

***Borough of Greencastle  
Commonwealth of  
Pennsylvania***

***Mayor's Report  
K-9's Future  
Greencastle Police Dept.***

***Presented March 5, 2018***

***By: Ben Thomas, Jr.***

**THE MAYOR'S PLAN TO RE-INVENT A GREENCASTLE, PENNSYLVANIA POLICE  
FORCE FUTURE CANINE (K-9) PROGRAM  
Presented to Council and the Community March 5, 2018**

INTRODUCTION: As the elected Mayor of the Borough of Greencastle, Pennsylvania, in consultation with Police Chief John Phillippy, and receipt of public comments, I am pleased to present this holistic review of the past and possible future K-9 service to assure citizens, visitors, emergency services providers, and police officers' safety with new funding opportunities and present the factual information and costs that the members of Council and members of the greater Greencastle community deserve. If there's a time in our society for such a continued program, it is now, however, it must be a program that is affordable to our citizens with a team approach to funding. A trained canine dog performs many vital services as was the case with Greencastle's first canine, Rony. Many specialty, life-saving, activities that human police officers are not capable of are real. Such a program is an investment for the greater community.

THE MAYOR'S RESPONSIBILITY: As stated in the Pennsylvania Borough Code, Section 1123. "The mayor shall have full charge and control of the chief of police and police force." This would include a K-9 Program as part of the police force. The Council, however, approves budgets. This is the checks and balance of Borough Government in Pennsylvania, again as authorized by Pennsylvania Law.

I appreciate the time spent over the past month of the Council's Public Safety Committee and Administration / Finance Committee. Each Committee looked through a separate window; one being public safety; the other the financial side and beyond. I thank-them for listening and reading from my input. Their reports shall be forthcoming.

**HISTORY:**

K-9 Rony was on duty for 8 years, 4 months and 20 days.

K9 Rony was deployed on his very first day of work for an open door at a residence located on Starlight Drive in Greencastle. The rear door to the residence was open. Since then, Rony searched 249 buildings. (This number includes the many buildings located in the Pocono search for the sniper that killed a Pa. State Police Trooper and seriously wounded another).

He performed 112 demonstrations, visited Head Start learning classrooms 18 times, visited the Elementary School and Primary school in Greencastle 34 times and performed at the end of the year assembly 6 times. Rony attended various school athletic functions as well as attended the yearly homecoming dances (at the High School's request) 7 times.

K9 Rony sniffed 1677 vehicles on duty while the number of vehicles sniffed in training was well over 10,000. Rony was trained to detect Marijuana, Heroin, Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Ecstasy, and Methamphetamines.

K9 Rony tracked suspects, lost people or elderly a total of 122 times, performed area searches for evidence a total of 44 times, and assisted in 317 arrests.

## SERVICES AND TRAINING:

Shop-N-Save provided all food for the K9 at no cost.

Greencastle Veterinary Hospital provided all vet care (visits, heartworm, flea/tic, etc.) at no cost.

The monthly mandatory patrol and narcotics training was provided by the Maryland Dept. of Corrections at no cost to the borough. Previous training through Castle's K9 was \$75 per training session, \$150 per month.

Any tug toy/treats bought were bought at 50% off at the Farmers Union Co-op in Greencastle.

The K9 vehicle was painted for free at Hicks Chevrolet.

The K9 vehicle was decaled for free at Fast Signs.

Donations throughout the years included the Lionesses. They purchased the bite suit and a portable GPS that was used for tracking. Costs of both of these items was approx. \$2000.

Donations from the public were made throughout the 8 years.

Throughout the time of Rony's career, Officer Russell personally invested his own funding in the program. These were not reimbursed nor was there a request for reimbursement. Costs included setting up his personal residence to house the K-9 along with countless hours of time spent training (many training opportunities Officer Russell attended on his own time, not asking to be reimbursed), responding off duty to officers needing K9 assistance without requests for compensation and replacement items needed that had simply worn out.

If a K9 program was to continue, all of the benefits we have enjoyed would continue with a Master K-9 Handler being Officer Keith Russell.

## PROGRAM BENEFITS (Chief Phillippy):

- Officer Safety- Because of the amount of time we work alone, the K9 handler always has a back-up with him.
- Use for Drug Interdiction- Our own Governor has recognized a "drug epidemic".
- Drug Prevention- K9 presence in the schools has a preventive aspect as well when it comes to drug use.
- Officer Safety- Not the Handler but every officer on an incident scene is safer when K9 is present.
- Man Tracking- K9 successfully track suspects and missing persons.
- Evidence recovery- K9 can successfully locate abandoned evidence that may be missed in a conventional search in open areas.
- Community relations- With the distance between law enforcement and the public we (GPD) do all we can to keep that gap at a minimum. K9 is frequently an ice breaker in conversations with the public, particularly with youth
- Community United- I struggle to think of many things in the community which united the community more than the K9 program. The Borough may have "owned" the K9, Officer

Russell may have “handled” him but Rony was truly the Communities dog. It should be recognized that a united community is a stronger community.

