



## City of Grass Valley City Council Agenda Action Sheet

---

**Title:** Police Department Facility Dog

**CEQA:** Not a Project

**Recommendation:** Authorize staff to pursue and start a therapy dog program at the Police Department

---

**Prepared by:** Alexander K. Gammelgard, Chief of Police

**Council Meeting Date:** 07/25/2023

**Date Prepared:** 07/17/2023

**Agenda:** Consent

**Background Information:**

In late 2022, the City adopted a resolution (2022-87) and associated policy related to employee handlers of peer support/facility dogs. The use of facility, therapy, and support dogs has grown across industries, and law enforcement has seen a huge increase in their use.

Facility and therapy dogs provide a number of benefits to their agencies, co-workers, and the public. Facility and therapy dogs are trained in obedience and specialty cues and are used in a work setting under the direction of a handler. Facility dogs are trained to motivate, inspire, and enhance the lives of their clients by reducing anxiety and easing the potential effects of traumatic events. A facility dog, with appropriate training may take on additional roles in the public as a therapy dog. At the police department, a therapy dog would be available for all types of incidents, from public engagement to trauma-informed response (i.e. death notifications, child forensic interviews, etc). The police officer handler would continue to perform their core job functions, bringing with him/her the benefits of a therapy dog. The addition of such a dog at the police department would complement other dog programs in the City as a whole, demonstrating our commitment to employee wellness and service to the public.

The police department has been researching the feasibility of such a program for years, and through many conversations has only heard positive things about the implementation within a police department. Following on the excitement created by City staff with Millie (Bernese Mountain Dog/City Hall) and Gus (Labrador Retriever/Fire Department), the police department is seeking acquisition and placement of a dog with a Police Department staff member.

The police department has obtained commitment from the Rüdiger Foundation for assistance in startup funding, including acquisition, equipment, and training. The Police Department, through its existing budgeted would absorb any on-going ancillary costs, pursuant to the resolution/policy mentioned above. Additionally, the police department will adopt a police-specific policy based on best practices in the law enforcement profession.

**Council Goals/Objectives:** The execution of this action attempts to achieve Strategic Goal #1 - Exceptional Public Safety

**Fiscal Impact:** Acquisition, outfitting, and training to be donated by the Rüdiger Foundation. Adequate funding is allocated and appropriated in the FY23/24 Police Department Budget for other costs, including vehicle safety equipment.

**Funds Available:** Yes

**Account #:** 100-201

**Reviewed by:** Tim Kiser, City Manager