



CITY COUNCIL
Alma Hernandez, Mayor
Princess Washington, Mayor Pro-Tem
Jenalee Dawson
Marlon L. Osum
Amit Pal

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

First and Third Tuesday
Every Month

CITY OF SUISUN CITY

701 Civic Center Blvd.
Suisun City, California 94585
Incorporated October 9, 1868

August 27, 2024

Wayne B. Goodman, Foreperson
2023-24 Solano County Civil Grand Jury
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

RE: Grand Jury Report from the Solano County Grand Jury for 2023-2024 titled: **Solano County Canine Officer Training, Handling & End of Career Policies June 21, 2024**

Dear Foreperson Goodman

The City of Suisun City wishes to thank the members of the Solano County Grand Jury for their report and bringing this to our attention. Staff has reviewed the findings and recommendations which are applicable to Suisun City and submitted the response to the City Council for approval.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS by Suisun City, City Council:

FINDING 1 – *On-going in-service training with canines and canine handlers is currently taking place, but not consistent across all agencies throughout the County. Canine pre-deployment training has generally been through a third party outside of the law enforcement agency. In the past, pre-deployment training practices had been a harsh environment for the canine. Occasionally severe discipline was used to train the canine causing the canine a high level of stress during and after the training period.*

Respondent has no current Solano County Agency canine experience and cannot agree or disagree with finding.

RECOMMENDATION 1 – *Use an outside agency for pre-deployment training only if the training facility and trainers are adhering to Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) training.*

Recommendation would appear to be a best practice followed if Suisun City were to employ canine teams moving forward.

DEPARTMENTS: AREA CODE (707)

ADMINISTRATION 421-7300 ■ DEVELOPMENT SERVICES 421-7335 ■ BUILDING 421-7310 ■ FINANCE 421-7320
FIRE 425-9133 ■ RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES 421-7200 ■ POLICE 421-7373 ■ PUBLIC WORKS 421-7340
SUCCESSOR AGENCY 421-7309 FAX 421-7366

FINDING 2 – *While there is a retirement plan for the Patrol Officers, there is no standard Canine Officers retirement plan available. This leaves the canine handler to cover all medical costs which may include injuries that occurred while in service.*

Respondent body has no current Solano County Agency canine experience and cannot agree or disagree with finding.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – *Provide all retired Canine Officers with medical insurance coverage at time of retirement, similar to that of the Patrol Officers. Medical coverage must cover both the scheduled routine medical issues and emergency medical services if ever needed. A meal allowance must also be in place for all retired Canine Officers.*

Create a standardized procedure in place for handling of retired Canine Officers until end of life. In the placement of a retiring Canine Officer the current handler should be given first choice. In the event that they cannot take on that role, there needs to be a process in place for continued care.

Recommendation would appear to be both an MOU and city policy issue to be reviewed by all stakeholders and Council Members.

FINDING 3 – *Not all law enforcement agencies within the county have Canine Officers. The law enforcement agencies that do see multiple benefits of having the Canine Officers on staff. In some cases, an increase in non-confrontational apprehensions is as much as ten times over those of a non-Canine Team.*

Respondent body agrees with the finding that not all agencies have canine officers, as Suisun City PD does not have any. Respondent body is not a subject matter expert in this field and would need to have the appropriate staff review this topic and make recommendations should this become a discussion appropriate for the Suisun City, City Council.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – *Increase Canine Officer staffing throughout the County. All law enforcement agencies should have at least one Canine Officer per shift. For the larger agencies, more Canine Officers may be needed to cover all needed situations and areas. Canine Officer/population ratio should be at least one Canine Officer per 15,000 population.*

Respondent body is not a subject matter expert in this field and would need to have the appropriate staff review this finding and make recommendations should this become a discussion appropriate for the Suisun City, City Council.

FINDING 4 – *There are only a few Peer Support Canines available to assist in emotional and behavioral support within a few agencies. Peer Support Canines play an important role in monitoring and recognizing the emotional and behavioral needs within high stress events and are able to soothe and support through their calming and caring personalities.*

Respondent body agrees with the finding and sees the value that emotional support animals can have after high stress events.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – *Increase Peer Support Canine staffing. All law enforcement agencies need to have at least one Peer Support Canine per shift.*

Respondent body is not a subject matter expert in this field and would need to have the appropriate staff review this topic and make recommendations should this become a discussion appropriate for the Suisun City, City Council.

FINDING 5 – *Canine activity and incident tracking throughout the county differs between agencies. Although being tracked, the agencies have adopted their own manner of tracking and documenting. This allows the media to exploit only the rare aggressive activities with little exposure to the positive side of the Canine Officer's contribution.*

Respondent body has no current Solano County Agency canine experience and cannot agree or disagree with finding.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – *Activity and incident tracking within the county for Canine Teams need to be consistent. Have Canine Team activity reports readily available to the public.*

Respondent body believes consistency in activity reports would be helpful in order to increase transparency and understanding of canine activity.

FINDING 6 – *Canine Officers no longer engage in crowd control, as having canines in large crowds overstressed the Canine Officer, causing confusion.*

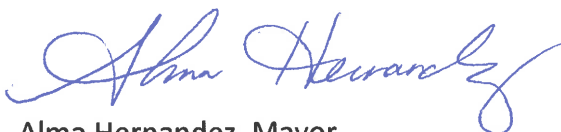
Respondent body has no current Solano County canine experience and cannot agree or disagree with finding.

RECOMMENDATION 6 – *Continue using the Canine Officers only in patrol, detection and search and rescue.*

Respondent body believes this would be a best practice with regard to canine officer deployment that would also be discussed and presented by staff should Suisun City be in a position to employ canines at a future date.

I hope this response adequately addresses, the findings and recommendations made by the Grand Jury. Please feel free to contact me at ahernandez@suisun.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Alma Hernandez, Mayor
City of Suisun City