City of WHITEWATER	Finance Committee Agenda Item
Meeting Date:	10/19/2026
Agenda Item:	K9 Program Request
Staff Contact (name, email, phone):	Dan Meyer dmeyer@whitewater-wi.gov 262-473-1371

BACKGROUND
(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

The Whitewater Police Department is requesting to reintroduce the K9 program. WPD has had three K9s previously (Boomer, Russo and Tilla), and the current drug trends and service needs justify reintroducing the program. There is a total of $22,944.38 in K9 donations available to use for this purpose. These funds were designated specifically for the K9 unit and as such are only able to be used for a K9 program. The following information will state the reasoning for the program, anticipated start-up costs in 2026, and anticipated ongoing year-over-year costs of the program.

The primary benefits of a dual purpose K9 unit are tracking, apprehension of dangerous criminals, and drug interdiction. The intent would be to utilize a K9 trained in alerting to illicit drugs other than marijuana which will ensure that the K9 is still able to work if marijuana is legalized in Wisconsin. WPD staff responded to a total of three overdose deaths in 2026. This recently led to the arrest of an individual in Madison for 1st degree reckless homicide, with the suspect found to be in possession of a significant amount of fentanyl, cocaine base and cocaine.

Having a K9 immediately available to our staff provides us with a greater ability to proactively find drugs in our community, create leads for drug investigations, and ultimately reduce the inflow of drugs to Whitewater due to increased enforcement. Wisconsin case law now prohibits officers from lengthening the time of a traffic stop for even a second for a K9 sniff without reasonable suspicion that drugs are present in the vehicle. This means that proactive K9 sniffs are almost impossible unless we have a K9 on patrol in our city where they are immediately available to assist in the time it takes to complete the required tasks of a traffic stop. Our partnership with the Whitewater Unified School District also continues to evolve, leading to increasing requests for K9 sniffs, which we currently rely entirely on outside agencies to provide. Finally, the K9 program has also historically been an excellent tool for recruitment and retention.

The fact that WPD has had a K9 program previously provides significant benefits. Our former policy and procedures will easily be refreshed and rolled out. Certain equipment such as our bite suit will still be able to be used for training. Additionally, the previously established K9 donation fund has also remained intact as donors intended the financial gifts to be used specifically for a K9 program. The K9 fund balance is currently $22,944.38 which would offset a large amount of the startup costs. The attached spreadsheet provides a detailed accounting of anticipated startup and ongoing costs for the K9 program which will be summarized below.

Startup Costs

The startup costs include two primary one-time costs – K9 purchase/training and K9 Squad outfitting. It is recommended that the cost of K9 purchase/training be paid for with the balance of the K9 fund to offset the bulk of the cost, and that K9 squad outfitting be paid for with unspent funds in the squad car sinking fund.

K9 Purchase/Training

K9 purchase/training includes the cost of purchasing the K9, initial outfitting of a crate and bedding, as well as handler training and fuel costs. The costs of K9 purchase/training are straightforward with fairly set costs. A variety of quotes were obtained for K9 providers/trainers, with the following being the recommended option:

- **Total Cost: $27,838.52** (utilizing F.M. K9 out of Berrien Center, MI)

Assuming the K9 donation fund (current balance: $22,944.38) is utilized for this purpose, the balance would be $4,894.14 which is an amount that the PD budget can absorb.

K9 Squad Outfitting

K9 squad outfitting includes the cost of outfitting a squad car for a K9 as there is very specific equipment needed to ensure the safety of the dog. Due to the cost associated with purchasing and outfitting a new squad, our plan is to outfit an existing vehicle (a current low-mileage Tahoe in the fleet currently assigned to either a Detective or Captain) for a K9.

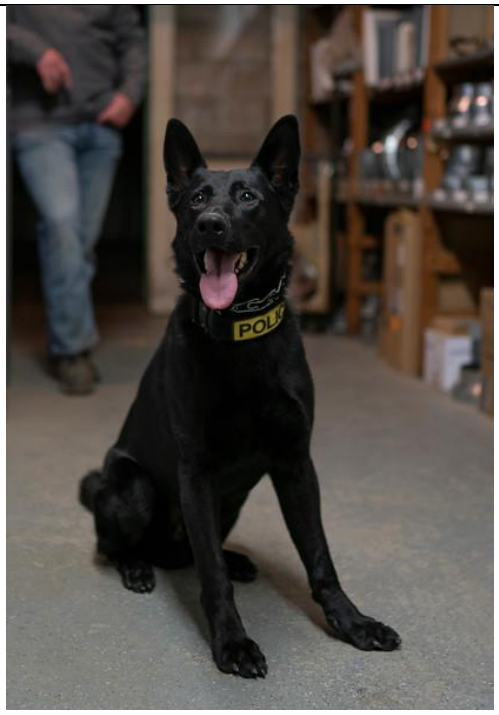
- **Total Cost: $20,369.35**

This cost could be paid using unspent funds in the sinking squad fund. A total of $164,774 was allocated to that fund for 2027, but approximately $37,000 will be unspent due to purchasing a Ford Transit van rather than a fully outfitted Chevy Tahoe patrol vehicle. That approximately $37,000 balance will cover the costs of outfitting the K9 squad.

Ongoing Annual K9 Operating Costs beginning in 2027

The annual K9 program cost is conservatively estimated to be approximately $8,120.

The ongoing annual costs of operating a K9 program include the estimated ongoing costs to keep the program functioning and would become a part of the PD's annual line-item budget in 2027 and beyond. The specific costs associated include bedding, bowls, dog toys, dog food, veterinary costs, boarding, K9 record keeping software, handler training meals, and handler overtime cost estimates. The annual K9 program cost is conservatively estimated to be approximately $8,120. However, we believe the actual costs will be significantly lower as food and veterinary services have historically been donated to the K9 program, and we have received verbal confirmation that those items will be donated now and into the future.



PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS
(Dates, committees, action taken)

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT
(If none, state N/A)

Startup costs:

$27,838.52. However, this is reduced to **$4,894.14** if the K9 donation fund is utilized for the purchase. The cost of squad changeover (**$20,369.35**) will not impact the budget as the balance in the squad sinking fund will cover the cost.

2027 and subsequent years' cost:

Approximately $8,120 per year

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend moving forward with either 2026 startup option to get the K9 program functional again.

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED
(If none, state N/A)

1. K9 Costs Spreadsheet