- “Good Neighbors”- Greencastle PD receives far more assistance to other agencies than we render in return simply because of the number of people we have on duty. K9 is one way we can make up some of that difference when rendering assistance.
- A K9’s greatest value is in the intangibles. What is the value of the Use of Force that didn’t happen? What is the value of the Officer who didn’t get hurt...or killed? A single lawsuit in this arena can cost hundreds of thousands, not that the dollars should matter over the human factor.

In summary K9 is literally a law enforcement tool that no other, or combination of tools can replace.

#### K-9 HANDLER:

Officer Keith Russell is a United States Navy veteran having served and deployed for Operation Desert Shield/ Desert Storm.

After military service he enrolled in the police academy (at his own expense) and graduated with honors. After Graduating he was employed as a police officer in two municipalities just on the outskirts of the city of Pittsburgh. He worked as an uncover officer, patrol officer and K9 Handler.

He was recruited as an undercover drug agent successfully for years, all over the United States. Marriage and a child on the way changed that career path. Officer Russel was employment in the Borough of Greencastle as a patrol officer. July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, K9 Officer Rony and his Handler, Officer Russell, were a certified team. The community immediately bonded with this Program.

K9 Rony was able to perform life-saving duties for Officer Russell and other officers’ safety and even kept suspects safe by just being there. Because of K9 Rony, the lone Handler was able to detain four individuals until back-up arrived (15 minutes later). All of the suspects stated that they would have run but did not want to get bit and complied with the officer’s orders. Many times Rony has saved the officer from going hands-on with a suspect because of his presence. By this very act, he has saved the officer from potentially being injured and saved the borough untold dollars by having to submit worker’s compensation injury claims.

One such incident involved a call for a man with a gun walking on N. Carlisle St. K-9 Officer Rony located the weapon that was stashed inside a large bush in Jerome King Playground. Imagine if the bad guy left that and a child playing retrieved it.

While at a monthly training, along with a dozen other K9 teams, The former Chief of Hancock, MD. Police Department received a call for a lost child with special needs. Instead of using his own dog to track the child, he asked Officer Russell and Rony to handle the track. He had access to a dozen other dogs that were there but chose to ask us.

One of the competitions attended (at Officer Russell’s own cost), K9 Rony out performed dog teams from many agencies. They were awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place in a competition outside of D.C. where they placed better than dog teams from the FBI, CIA and many other agencies such as Montgomery County Police, MD. At this particular event, there were over 100 dog teams

competing. Officer Russell sat next to the Director of the CIA at an awards banquet. Officer Russell was personally congratulated by the CIA Director on beating his dog teams.

Having Rony meant that the general public would approach and talk with the Officer where they otherwise wouldn't be inclined to do so. Rony was able to be petted and loved by anyone the handler said was ok, all while being on duty and could flip his switch to do what needed to be done at a moment's notice. In today's current climate of contention and distain for police I feel we as a department are extremely fortunate to have the support and respect from the community.

**To Officer Keith Russell and your Family; I THANK-YOU for your service, your dedication, your expertise, and your sacrifice as the K-9 Handler and the Family Support on behalf of the citizens of the greater Greencastle, Pennsylvania community.**

LAW ENFORCEMENT MUTUAL AID: The Pennsylvania Law Enforcement System of Mutual Aid: Pennsylvania has 2,562 municipalities of boroughs, townships, and cities. There are approximately 1,200 police departments in the Commonwealth. The Pa. State Police was formed in 1905 to serve rural Pennsylvanians. Police officers rely on "mutual aid" from neighboring departments and Pa. State Police for assistance due to limited staffing and specialized police services. This could be motor vehicle crash re-construction teams, SWAT (tactical units), Forensics and criminal investigation personnel, and K-9 dogs and their handlers. All of these specialties require constant training. Greencastle relies on all of these mutual aid law enforcement services when requested that also includes additional personnel to back-up our officers who often work alone. They typically come from Waynesboro, Mercersburg, and Pa. State Police. Our officers, in turn, respond to assist them. We are not the lead agency or the investigative agency when providing mutual aid law enforcement assistance. The time involved is typically very limited. We receive far more assistance than we provide. A K-9 program helps balance this mutual aid assistance.

**2018 GENERAL FUND BUDGET REVIEW AND INFORMATION FOR CONSIDERATION OF A FUTURE K-9 PROGRAM:**

- The Police section of the budget (410.) is \$669,972. The General Fund Budget is \$1,840,423.
- Police services are provided 24/7.

