



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2021-0506, **Version:** 1

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### Title

The Orland Park Police Department's Therapy Dog Program

### History

The men and women of the Orland Park Police Department are its greatest asset. Sworn officers and tele-communicators are oftentimes on the front lines of critical incidents and witness situations that result in a high degree of stress and anxiety following traumatic events. Additionally, victims, in particular children, are highly susceptible to depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from abuse or neglect. Recent studies, (Lass-Hennemann, J., Schafer, S. K., Romer, S., Holz, E., Streb, M., & Michael T. (2018). Therapy dogs as a crisis intervention after traumatic events? and Kimioka, H., Okada, S., Tsutani, K., Hyuntae, P., Okuizumi, H., Handa, S., Oshio, T., Park, S., Kitayuguchi, J., Abe, T., Honda, T., & Mutoh, Y. (2014). Effectiveness of animal assisted therapy: A systematic review of randomized controlled trials), have shown Animal-Assisted Interventions were able reduce stress and anxiety following critical incidents.

Based on empirical evidence and the aforementioned recent studies, the Police Department is seeking authorization to implement a therapy dog program that will assist employees and victims after a critical/traumatic event. Furthermore, the therapy dog would be available for community and school events.

The Brevard County Sheriff's Office of Cocoa, Florida has a therapy dog training program whereupon a selected member of the Orland Park Police Department will be trained with an adopted therapy dog. Both the training and the adopted dog are free to the Orland Park Police Department. Furthermore, the selected therapy dogs receive basic obedience training from county sentenced inmates and advanced training is performed with a K9 specialist. All adopted therapy dogs come from a county run "No Kill" shelter. An assigned non-sworn member of the Orland Park Police Department will enroll in a forty (40) hour training program with the Brevard County Sheriff's Office in mid-September of 2021. Once the handler and dog are successfully certified through the week long training program, both will return to Orland Park.

On July 19, 2021, this item was reviewed by the Committee of the Whole and referred to the Board for approval.

### Financial Impact

The cost associated with the implementation of the program is the salary of the attendee, travel, lodging and food expenses, coupled with the care and feeding of the adopted therapy dog. The Orland Park Law Enforcement Organization has pledged a monetary donation of \$5,000.00 to cover the costs of the program.

**Recommended Action/Motion**

I move to approve the creation and implementation of the Orland Park Police Department's Therapy Dog Program for staff and citizens.