

**Cape May Court House, New Jersey  
TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLE  
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
WORK SESSION AGENDA  
September 18, 2023 4:00 PM (prevailing time)**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor's Announcement: I hereby declare that notice has been given to the Herald Times, the Atlantic City Press and posted on the bulletin board of the Middle Township Municipal Building, stating the time and place of the following meeting, as required in P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 of the State of New Jersey. (Sunshine Law).

Notice of this meeting was properly given in Resolution No. 42-23 entitled "Establishing Work Session Meeting Nights" which was adopted by Township Committee of the Township of Middle on January 4, 2023.

Members present are Mayor Donohue, Deputy Mayor Gandy, and Committeemember Norris

Deputy Business Administrator Suzanne Schumann, Deputy Township Clerk Emily Bartleson, Township Engineer Vincent Orlando & Municipal Solicitor Matt Rooney

**FLAG SALUTE:****PRESENTATIONS OR DISCUSSIONS:**

MTPD K-9 Unit Proposal –  
Chief Pooler

*Chief Pooler explained the program is fully funded by donations with no impact to tax payers. Further explained the only expense is the reimburse of the officer a half hour a day for taking care of the canine. Advised that all the car upgrades and kennel for the dog have been fully funded by donatations. In addition, Joe Nichols is willing to donate two dogs to the Township with training. Also, food is donated and vet costs are discounted but that she believes they can be covered by donations as well.*

*Joe Nichols, Canine Training Director, explained the Chris Katz is already trained but will be re-entering training.*

*Chief Pooler advised that the program is currently implemented in Wildwood. She discussed the benefits of a K9 unit such as tracking benefits. Provided a recent scenario where a K9 officer would have been beneficial to the department. Explained the Middle Township has had 63 missing persons cases which a K9 officer could have been beneficial in assisting with. Stated that another benefit would be to utilize the canine during traffic stops to help detect narcotics. Also discussed benefits that canine would have in assisting officers when visiting the homeless encampments in Middle that are located deep in the woods.*

*Mayor Donohue asked that with two dogs than two handlers would be needed?*

*Chief Pooler advised that each shift side would have a dog.*

*Mayor Donohue sought confirmation that the would not be a full unit but two officers.*

*Chief Pooler stated yes. Explained the two officers would be fully trained and the dogs would be on regular patrol with their designated handler. Advised that she is seeking two scent dogs not two patrol dogs.*

*Mayor Donohue asked the training director about the academy.*

*Joe Nichols, Canine Training Director, gave his history with the military and working/training of K9 officers. explained the beginning of the academy. Discussed the benefits of utilizing a bomb dog. He continued on to explain he is open to adjusting the training academy times for officers however the Police Department needs. He reviewed the typical training programs and times the courses take the officers and dogs. Began to discuss the funds raised through various other municipalities to fund this type of unit for Police Departments and costs associated with training the dogs. He further explained scenerios involving schools, children and homeless encampments where the dogs have been beneficials in the situation. He then continued to provide various incidents where K9 officers have assisted Police Departments.*

*Mayor Donohue thanked him for his passion. Explained that he wants to make this happen but has to review the impact the will have on the department while taking two officers off the street to go through training.*

*Joe Nichols reiterated the training times the officers would go through. Explained that he currently has a bomb dog fully trained and ready to for one officer to get through academy.*

*Mayor Donohue asked if Mr. Nichols is an independent agency or a part of Atlantic County.*

*Joe Nichols explained he is employed by Atlantic County.*

*Committeeman Norris asked of the officer training would be staggered.*

*Chief Pooler confirmed the training would be offset.*

*Committeeman Norris asked what would happen with the dog if their handler were to go on vacation.*

*Chief Pooler explained the dog would go to the other handler or county K9 department.*

*Committeeman Gandy asked if there are two officers willing to take on the responsibility.*

*Chief Pooler explained that she believes there are a few offices willing to take on the task but will ensure the dogs will go to the most qualified officers. Further explained that if they believe that one officer can handle the responsibility than they would only get on dog.*

*Mayor Donohue asked that timeline to set this in place.*

*Joe Nichols reviewed what happens once the offices go into the academy.*

*Chief Pooler advises that if this program is approved her first step would be to solidify the donation and then begin to get the vehicles outfitted and ready for the dogs. She believes the program would not start until the new year.*

#### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS AND PROJECT UPDATES:**

##### **Administration:**

##### **Finance:**

##### **Public Works:**

##### **Engineering:**

##### **Legal:**

##### **Tax Collection:**

##### **Tax Assessment:**

##### **Construction/Planning/Zoning:**

##### **Recreation:**

##### **Police / Animal Control/ Code Enforcement:**

##### **Buildings and Grounds:**

##### **Sewer:**

##### **Economic Development:**

##### **Personnel:**

##### **Zoning:**

##### **Township Clerk:**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

*Stan Doniger, Rio Grande, reviewed his concern of what happens during the off hours when the dog is not on shift. Asked if there is an agreement with neighboring municipalities with K9 officers.*

*Chief Pooler explained that the dogs would be on opposite shifts and the department would only have a 12-hour period where no dog would be on duty. Advised that one requirement to be a handler is that they officer has to live in Middle Township and if needed, the officer would need to respond to a call when not on shift. Stated she could always call a neighboring municipality if needed to have one of their K9 officers brought over for a situation.*

Motion to Adjourn Meeting – 4:33 pm

1<sup>st</sup>: Committeeman Gandy                      2<sup>nd</sup>: Committeeman Norris

Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Gandy, Committeeman Norris, Mayor Donohue