


<p><b>Belmont Police Department</b></p>  <p>460 Concord Ave Belmont, Ma 02478</p>	<i><b>PROPOSAL</b></i>	
	To:	Liz and Graham Allison
	From:	James MacIsaac, Police Chief
	Date:	July 21, 2023
	Subject:	Service Dog

### **OBJECTIVE:**

The addition of a community comfort dog from the Belmont Police Department will provide an excellent opportunity for positive and meaningful engagements with the local community. This endeavor is designed to cultivate a sense of unity and establish open lines of communication between Belmont residents and our dedicated officers. Additionally, apart from its contributions to the community, the dog will also offer support to our officers and their families during challenging times, resulting in a lasting positive influence on our work environment.

The implementation of comfort animals for "well-being" visits in the workplace has been extensively studied and proven to enhance employee morale, satisfaction, and overall productivity. Numerous research studies consistently show that even brief interactions with animals can significantly reduce stress levels. Furthermore, research suggests that having animals present in the workplace often facilitates more productive interactions among colleagues, fosters higher levels of trust, and encourages effective collaboration. By introducing a community comfort dog, we are taking an innovative approach to improve the overall well-being and performance of our valued team members.

### **GOALS:**

- Create a bond with BPD and the community.
- Improve our police Public Relations image.
- Comfort the community in high stress situations.
- Reduce stress among officers.
- Be on the cutting edge of new programs for police departments nationally.
- Create a stronger connection with the different populations in the community.
- Continue a positive image of the Belmont Police Department in the community's eyes.
- Break down barriers with the public and be more approachable.

### **RESEARCH:**

The concept of a police department comfort dog is a relatively new approach to public relations for a department and its community. The research shows that the use of a comfort dog helps to reduce stress and anxiety of the officers within the department as well as support officers and victims/witnesses. The dog opens doors throughout the community that allows the department to establish outreach events/programs that break down the tough exteriors/barriers plagued by stereotypical views of a police department. Several departments are using these dogs to improve their public relations and impact on their community.

**BENEFITS:**

- Physical – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses
- Social – a visit with a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, promotes greater self-esteem and well-being, and focused interaction with others
- Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem solving and game playing
- Emotional – an adorable four-legged visitor improves self-esteem, acceptance from others, and lifts mood often provoking laughter
- Environmental – a dog in a facility decreases the feeling of a sterile environment, lifts mood and this continues after visit
- Community- a dog allows the department to assist in community development of programs

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

The comfort dog would continue to open doors for partnerships and programs with BPD. There are so many ways to utilize and grow this program and the partners involved. Finally, with a social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) we can build a following and a strong community involvement. By following the dog throughout his/her adventures, there can be times posted to meet the dog and even set-up events. This gives a strong public image and a way to stay connected with the community.

**STARTUP EXPENSES –YEAR ONE:**

<b>Purchase of Dog</b>				\$2,600.00
<i>*Boonfield Labs- Recommended by Middlesex DA</i>				
<b>Veterinary</b>				\$1,200.00
<b>Grooming (Annual Cost)</b>				\$700.00
<i>*every 6 weeks</i>				
<b>Training</b>				\$1,000.00
<i>*Hudson K9 Training Center-Recommended by</i>				
<i>the LE Liaison for Boonfield Labs.</i>				
<b>Overtime for Training</b>				\$1,500.00
<b>Food</b>				\$1,000.00
<b>Collar</b>				\$25.00
<b>Leashes</b>				\$100.00
<b>Dog Beds</b>				\$100.00
<b>Toys, Treats, Supplies</b>				\$250.00
<b>K9 Police Vehicle</b>				<u>\$0.00</u>
<i>*Fortunately we have a spare fully equipped K9 Vehicle</i>				
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,525.00</b>

**FUTURE FUNDING FOR THE COMFORT DOG PROGRAM:**

Future funding for this program will be built into the police department operating budget much the same way we budget for our Patrol Dog. The costs to maintaining this program are relatively low but the benefits are immense.