

Owner of dog shot by police rejects settlement

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Sean Kendall, File

By Pat Reavy, | Posted - Jul 30th, 2014 @ 5:05pm

SALT LAKE CITY — As an internal Salt Lake police investigation into the fatal shooting of a dog continues, another controversy has erupted over a possible settlement in the case.

On June 18, police were looking for a missing 3-year-old boy in the area of 2500 South and 1500 East.

Detective Brett Olsen, one of the decorated heroes who brought the Trolley Square shooting spree to an end in 2007, happened upon the house of Sean Kendall while going door to door. When no one answered the front door, Olsen went into the fenced backyard, where a confrontation with Geist, a 110-pound Weimaraner, occurred.

Geist was shot and killed by the officer. The incident sparked a massive public outcry over police policies concerning officers entering private property and on how officers are trained to deal with animals. Chief Chris Burbank promised a "thorough and deliberate" review of the case.

Kendall himself has been very vocal about his displeasure with the police department and has said he wants Olsen fired.

"SLCPD has offered a generous settlement as compensation for the loss of Geist. However, there has been no disciplinary action taken against Brett Olson or action regarding policy change and training. I believe this is an attempt to placate me and buy me off. I would rather (have) a public apology and non lethal policy change than any amount of money."

On the this week, Kendall posted: "SLCPD has offered a generous settlement as compensation for the loss of Geist. However, there has been no disciplinary action taken against Brett Olson or action regarding policy change and training. I believe this is an attempt to placate me and buy me off. I would rather (have) a public apology and non-lethal policy change than any amount of money."

Kendall reportedly made a second post Tuesday afternoon claiming that a settlement had been reached. That post was later deleted.

On Tuesday, Burbank responded with a prepared statement of his own that he sent out on Twitter.

"As a public agency negotiating in good faith through proper channels, we were disappointed in today's outcome. Due to Mr. Kendall's premature Facebook posts and desire to negotiate through the press, the police department has ended our attempts to meet his financial demands. To clarify, this was his request for a settlement, not our offer. We continue to press ahead with our internal process and expect to conclude our investigation this week. The department reserves further comment until that time."

Later, Kendall made an additional Facebook post saying that he had "been under a great deal of stress" both at work and at home lately. He said the settlement "was for a sum my lawyer and I felt would be an acceptable amount. I shared my thoughts a little (too) prematurely."

He said he was basing his decision to settle on the advice of his lawyer.

"I personally feel that fighting is the right decision but went against my personal feelings because of the recommendations of my lawyer. I apologize for the confusion and understand the lack of confidence."

The internal police investigation is expected to be completed soon, though no exact date had been given.