

## SLCPD Chief on Defense Over Dog Shooting

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At a hastily convened press conference, Salt Lake City's Chief of Police, Chris Burbank, was clearly on the defense over an incident involving a neighborhood search for a missing child.

The search in Salt Lake's Sugarhouse area also included an officer-involved shooting of a dog that many say was doing its job too.

The incident happened on June 18 and has unleashed a considerable amount of public criticism which Burbank called understandable but unfair given the job his officers are routinely summoned to do.

Amplifying the public's reaction and protest is a video that the dog's owner posted to Facebook, where he confronts officers who remained to offer their sympathy over the incident and to collect additional, pertinent information about the officer-involved shooting of the owner's 2½-year-old Weimaraner named "Geist."

Burbank confirmed Friday that his internal affairs investigators will thoroughly examine the events which led to the dog's death, allegedly by Officer Brett Olsen, who has an exceptional record of service with the department, Burbank said.

Officer Olsen "has been under fire, and performed very well," Burbank said, referring to the Trolley Square shooting incident in 2007. Olsen was one of three police personnel who confronted 18-year-old Sulejman Talovic at Trolley Square that year. Talovic was killed at the scene after a shooting rampage involving several members of the public in an "active shooter" scenario.

As a result of the multimedia aspects of the dog's shooting and the immediate proliferation of public reaction using the internet, Burbank has received hate mail and criticism to an unprecedented degree. He read some of the examples which he termed "extremely disappointing," and which threatened police personnel. In addition to those read, there were others he said which are "a lot worse."

Since the department has commenced an internal affairs investigation as normal procedure in an officer-involved shooting, "Individuals will be held accountable for their actions, as they always are," Burbank said. In addition to the department's own investigation, a civilian review board will be convened to

insure a “good and thorough” examination of the facts which will take about a month. “We are committed, as we have been in the past, to performing our job to meet community expectations.”

Referring to departmental efforts to avoid similar problems with the public’s perception of the police, the Chief emphasized to the public at large that “avenues exist that we can use together to resolve this problem,” acknowledging the purpose of the plaza in front of Salt Lake City’s new public safety headquarters where a protest rally is scheduled for Saturday, June 28th from 10am to 1pm.