

April 26, 2001

John Johnson
City of Jefferson City
P.O. Box 530
Jefferson City, Tennessee 37760

Dear John,

You asked about the City's K-9 police dog and the possibility of selling or giving the animal to its current handler, who is leaving the city's employment.

I spoke with Rex Barton, our Police Consultant, about this. He says that many cities have had this question because the impression is that police dogs are closely tied to their handlers. And to a large extent this is true. But a new handler can be trained to be equally effective with the dog. The new training costs between \$500 and \$3,000 depending on where you go (there are no "certifications" for this type of training in Tennessee). The cost for a new dog is between \$3,500 and \$5,000. This being the case it is well worth the city's effort to keep the dog and have a new handler trained.

In order to know if you should keep the dog, Rex recommends that the animal be taken to a veterinarian. The vet can help estimate the remaining useful (working) life of the animal. If the remaining useful working life is more than a year or two, you will probably want to keep the dog and train a new handler. But if you decide not to, the veterinarian's estimate can also help you decide a fair market value for the dog, in the event you decide to sell the animal to the current handler. If there is less than a year or two of useful life, you may want to consider giving the animal to the current trainer for a small fee.

I hope this helps answer your question. If not please give me a call.

Sincerely,

Patrick Hardy
Municipal Management Consultant