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## **HSU RENEWS CALL FOR MANDATORY TRAINING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS THROUGHOUT UTAH**

In response to the Salt Lake City Police Department's internal review of the case involving "Geist," as well as a Police Civilian Review Board's findings regarding the tragic shooting death of this family pet, the Humane Society of Utah is strongly urging all law enforcement agencies throughout the state to provide additional training and tools for officers to use when they encounter a dog in the course of their duties.

The HSU strongly agrees with the PCRB's recommendation that SLCPD seek out "agencies/entities who have established such programs in an effort to be more prepared in future canvassing types of incidents."

According to HSU Executive Director Gene Baierschmidt, "the officer involved in the shooting admitted to the PCRB he has not received any specific training related to adverse encounters with dogs. The Humane Society of Utah finds this to be more than troubling. We regard dogs to be family members and believe law enforcement officers should always be equipped with non-lethal tools, and receive proper training on the use of those tools in situations like this. Every effort should be made to make sure this does not happen again. The Salt Lake City Council has called for more education of police officers with regard to animal encounters and the HSU supports the Council's recommendation in the strongest possible terms."

Chief Burbank has now publicly committed to providing his officers with additional training. The HSU believes all law enforcement agencies in Utah should, at minimum, also take the following steps to prepare their officers:

- \* Training regarding non-lethal options (catch poles, nets, batons, Tasers, powder based fire extinguishers, etc.)
- \* Training with regard to dog behavior, body language, posture, barking, etc.
- \* Contacting animal control officers to deal with unleashed dogs
- \* Improve communication between officers, homeowners and animal control
- \* Establish clear departmental procedures with a scale of options short of discharging a gun

The HSU has not been contacted by SLCPD regarding measures that can be taken to better equip officers to deal with animal encounters. However, this organization stands ready to provide counsel to the department, should SLCPD request assistance.

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