



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 8c

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting January 4, 2022

DATE: October 21, 2021

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Hannah Minnehan, Patrol Commander

SUBJECT: Authorization for Conveyance of a Retired Port-Owned K9 to its Handler

Amount of this request: \$0.00

Total estimated project cost: \$0.00

ACTION REQUESTED

Request Commission authorization for the Executive Director to convey a Port-owned K9 to its handler.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 14, 2021, the Port of Seattle Commission approved Resolution 3797 which authorized the Executive Director to sell and convey port personal property in 2022 in accordance with RCW 53.08.090 with a value not greater than \$21,000. Port Policy AC-13 restricts Port-owned property from being conveyed to Port employees unless approved by the Commission. In this case, there is basis for an exception as explained in the Justification section and conveyances of K9s to their handlers is a standard industry practice. The Executive Director will work to develop a more permanent process for Commission consideration and approval in the near future. In the case of K9 Ty and conveyance to his handler, time is of the essence given the circumstances and the veterinarian medical assessment and recommendation.

Allowing the Port to retire its canines in this manner is modeled after the TSA canine retirement process. The Port of Seattle purchased its first Air Scent Canines in 2017 and this is the first time the Port will be retiring one of its canines. All previous canine retirements were TSA-owned and followed their retirement process.

JUSTIFICATION

The typical working life of a canine ranges widely, mostly dependent on the canine's health, and can range anywhere from 1-10 years. Once a canine is eligible to retire, organizations including the TSA offer the first right of refusal to the current handler. If that handler declines, the dog is offered to the previous handler and so forth. If no one wants to adopt the canine, it is returned to the vendor or adopted to friends and/or co-workers.

Meeting Date: January 4, 2022

Retirement eligibility of a canine is determined by several factors which can include but is not limited to age, medical health, cost, and/or behavior. Required paperwork includes a letter from the veterinarian, official department request and hold harmless documentation.

Port Policy AC-13 contains a provision that informs of the best approach to enable transfer of a retired Port Police service K9 to its handler. AC-13 paragraph .05 states that: “Surplus property must not be sold/transferred to any Port Commissioner or Port employee or to members of their immediate families unless specific approval of the Port Commission is obtained. For example, a retiring police officer with at least five years of service will be provided the officer’s assigned service weapon along with a display box as authorized by the Commission via the provision of a collective bargaining agreement.”

At this time, we are seeking authorization for Commander Hannah Minnehan’s K9 Ty (M674) to be retired from active duty as an explosive detection canine. Commander Minnehan has promoted out of the unit and will not be assigned a canine in her new capacity. K9 Ty is approximately seven years of age and it would not be cost effective in re-assigning him to another active handler. He suffers from severe anxiety, documented by two veterinarians, making his re-assignment to another handler cost prohibitive. His re-assignment would require intensive re-training and would most likely not yield the result needed. His handler has agreed to adopt him and has completed the Release of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement for Retired Service Animals.

Schedule

Upon approval of authorization by the Commission, the retirement of K9 Ty will commence immediately.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1 – Board K9 Ty at a local vet hospital that provides 24-hour care.

Cost Implications:

Pros:

- (1) Temporary holding area for the K9. Cost to board only, per calendar day= \$38.00, monthly= \$1140.00

Cons:

- (1) K9 Ty has a documented record of suffering from stress and anxiety from being boarded. He contracted two different diseases while being boarded which required additional treatment and medication resulting in a significant monetary expenditure. Additionally, K9 Ty’s stress was so extreme, in addition to the 2 illnesses and colitis, he also had significant weight loss, losing a total of 5 pounds in 3 days.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Meeting Date: January 4, 2022

Alternative 2 – Reassignment to a new active handler in the program.

Pros:

- (1) Port would not incur cost of K9 boarding.

Cons:

- (1) See canine health issues listed above.
- (2) Due to K9 Ty's extreme anxiety reassigning him to a new active handler would not be conducive to the overall mission. Learning the basic techniques of dog handling as a 'green' handler while simultaneously having to deal with multiple and very difficult behavior issues would be both cost prohibitive as well as laborious and burdensome. The Port would be investing a lot of time and money into a team that has a small chance of success.
- (3) In addition to K9 Ty's behavior issues, his age also makes it cost prohibitive to invest in a team that will only be able to reciprocate a small amount of time back into the program.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 3 – Retire and release all interest of K9 Ty and allow for his handler to adopt him.

Cost Implications: None.

Pros:

- (1) The Port will not be liable for any cost or care for the K9.
- (2) K9 Ty will be adopted his former handler and assume all costs associated with his care and provide a healthy and safe home for the dog. His behavioral issues would continue to be addressed and monitored.

Cons:

- (1) None.

This is the recommended alternative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The department is not requesting any funds for this authorization.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

- (1) Retirement Recommendation Letter from primary veterinarian
- (2) POSPD Hold Harmless Agreement

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

None