



CITY OF PORT HUENEME

City Council Agenda Staff Report

DATE: October 6, 2025

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: James Vega, City Manager
Michael Federico, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: REACH HUENEME DONATION FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT CANINE UNIT

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council accept the REACH Hueneme Donation for the Police Department's Canine Unit for the purpose of obtaining a drug search only, non-apprehension dog and approve a net-zero appropriation of funds in the amount of \$26,800 to the General Fund.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The Police Department currently has one police canine in our canine unit, Giorgio. Giorgio is a "search-only, non-apprehension" dog who is trained to locate weapons, such as guns. The department previously had a long successful history of police canines and at one point had 5 working canines at the same time. The Port Hueneme Police Department was credited with being the first police department in Ventura County, and one of the first in the state, to have a canine program.

Several years ago, REACH committed to a \$25,000.00 donation for a police canine if the Police Department brought back the canine unit. Since that original commitment, the Police Department was able to bring back a canine unit. However, REACH had utilized the funds they were setting aside for the canine during that period. Instead, REACH initiated a new fundraising effort to raise \$15,000.00 for the canine program. The fundraiser was even more successful, and these efforts led to an incredible fundraising amount of over \$42,000.00.

The feedback from participants in the fundraiser has been overwhelming community support for the canine program and a narcotics detection dog. Over the past year we have seen a spike in drug overdoses and overdose deaths. During a recent Port Hueneme City Council meeting, the Ventura County Human Services agency gave the City Council a

presentation that explained that overdose deaths in the City of Port Hueneme had more than doubled in the past year and that the increase was higher than in neighboring cities.

With these funds, the Police Department could obtain a narcotics detection dog that is trained and proven. This would help combat drugs and fentanyl on our City streets. In addition, this dog would also provide or be available for other needed services, such as safety and security measures for partners such as the Naval Base Ventura County and the Port of Hueneme. This dog would also be trained in tracking people to help find suspects and lost persons. This dog is not intended to be an apprehension dog to take suspects into custody. This canine would be a search dog only. In addition, similar “search only, non-apprehension” dogs, like our K9 Giorgio and dogs in other law enforcement agencies, have become friendly faces in their communities and de-facto wellness therapy dogs in police stations and at community events.

If accepted, the donations (\$42,000+) would be placed in a restricted account and only used to fund costs related to the Canine Unit, such as:

- Purchase of Canine (Includes initial training costs): \$17,800
- Police Vehicle Upgrades to Existing Vehicle: \$ 9,000
- Food generously supplied by Lucy Pet Products \$ 0
- Vet Care generously provided by Hueneme Veterinarian Center: \$ 0
- Officer Training will Utilize Existing Training Budget: \$ 0
- Staff Costs will Utilize Existing Position (No Additional Staffing): \$ 0

With current donations, staff anticipates that funds will be available for all current year and some future year costs. In addition to the generous donations by Lucy Pet Products and Hueneme Veterinarian Center, it is anticipated that REACH will partner with the Police Department for future fundraising efforts to offset remaining future costs. These are further examples of the incredible support from our community for the canine program.

Staff recommends accepting the current REACH Hueneme donation and any additional funds raised by REACH for the canine unit through the remainder of the fiscal year, as additional funds are anticipated. Staff recommends appropriating funds required for the initial purchase of the canine and vehicle upgrade as outlined above.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is a net-zero fiscal impact to our current adopted budget as funds for the purchase of the police canine and associated vehicle/equipment can be purchased within the donation amount. Approval of this action would require an appropriation of \$26,800 to the Police Patrol Capital- Equipment Account 101-441-5600 and \$26,800 to the General Fund Miscellaneous Revenue account 101-000-4800 with a net-zero effect to fund balance. The remaining donation revenue in the approximate amount of \$15,200 and any additional donations received for the canine program will be deposited to a restricted donation account and tracked for use on canine-related purchases only.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Primary Strategic Pillar(s) and Initiative(s):

Optimal Levels of Service for Residents and Businesses

- Promote operational excellence in all City functions and embody best practices as a municipality.
- Support and establish programs and events that create a strong sense of community pride and a connection to our history and heritage.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.