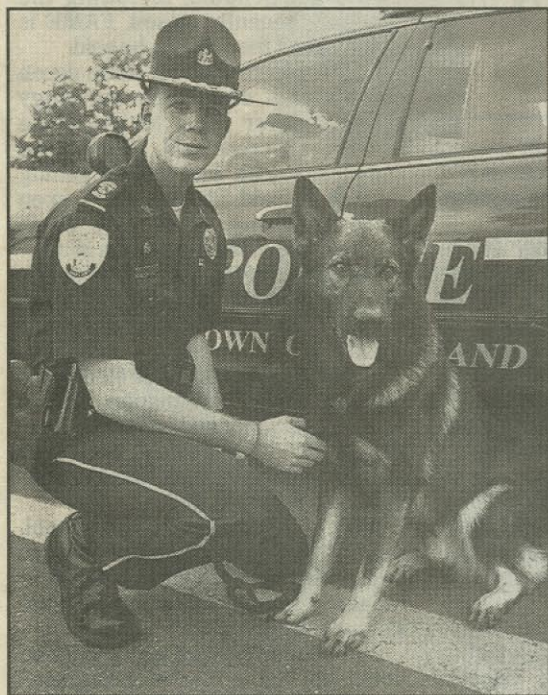


9/12/97

Waterville editor: Timothy Allen  
873-3341, Ext. 248



Staff photo / DAVID LEAMING

Oakland Patrolman Jeffrey Wrigley poses with Smoke, the latest addition to the department.

## Oakland adds canine cop to police force

By AMY CALDER  
Staff Writer

OAKLAND — In a first for local police departments, Smoke, the Oakland Police dog will do drug searches and tracking, and go into classrooms to help children learn about police work.

Town officials this week approved a plan to add Smoke to the police force.

"The Kennebec County Sheriff's Department and Maine State Police have dogs, but there are no other police departments in Central Maine that do," Oakland Police Chief Kevin O'Leary said Thursday.

The Town Council on Wednesday unanimously approved training for both the dog and his owner, Patrolman Jeffrey Wrigley.

Wrigley acquired the dog from the State Police about six months ago.

"He's outstanding — very mild mannered," Wrigley said. "He loves people, is very social — not your typical shepherd."

The 2-year-old dog has been trained as a police dog, but because he arrived late for the training season, he did not train with a handler, according to Wrigley.

Wrigley and Smoke will take a 192-hour course together this fall at the State Police Canine Center in Gray, and a 12-week course in the spring, O'Leary said.

"I'm thrilled that the council voted the way (it) did," O'Leary said. "It's a good vote of confidence for the police department and what we're trying to accomplish out here."

Roy said the estimated total for training, veterinary care, food and miscellaneous expenses associated with the dog is \$3,700. O'Leary said Arbo's Towing & Repair Service of Waterville has donated \$500 for the effort. The town would also pay for part of the cost.

Meanwhile, the dog will accompany Wrigley on his beat.

"I feel very confident with him around children and the general public," he said. He added that shepherds are very "master-oriented."

"He will live with me and work with me," he said. "Basically, he's my shadow."

In other business at Wednesday's meeting, councilors voted to close Mutton Hill Drive for the winter months. The drive leads into an unfinished subdivision, and in the past, people have littered and had parties there.

Councilors also approved the mapping of wetlands for a proposed business park off Second Rangeway, and an amendment to the local sewer ordinance that would give Roy the authority to consider unique abatement cases.

A request by the Bangor Chamber of Commerce that the Town of Oakland support its effort to become the location for the Maine Bureau of the American Association of the Forum Francophone was approved.

The council voted to discontinue tape recording of council meetings for six months and after that time, decide if the practice will resume, according to Roy.

The council changed the date of its Oct. 8 meeting to Oct. 7. The next council meeting is Sept. 24.