




# SHAKER HEIGHTS

## Memorandum

To: Members of the Safety & Public Works Committee  
From: Jeffrey N. DeMuth, Chief of Police   
ec: Mayor David E. Weiss  
Chief Administrative Officer Jeri E. Chaikin  
Director of Finance Robert Baker  
Director of Law William Gruber  
Date: June 3, 2019  
Re: City-Owned Police Dog (K-9)

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The Shaker Heights Police Department's K-9 Program has been in operation for over thirty years. Upon retirement of a City-owned K-9, it is the past practice of the City to allow the retired dog to live with its handler until the dog expires. During the time between retirement and death, the City can still be considered the owner of the dog as there is no official paperwork that transfers the ownership of the dog to its handler. Also during this time between retirement and death of the dog, the handler has, generally, assumed the costs for food and veterinarian care. In addition, there may be a liability issue for the City during this time when the dog is retired and under the care of the handler and their family.

To fully address these issues, the Police Department is proposing that the City enact an ordinance which reads as follows:

### **141.07 Sale of Police Dogs**

- (a) As used in this section, "Police Dog" shall mean a dog that has been trained, and may be used, to assist the City's Police Officers in the performance of their official duties.*
- (b) Upon the retirement of a City-owned Police Dog, or if a Police Dog is injured in the line of duty, becomes disabled and is unfit for duty, or grows too old to be fit for duty, the City's Police Officer handler at the time of the Police Dog's retirement shall have the first chance to purchase the dog for one dollar (\$1.00). The Officer who purchases a dog under this section shall assume all responsibility for the dog thereafter.*
- (c) If an officer chooses not to purchase a Police Dog as authorized by this Section, the disposition of the dog shall be as determined by the Chief of Police and Finance Director of the City.*
- (d) A City Police officer who leaves the City's K-9 Program while the Police Dog assigned to the officer is still fit for duty forfeits the right to purchase the animal under this section.*



**CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS | Police**

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Enacting this ordinance will provide clarity as to ownership of the dog upon retirement from service with the Police Department.

Presently, one retired K-9 is living with his retired handler and one K-9 is facing imminent retirement due to the promotion of his handler.