

CAC Canine Policy Review Ad Hoc Report -- January, 2025

Goal of Ad Hoc Committee

CAC Members Tom Rose, David Jones and Sonoma County resident Alan Pravel began work as an ad hoc committee in October, 2023. The central focus of the committee was to review SCSO use of force policies for adherence to 2021 legislation (Govt. Code Sec. 7286). That section requires, among other things, that law enforcement agencies maintain force policies that require that officers use de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques and other alternatives to force whenever feasible, use only force deemed “proportional” to actual or threatened resistance, and that all law enforcement agency policies provide “comprehensive and specific guidelines” for uses of force, including force methods and devices, discharge of a firearm, etc. .

Since inception, Rose, Pravel, CAC Member George Valenzuela and Sonoma County resident Carl Tennenbaum have served, and now left the CAC and/or the committee. CAC members Robin Jurs and David Jones are current committee members. The goal of the reconstituted ad hoc committee is more focused: to develop and propose for CAC approval a set of comments and proposed changes to SCSO canine policy, which would provide closer control and more specific guidance for use of canines to apprehend suspects in the field. .

Work Conducted to Date

The committee has met with SCSO canine program leadership, attended field training for handlers and dogs, reviewed historic SCSO canine uses of force and injury claims, reviewed studies regarding canine force, and reviewed canine force policies of other California law enforcement agencies. The committee has reviewed SCSO’s 2024 update to its canine policy, and has compared it to the text of the 2023 policy.

Next Steps for the Ad Hoc

The committee is currently creating a written summary of its review of the 2023 and 2024 policies and developing a set of written comments and questions to share with SCSO canine personnel. It intends to request a meeting to discuss these issues with SCSO canine program leadership in the first quarter of 2025.

Envisioned Final Outcome for the Ad Hoc

Recommend canine policy changes to CAC comply with law and provide additional controls and clarity for peace officers and public by providing more comprehensive and specific guidelines for SCSO canine uses of force.

Estimated End Date for Ad Hoc Work

June, 2025