TOWN OF SILVER LAKE
Special Public Meeting Minutes (K-9 Program)
April 22, 2026-6:00 PM
Silver Lake Town Hall, 604 N Jefferson St.

I. MEETING OPENED AT: 6:00 PM

II. PRESENT:

a) Elected Members: Medard (Hugh) Murfin, Nichole Taylor (absent), Gloria (Jean) Weller, Tonya Conley
b) Department Heads: Jason McGlennen
c) Attorney: Austin Rovenstine (absent)

III. PRESENTATION:

Silver Lake Chief Deputy Marshal Kole Williams prepared a PowerPoint presentation for the council and the public regarding a K-9 program through Redemption Ranch. Redemption Ranch is a nonprofit organization that transforms high-drive shelter dogs into fully trained, deployable law enforcement K-9s. The dogs are professionally trained through structured rehabilitation and specialize in narcotic detection, tracking, article search, and patrol and apprehension work. Kole presented case law, liability insurance, ongoing veterinary care, yearly recertification training, needed equipment, and information about towns similar to Silver Lake with successful K-9 officers. The Marshal's department is working on SOPs. Kole then asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

IV. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

a) **Questions:** Tonya Conley, Clerk-Treasurer, told Kole he did a great job on his presentation and that she had questions. She stated that some of the questions would be for the department and some for the council. The questions were as follows:
   1. **Realistically, how many call-outs do you think would be done for other jurisdictions?** Jason stated they couldn't answer that until they

were in it. Kole said he asked other communities with K-9s, and some weeks it was 2 or 3 times, while others had none.

2. **Did you make an SOP if it bites someone?** Kole said yes, just because it's non-bite doesn't mean it won't; depending on the situation, it could react. Jason stated it's a dog. Tonya said yes, but she thinks the liability insurance would want a policy in place. Kole stated he did show Hugh and talked to Hugh about it. A report and photos would be prepared and sent to Jason, the Council President, and the Town Attorney.
3. **Will the dog be with you when you are off duty?** Kole stated yes, the dog will stay with his handler.
4. **What will happen if your dog doesn't get along with the police dog?** Kole stated that the introduction will be gradual and will ensure they are properly introduced. The dog will be fit for the handler and his dog before it is released.
5. **If Kole leaves the department, what will happen with the dog (question to the council)?** The dog would stay with the department, per Kole's answer. The policy will cover this circumstance.
6. **She asked if recertification was done every year.** Kole stated that training could be conducted at the county level, but annual training will be required for recertification. Redemption Ranch has asked that he be present in person every couple of months. It will be an 8-hour session to make sure everything is going well.
7. **Will you report to the council how many times the dog is used in Silver Lake versus in the county?** Kole stated yes, and the app must be used anyway to track everything, so yes, there will be a report to them. Jason stated it would be in the call history he gives them monthly.
8. **How are complaints going to be handled? Tonya stated that it is inevitable that someone will complain. Will that be handled in a public meeting?** Kole stated he wouldn't see a reason why it wouldn't be handled in a public meeting.
9. **At what age does a dog usually work before retiring?** A Pierceton officer stated that, normally, police dogs retire due to health issues or injuries rather than age. Hugh stated that his research showed that the typical age is 8 to 9 years before the dog retires. Kole stated that Redemption Ranch uses dogs who are 2 years old or younger for this program.
10. **What will happen with the dog upon retirement?** Tonya stated that she thinks something should be written so the officer can adopt the dog upon retirement. She said she knows that it would be up to the council at the

time, but the dog grows attached to the person who handles it. The Pierceton officer stated that, typically, the dog is retired to the handler, and the town no longer covers the cost.

11. **Tonya stated that with the community center coming into town, she would like to have a first responders' day. Would you be willing to do demonstrations for the public?** Kole stated yes, absolutely, it is a big thing.
12. **Who is liable if you are called out into the county while you are off duty?** Jason said the town, it is town equipment.
13. **If you take the dog out of Silver Lake, will Jason have to approve that?** Kole stated that everything is at his discretion. He and Jason did speak about that, and hours will be monitored so the allotted overtime does not exceed the 10 allowed unless approved by the council.

V. **COMMENTS:**

a) **Officers from other jurisdictions (Mentone, Pierceton, Claypool, Indiana State Police) were present.** All officers present spoke about the need for a dog in the southern end of the county and said they have watched Kole in and out of his job. They spoke highly of him and the opportunity to have a K-9 asset available. The county currently has three K-9s, which are not always available for a quick response, and this would help. It would also help drive out drugs and other nuisances from communities. Jaxson Hastings stated that he is on the fire department, and they receive calls for missing individuals with dementia or autism. This would be a great asset for fire departments to use as a tool.

VI. **COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION:**

Hugh stated that he had done research, and Tonya had asked all the questions that he had. Jean made the first motion to buy and install a used cage for the police vehicle for the dog, and furthered the motion by allowing Kole to proceed with Redemption Ranch to receive a dog. Hugh seconded the motion. Motion carried. Jean stated that in a few years, when he got another vehicle, Kole could investigate buying a new cage then.

Jason stated that he had received a $50.00 donation for the K-9 to be put in a K-9 donation fund. Tonya stated that the fund had to be established by ordinance before she could deposit the funds there. For now, she will receipt it under miscellaneous and move it later. Tonya also stated that if a new vehicle were to be purchased,

grants would need to be sought. Jean said that is why she said a few years. Tonya stated that even in a few years, it will still need to be investigated. Changes with SB1 and property taxes are uncertain currently. She said it could be changed by then, but as it stands now, the effects are unknown.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Jean made the first motion to adjourn at 6:45 pm, Hugh seconded, and called all in favor, ayes were given. The meeting was adjourned.

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Medard Murfin, Council President **Tonya Conley, Clerk-Treasurer**