In analyzing the costs of a future K-9 and Handler Program please realize that there are fixed costs with the Officer whether or not they perform K-9 duties. Examples include individual health care; family health care (40% deductible in 2018); life insurance; worker's compensation insurance; municipal pension contribution; vacation; sick leave; general expenses. To add these into the officer's hourly wage for K-9 would unfairly inflate expenses that are encumbered with or without the services of a well-trained dog and handler. So...what are the projected K-9 and Handler expenses moving forward:

**START-UP COSTS:**

<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Service / Explanation</b>	<b>Amount:</b>	
Purchase new K-9 /	This includes recruitment of the right dog	\$14,000	

Training	and Police Officer (Handler) intense training. Training coordination for an experienced handler is three to four weeks.		
Wage expense	While the Officer (Handler) is away in training (4 weeks)	\$3,872	
Vehicle fuel / miscellaneous expenses	Driving a police vehicle to / from the training site.	\$400	
Police coverage for the Handler's open shifts	Fill with part-time officers	\$3,200	
	<b>Start-up costs:</b>	<b>\$21,472</b>	
	<b>ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS:</b>		
Special K-9 Insurance	Bite liability coverage / Misc. expenses	\$1,400	
Proficiency training (up to 24 hrs. per month at no costs)	This training is important for proficiency, consistency, and assurance of a high level of K-9 - Handler service.	\$6,970 (16 hrs. per month @ \$4,646)	
K-9 Maintenance	This includes 3.5 hours per week time off as is a part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (reserved)	\$4,404	
Shift replacement for training and maintenance time-off	These times are primarily filled with Officers (part-time). If the Chief fills any of these periods there are no additional wage costs. Note: There is already an hourly shift cost operating police services 24 hours a day.	\$9,400	
K-9 Vehicle	The 2004 Chevy Tahoe is fully depreciated and kept in good condition as a specific, officer assigned vehicle. The estimated sale value is \$2,500. A vehicle is already used by the Officer so daily costs are encumbered. Extra costs include routine service and Pa. inspection. Insurance is included in the Borough's fleet of vehicles so costs are minimal.	\$500	
	<b>Annual costs already in the 2018 General Fund Budget:</b>	<b>\$22,674</b> <b>(-\$2,324 based on reduced training hrs. @ \$20,350)</b>	
	<b>K-9's Hourly Work / Service Expense:</b>	<b>\$10.90 (\$9.78)</b>	
Veterinarian, food furnishings, K-9 bullet proof vest	All donated in the past plus funds received from individuals and businesses.		

### Discussion

1. The annual costs of a K-9 Program 3.4% of the Police Budget.
2. Is the greater Greencastle community willing to financially support a new K-9 Program over the life of the dog (9 to 10 years)? I have been personally contacted by several individuals willing to consider donating to a new, fully-transparent, K-9 program?

3. If so, there should be complete budget transparency and accountability with both income (revenue) generated and recognized along with expense and service documentation.
4. Potential Public / Private Funding partnerships:
  - a. Businesses
  - b. Individuals
  - c. Veterans, fraternal, and non-profit organizations
  - d. Grants (Pa. Dept. of Community & Economic Development) strictly for start-up costs.
  - e. Local Radio Station WRGG has volunteered to host fund raising efforts (possible annual event).
  - f. Inter-governmental Cooperation Agreement with Antrim Township beginning in 2019 with an annual service contribution (\$\_\_\_\_) to be determined (Request \$5,000 Start-up costs) for the following services: K-9 assistance in Antrim Twp.(to Pa. State Police; Sheriff's Department; Probation. Greencastle Police would never be the lead agency. K-9 and Handler provides "mutual aid" assistance; Pro-active and public relations to various non-profit, civic, and citizens groups in Antrim Township. Example: Ruritans or Scouts requesting K-9 demonstrations and public education programs; Regular, pro-active and educational K-9 services for students and faculty at the Greencastle-Antrim School District Campus where an estimated 80% of the students are Township residents (based on population). The former DARE Officer Program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) hosted by Greencastle Police was partially funded by the Township.

One well-trained K-9 and Handler is much better than none for our community. I ask that Council and the greater Greencastle community to support the Greencastle Police Department and continue the suggested funding research for a future improved K-9 Program.

#### K-9 FUTURE ACTION PLAN:

1. Create a sustainable, long term K-9 funding plan from multiple sources above and beyond the General Fund Budget (Greencastle Borough taxpayers) as recommended in the Mayor's Budget – Discussion Report.
2. Communicate (through chain of command) to Borough Council and the community more effectively through monthly reports of K-9 use.
3. Review and update internal Police Department Policies & Procedures including use of K-9 deployment.
4. Update computer software for K-9 activities, logistics, hours of deployment selection, and incidents.
5. Borough Council would be encouraged to ride along with the K-9 Officer on a shift so they can possibly see firsthand how the K9 program benefits the community.
6. Issue an annual K-9 activities report to Council, the Community, and any other government partners posting reports on the Borough's web-site.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Thomas, Jr. Mayor

