

COMFORT DOG HANDLER

A. SUMMARY

An applicant for the position of Comfort Dog Handler assigned to the Community Service Division should have a minimum of 4 years as a Police Officer with a high degree of achievement and success within the Police Department. The comfort dog handler position involves the use of a trained police dog that will be used to support police operations. This is a pilot program, and as such any applicant should be expected to be flexible and patient as the program develops.

The functions of the Comfort Dog will include providing interactions with members of our community to reduce anxiety and increase communication between police officers and members of the public, to provide comfort for people during times of crisis, and to provide aid and comfort to individuals, groups and communities impacted by violence, tragedy or traumatic events. In addition, the Comfort Dog can effectively be used in our Department's community policing efforts with our Community Service Division, our School Resource Officers and our Crisis Intervention Team.

B. QUALIFICATIONS: SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

- Minimum of 4 years of experience as a Brookline Police Officer
- Interest in working with a trained comfort dog
- Minimum of a 5-year commitment to the position
- The Comfort Dog candidate's residence must be capable of housing the Comfort Dog and/or have adequate space for the construction of a kennel, since the member will be required to keep the Comfort Dog at his/her residence/ In the event the member does not own the property, the member must obtain written permission from the property owner for housing the Comfort Dog at his/her residence. In addition, there may be an interview of the Comfort Dog candidate's family and/or site visit conducted by the Training Program prior to the candidate being selected for the position.
- In the event of a conflict the Officer must be willing to give up any other dogs as determined by the Chief of Police.
- The Comfort Dog Handler candidate shall have, at a minimum, completed the 40 Hours CIT training as well as Mental Health First Aid.
- The Comfort Dog Handle Candidate shall demonstrate proficiency and genuine interest in working with, training, and caring for dogs.
- The Officer will be willing to accept responsibility that the dog is kept healthy, safe and well cared for.
- The Officer will be willing to accept responsibility for maintenance of any and all special equipment issued to them and the Canine.
- The Officer must understand that they will attend and keep track of all Canine training and most importantly have the responsibility of keeping the dog at an acceptable level of readiness.

C. ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

- Recommendation from current/former supervisor(s)
- Prior history of positive job performance and work history
- Proven abilities to perform work required in the specialist position
- Self-initiated training
- Commendations / letters of commendation
- Complaint history (external citizen complaints / internal complaints)
- Sick time review (no misuse of or chronic sick time use documented by the Department)
- Strong work attendance records
- Self-motivated / strong work ethic
- Positive attitude and pro-active approach to work
- Focused and attentiveness to detail
- Excellent organizational skills
- Ability to devote extra time for training
- Possess excellent problem solving, time management, written and verbal communication skills
- Be highly motivated, able to work independently with minimal supervisory intervention. Should also have a demonstrated track record of maintaining a high level of confidentiality, discipline, trust, and professionalism.
- Possess a demonstrated competence in report writing and courtroom testimony.
- Ability to work independently and in team environments
- Sound communication skills
- Prior assignment to and/or volunteering for Department specialty units

