



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

MEETING DATE: 02/01/2021

AGENDA ITEM: 3. Police K-9 SEARCH & RESCUE DRUG INTERDICTION

FROM: Russ Johnson, Chief of Police

The Salida Police Department has many tools that help us do our jobs. We are always looking at ways to be more proficient while incorporating community trust and support. Over the last five years, we have had a Police K-9 program in our long-term plans. The last Salida Police Department K-9 program ended in 2006. A K-9 program is not something you can just pick up and start doing if you want an effective program. It requires the right officer and the right K-9.

Over the last two years, we have been actively working on getting those two pieces in place. We have spoken with several companies who train and sell police K-9's. We have also looked into several different grant options. What we have found with the grant options is that they require you to get specific K-9's from specific companies, and they typically only match your funding. This limits our ability to find the right K-9 for our community.

While doing this search, we found Complete Canine Training in Brighton, Colorado. We have been speaking exclusively with them for the past several months. We have done extensive research about them and have found them to be exactly what we have been looking for. What we were specifically looking for was a K-9 that could do Search and Rescue and Drug Interdiction, all while being a friendly asset to the PD and community. We were looking for the friendliest, non-aggressive police dog we could find. We finally found Sarge. Sarge is a Dutch Shepard that is extremely friendly and hard working. We have had him down to Salida with Complete Canine Solutions and he was more than what I expected. He demonstrated his tracking skills and drug sniffing abilities, but immediately ran up to us when he was done, just to say hi. Sarge will definitely assist us with those tasks. However, when he is not working, Sarge will also serve as a positive community relations asset for the PD.

We are in a community that loves dogs and Sarge will definitely be a big part of the community. We intend of having him attend community functions, meet with kids, have live demonstrations of what he does and just be part of our town.

As for having the right officer, it takes someone who is willing to put in the extra work. There is a lot of training that goes into having a working K-9. There will also be callouts and multiple community events to attend. Officer Coscarella is a local Salida Officer that has been with us for the last few years. He has a passion for this work and had put in a lot of time with all the research and community outreach he has done. He is definitely the right Officer for the job, and we have a community that is very supportive of this endeavor. We will cover all the details in our presentation and are excited to discuss this opportunity with Council.

Chief Russell Johnson