

COUNCIL LETTER
City of Knoxville
January 18, 2016

Agenda Item: Discuss future of Knoxville PD K9 program.

Background: Knox, KPD's police dog retired last Fall. Knox was originally obtained in 2008 after a community fund raising drive headed by a local business leader. That drive raised the \$8,500 cost of Knox plus additional funds to equip the team.

There are several options regarding a K9 unit. The first is not to replace the unit. When Knox was first obtained there were no other police dogs in the area. Now there are several drug detecting dogs in the area that are available for call. There are no other enforcement dogs in the area so that capability would be lost. However, this was the least used aspect of Knox's training while he was working for KPD.

Next, a narcotics detecting dog could be purchased for about \$5,000. These dogs are trained to find a variety of drugs. These dogs are usually very friendly and people are able to interact with them increasing positive police-public interactions.

A tracking only dog could be purchased for about \$3,500. These dogs are trained to find people, both lost and wanted individuals. These also are normally friendly dogs ideal for public relations.

An enforcement dog could be purchased for about \$12,000. These are the traditional police dogs. They are trained in handler protection, suspect apprehension, evidence recovery, and area/building searches. The PR aspect of these dogs varies greatly. Some have the temperament for positive public interaction while others, like Knox, are very aggressive and can be used for PR events but the public must be kept back to prevent them being bit.

Finally, a dual purpose dog may be obtained for \$6,000 - \$15,000 (depending upon the combination). These are the most versatile dogs. Knox was trained in enforcement, narcotics detection, and tracking. The PR use of the dog is the same as an enforcement dog.

Other specific training is available such as explosive, arson, money, cell phone, or cadaver detection. KPD cannot justify any of these types of dogs.

During his career with KPD, Knox was mostly used for narcotic detection. His law enforcement training was also used. Knox always had a great psychological impact when he appeared on a scene. No one ever chose to challenge Knox so he never bit anyone in the line of duty. He was used to

search many buildings looking for hidden suspects. Having Knox do this resulted in much quicker searches with much less danger to officers. It is impossible to know how many officer injuries were prevented when suspects decided to surrender rather than fight.

Policy Question: Should KPD replace Knox, the retired police dog with a new dog? If so, what type of dog should KPD get?

Budget Impact: This is not a budgeted item. A fund raising drive could once again be attempted to help reduce the budget impact. Also, there is a current line in the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Fund to replace the Drug Task Force vehicle. About \$7,000 has been put in this account every year since 2004. KPD has replaced this car several times, but never used VERF money to do so as KPD was able to trade the unit to the MINE Task Force for a seized vehicle. Part of this money could be reallocated to make this purchase.

There are other costs in addition to the cost of the dog. KPD already has much of the needed equipment. The new dog will need a new home kennel, patrol vehicle, and car kennel. The vehicle used for Knox was due to be replaced in 2016. The kennel in the car is model specific and could not be transferred to the new car. The current K9 car was obtained used from the Kansas Highway Patrol. It is possible that they will have another vehicle available which would greatly reduce those costs. The VERF has \$30,000 allocated to replace the K9 car.

Recommendation: The Police Chief recommends replacing Knox.

Supporting Document: none