, and routine office and work supply costs. Funding is included in the Police Department's 2006 Operating Budget and 2007 Executive Operating Budget. No additional appropriation is required.

Title

Approving City acceptance and expenditure of funds raised by "Capital K9's" to continue to equip and train a canine unit for the Police Department.

Body

PREAMBLE

Prior to 2005, the Madison Police Department had never had an organized, formal canine program/unit. Starting in the late 1980's, a handful of officers were approved to use trained canines on duty, primarily for narcotics detection. In the early to mid-1990's, several MPD officers assigned to the Dane County Narcotics and Gang Task Force were trained as canine handlers. The dogs they worked with were trained only in narcotics detection, and were not trained in patrol-related functions.

In 1997 a sub-group of the Officer Advisory Committee (OAC) conducted an extensive study into the need for, feasibility of, and potential cost of implementing an MPD patrol canine unit. The committee concluded that there was a strong need for the department to have a patrol canine unit. The committee's research indicated that a patrol canine unit would increase departmental efficiency, while enhancing the safety of both officers and the community. The committee presented its findings to the management team, and start-up costs for a patrol canine unit were sought through the city budget process as a supplemental budget request for 1998. The request was not approved.

In 1998, an MPD officer was selected as the next dog handler assigned to the Dane County Narcotics and Gang Task Force. The new dog - Arno, a Dutch Shepard - was a dual-purpose dog (trained in both narcotics detection and patrol functions, such as building searches and tracking), the first MPD canine fully trained in patrol functions. Arno was a tremendous asset to both the department and the community. He was responsible for a significant number of drug, vehicle and cash seizures; was responsible for the arrest of a number of suspects, including several violent offenders; located critical pieces of evidence at crime scenes; and took part in many community events.

Since the department had such an overwhelmingly positive experience with Arno, several department members initiated a project to revisit the concept of establishing a patrol canine unit. This effort received wide support from within the department, with a number of officers indicating that a canine could be utilized frequently in a wide variety of settings. Studies have shown that building searches are quicker and more effective when a dog is used than when officers alone are involved, with a significant decrease in risks to officer safety. Also, quick apprehensions of suspects will remove violent offenders from the community. Just the presence of a canine can tend to encourage quicker compliance in situations that might otherwise become confrontational.

Although there is considerable recognition of the many benefits in utilizing canines, the project team recognized the difficult fiscal environment and, consequently, began investigating alternative avenues of funding. Drawing on the funding model utilized by the Anchorage Police Department, a proposal was developed in late 2004 to fund the vast majority of costs associated with development of a canine program through private contributions. A nonprofit organization, "Capital K9's", was created in 2004 for the express purpose of funding a Madison Police Department canine unit.

To date, Capital K9's has donated more than \$65,000 to the City for the funding of a Madison Police Department Canine unit. This has allowed the Police Department to establish for the first time a dedicated patrol canine unit. Two dogs (a Dutch Shepherd and a Belgian Malinois) were purchased and have been serving the citizens of Madison since early 2005. A third dog (a German Shepherd) was added in 2006, and it is anticipated that a fourth canine team will be added in 2007. The canine teams have proven their value, and have provided a tremendous service to both the citizens of

Madison and the officers of the Madison Police Department. With the support of Capital K9's, the MPD canine unit has also acquired three fully equipped squad cars, paid for the canine handlers' initial training, and obtained equipment for the canine teams. The canine handlers utilize their dogs when called upon, and when the dogs are not needed respond to other patrol calls.

Capital K9's plans to continue to raise money to fund the Madison Police Department's canine unit, and will provide funding necessary to purchase and train canines and canine handlers, and to equip the unit. Expansion of the unit will occur as funding permits.

The development of this canine program has significantly improved patrol response capabilities and reduced officer risk, with no additional staffing requirements (canine handler positions are assigned from existing MPD resources). Since equipment costs will be funded through "Capital K9's", the only cost to the City will be to provide maintenance and fuel for the K9 vehicles, to cover some training expenses (through existing MPD training budget allocations), and to provide routine office and work supply costs.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Chief of Police are authorized to accept funds, canines, vehicles and equipment from "Capital K9's" in support of the canine program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City extends its appreciation to "Capital K9's" and other sponsors participating in this project; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Comptroller and the Madison Police Department are authorized to establish and/or maintain accounts as required for the administration of these funds.