

Dog used by sheriff's office banned from Texas after attack

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By Chris Willingham



Article 4: Dec. 9, 2021

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A McCurtain County Sheriff's Department drug dog got loose in an Allen, Texas neighborhood and bit a young child multiple times, an Allen Police report indicates.

The dog, named Bevo, was deemed a dangerous animal by a Collin County Judge and is banned from the state of Texas for the remainder of its life, Texas court records show.

That incident is one of many recent controversies this newspaper has been covering at the sheriff's department.

Though the child was hospitalized for at least five bite wounds to his calf and buttocks, sheriff Kevin Clardy said the county has no legal liability whatsoever.

"This is a privately owned dog; the county does not own him. The liability falls on Ian himself, personally," Clardy said, referring to deputy and canine handler Ian Wilkerson.

According to an Allen police report, the incident occurred about 5:30 p.m. on Halloween when Bevo got out of a fenced yard and was loose on a cul-de-sac in an Allen neighborhood.

An Allen police officer said Wilkerson came to the home, which belongs to relatives, and saw Bevo was not in yard. Allen police said a young boy across the street from the home got nervous upon seeing the dog loose in the street and ran.

"The dog got out, the kid ran and the dog did what it's trained to do, honestly," Clardy said.

Allen Police said the young boy, whose age was not given, received at least five bites and puncture wounds, “with his calf receiving the worst of it.”

He had open wounds on his shin, calf and buttocks and was taken to Plano Children’s Hospital for treatment, Allen police said. He received stitches and was treated and released.

Animal control officers in Allen seized Bevo and he was quarantined at an Allen veterinarian’s office.

A Collin County judge declared Bevo a dangerous animal and banned him from the state of Texas for life.

After 10 days the judge allowed the dog to be returned to Oklahoma, but only after an animal control officer inspected the sheriff’s department canine pen and facilities.

“It’s a tragic deal, but the dog has been released back to Oklahoma,” Clardy said.

“I don’t know if he had it at the time of the incident, but Ian does have a \$100,000 (insurance) policy now that covers that,” he said.

The sheriff said because the dog is privately owned by deputy Wilkerson and not by the county, all the liability falls upon Wilkerson.

“When the dog is on on-duty status, we cover civil liability for the dog, but when he’s not, he’s out of the scope of employment, so we’re not civilly liable,” Clardy said.

“No civil liability to the county in any shape, form or fashion.”

In a very similar case in another county involving a privately owned drug dog working for a sheriff’s department, a state auditor’s report said the sheriff’s department was in violation of several state statutes by not listing the dog on the county inventory of assets.

Also, providing food and veterinary care to the animal was a misappropriation of assets, since the county paid for those services and the dog is not owned by the county, the report says.

“The county hasn’t spent a dime on this dog, other than dog food,” the sheriff said of Bevo.

However, a search of county records shows the sheriff’s department using county funds to pay for vet services for two police dogs this year. Both purchase orders to Pratt Veterinary Services, dated May 26 and June 2, have Clardy’s signature on them.

Both were for approximately \$300 for each dog’s annual care.

According to a state auditor’s report, that would constitute a misappropriation of assets and noncompliance of state statutes, since neither dog is owned by the county.

In that case, the state auditor's board said the sheriff could not spend county funds on drug dogs which did not belong to the county.

Clardy said Bevo was "grounded" until the department decides what to do with him.