

Agenda Item Report



Winnebago County
The Wave of the Future

DATE: *January 16, 2024*
FROM: *Sheriff John Matz*
RE: *Directed K-9 Donation*

General Description:

Authorize the Sheriff's Office to accept a directed donation from Thomas and Penny Harenburg valued at \$17,000 for the purchase of an additional canine and training for the unit.

Action Requested:

Motion to approve a resolution for the directed donated of \$17,000.

Procedural Steps:

(Show each level of committee and board approval needed, with meeting dates.)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Judiciary	Meeting date: 02/05/2024
Action taken: _____	Vote: _____
Other Committee: Personnel and Finance	Meeting date: 03/07/2024
Action taken: _____	Vote: _____
County Board	Meeting date: 03/19/2024

Background:

In late 2014, Thomas and Penny Harenburg inquired about making a direct purchase of a canine for the Sheriff's Office. They fully supported the K9 program and wanted to help public safety and law enforcement in Winnebago County by expanding our existing program from two canines to three canines, which allowed for a Unit to be assigned to each shift. This original directed donation of \$17,500 went through the appropriate committees and was approved for acceptance by the full Winnebago County Board on March 17, 2015. In 2022, the Harenburg's made a second direct donation of \$14,700 to purchase another canine and associated training for the Sheriff's Office, which also went through the appropriate committees and was approved for acceptance by the full Winnebago County Board on June 21, 2022.

After seeing the successes of the program and recognizing one of our three working dual-purpose canines is nearing the age of retirement, Thomas and Penny Harenburg have offered to make a third directed donation for another replacement canine, to further support the K9 program and not result in a deficit within the Unit.

Policy Discussion:

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office is responsible for providing law enforcement and related services to the citizens of Winnebago County. Law enforcement canines are one of the most effective and diverse tools known to police work. They save time for our deputies, reduce the number of deputies needed for a search, or to contain an area, and deliver a more thorough search. Additionally, they are a useful tool to help keep our deputies safe during apprehension of dangerous criminals.

The full-time Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit is comprised of four Deputy/K-9 pairs assigned to the Field Services Division. All canines are owned by the Sheriff's Office. Three of the canines are considered dual-purpose canines and are trained in narcotics detection, tracking, area searches, building searches, article searches as well as apprehension work. In addition to traditional patrol work, they are also used in SWAT applications, search warrants, school searches, correctional facility searches, and demonstrations for the public in all areas of their job duties. The fourth canine is for explosive detection. They will respond to any area of the county as well as bordering counties if requested as mutual aid. The deployments of the K-9 Units have greatly increased the efficiency and effectiveness for drug related patrol work. Likewise, our K-9 Units have also proven effective tracking fugitives, locating missing persons, and security work.

While the canines themselves have a work life expectancy of about 8 years, unexpected expenses occur as well. This, coupled with routine requests from community members to donate funds to our canines, prompted us to consider alternative means for funding. To this end, the Sheriff's Office partnered with the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation several years ago for members of the community to directly fund K9 Unit related expenses. Purchasing of canines and additional extra expenses of the K9 Unit programmatic funding have been distinctly absent from the Sheriff's Office budget, and unanticipated needs spending relies upon community donors for support. It was the hope that enough money would be raised to purchase the next several canines that would be needed at the Sheriff's Office. In recent years, the monies in the fund donated by community members have been used to pay primarily for unexpected medical needs of the canines, ongoing post-surgical medication and office visits, and other needed specialty equipment.

Because Thomas and Penny Harenburg have created several funds under their namesakes at OACF, donating directly to the Sheriff's Office is their preference. It would be beneficial for the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office to accept the generous directed donation from Thomas and Penny Harenburg for the purchase of a canine unit, equipment, and training for the unit.

Attachments:

- Resolution
- Invoice for K-9 Unit and training