

## **Safety Health & Service Committee Meeting**

### **Monday, April 26, 2004**

The Safety Health and Service Committee met in council chambers at 7:00 P.M. to discuss a request from Police Chief Jeff Urban for the approval of a second canine unit in the police department. Present at the meeting were committee members Darrin Lautenschleger and Chairman Sam Hitchcock. Guests presents were Chief Jeff Urban, Councilwoman Sandy Cox, Councilman Bill Ellwood, Safety Director Greg Popham, Mayor Ron Brodzinski., Citizen Ella Slough and the Media.

Chairman Hitchcock asked Chief Urban to explain the need for a second canine unit to those present and the justification. Urban explained that the first canine unit has worked very well as far as drug interdiction and keeping officers from being injured. He reminded committee members that there is very little cost to the city involved to the canine with the food and veterinarian care being donated. He said the only cost factor would be that the handler is granted one extra day off a pay period to compensate for the care of the dog. He said they already have the training supplies and equipment available from the first canine unit and also have a car, car 21, that they have been holding back to use in the event a second canine is approved. The fund balance from the original money donated stands at \$19,470.00 out of which the second canine would be purchased and the handling officer would receive a four-week training. Greg Popham said that the cost of canine and training for the first dog and handler totaled about \$6,000.00. Urban explained that the first dog cost \$5,000.00 and the second was only going to cost \$3,800.00.

Urban said that Randy Williamson and his canine are assigned to the afternoon shift and that he would assign the second canine & handler to the midnight shift which would save overtime from having to call Randy out when the needed a dog on midnights. He also said that with the current hiring freeze that Officer Dave Finley is expected to retire this year and that would leave the midnight shift short. He said having a canine unit on midnights would be an added safety factor.

Darrin Lautenschleger asked how a handler would be chosen and Urban said that he would post qualifications and shift indicated and then a signup would be accepted for those officers interested in applying for the position. He said he would choose from that list with the assistance of Williamson.

Sandy Cox asked what percentage of the officer's time would be with the dog. Williamson stated that every time he is out the canine is with him. Sandy expressed concern that we were supplying canine service for neighboring departments without being paid for the service by the other jurisdictions. Urban explained that with or without the dog officers respond to neighboring departments through a mutual aid pact and that this is only done with available manpower. So, anytime the dog would be used in another jurisdiction it would already be on duty and available.

There was some further limited discussion regarding the issue and after all questions were answered Darrin Lautenschleger made a motion to recommend the second canine to full council. Hitchcock seconded and both voted in the affirmative. Motion passed.

At 7:22 P.M., with no further business to consider, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sam R. Hitchcock, Chairman  
SAFETY, HEALTH & SERVICE COMMITTEE  
CITY OF NEW PHILADELPHIA