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Category 1: Basic Requirements
Criteria F

Among other things, the organization “We Ride To Provide” handles services for K9 Officers who are killed in the line of duty. Unfortunately, K9 Officers killed are not always killed by perpetrators of crimes.

A Belgian Malinois, K9 Office Bloo was partnered with Deputy Sheriff Master Michael McRae in 2018, after completing the intensive canine training program. The two quickly became a forceful duo for law enforcement. Bloo also became a much loved member of Deputy McRae’s family. Bloo had “such a playful spirit and he was an attention seeker,” according to Deputy McRae, “We will never forget Bloo and he will always have a place in our hearts.”

Then, in August of 2020, for some reason, Officer Bloo attacked Deputy McRae. To protect himself, Deputy McRae was forced to shoot and kill Bloo, who had been his partner, comrade and family member for the two years they had lived and worked side by side.

Deputy McRae and Bloo had an excellent achievement record that included being deployed together on more than 150 assignments, completing 17 Felony tracks and apprehending 5 Felony suspects, 21 of those apprehensions without bites. Bloo had successfully lived with Deputy McRae, his wife and children during the entire time. What happened to Bloo on the day his behavior turned will always be an unanswered question.

The memorial service for Office Bloo was held on August 17, 2020, in the Chapel of Caldwell & Cowan Funeral Home. We work closely with “We Ride To Provide” to assist with K9 Officer deaths, and may be called upon at a moment’s notice to provide our facility and Chapel. We are always glad to assist in honoring these fallen heroes.

Office Bloo’s service was attended by law enforcement officers from around the State. A parade of law enforcement vehicles escorted the car carrying Officer Bloo to the funeral home, where his ashes were placed in state at the front of the Chapel. His service was officiated by a minister, and eulogies were delivered by both Chief Akies of the DeKalb County, Georgia, Sheriff’s Office, and DeKalb County Sheriff Melody Maddox. Sheriff Maddox stated that “the Sheriiff’s Office does not take the value of the K9 Officer partnership lightly or for granted”. She praised Deputy McRae, his wife and children, for the “many days and nights and weekends this dedicated team was called away from their home to do one of the hardest jobs that there is in the Sheriff’s office – tracking down individuals who are accused of committing egregious crimes against our family, friends and neighbors.” Sheriff Maddox continued by thanking Officer Bloo and Deputy McRae on behalf of DeKalb County families, friends and neighbors for risking their own “well-being to bravely go into dark alleys and dangerous places where guilty people hide to avoid arrest”.

Deputy McRae and Officer Bloo were truly a dedicated and effective team of professional law enforcement officers. Bloo will be greatly missed by his partner, his adopted family, and the citizens of DeKalb County.

K9 Office Bloo is memorialized with his name on the list of K9 Officers killed in the line of duty.

ANNUAL FIRE SERVICE BAR-B-Q

In 2011, we sponsored our first annual Fire Service Bar-B-Q for ALL career and volunteer fire service personnel in Beaufort County. The annual Bar-B-Q is held during Fire Prevention Week in October. The event is held at the Lady's Island Fire Department Headquarters on Lady's Island, South Carolina. There are twenty fire departments in Beaufort County. A few weeks before the Bar-B-Q, we send an invitation to all the fire chiefs in the county to let them know the day of the event and to ask them to provide us with a count of the personnel who will be eating.

Our menu includes a half of bar-b-q chicken, potato salad, baked beans, bread, ice tea and cake for desert. Prior to the day of the BBQ our funeral home orders and pays for all food and supplies. We take all food and supplies and meet at headquarters bright and early on the morning of the BBQ. We assist Chief Bruce Kline of the Lady's Island/St. Helena Fire Department and Chief Josh Horton of the Fripp Island Fire Department with the cooking. While some of us are cooking, the others are setting up the tables and chairs, packaging the baked beans and potato salad, and cutting the cake. Some of the dinners are take out. In 2013, we added the Copeland Funeral Service logo to the carry- out containers. In 2015, we had some employees from the South Carolina State Firefighters' Association, Columbia, South Carolina, come and witnessed what we do for the local firefighters and first responders. In 2014, at the South Carolina State Firefighters Annual Convention, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, J. Edward Gamble III, CFSP, received the Citizenship Award.

In 2013, (our third year), we included all communications, Fire Commissioners, and Emergency Medical Services staff persons. We also added Daufuskie Island Fire Department. The only way to get to Daufuskie Island is by boat and or ferry. It is approximately a fifteen minute ride by ferry. By feeding the ferry captain, we bartered with him to deliver the Daufuskie Island Fire Department their meals. In 2014, (our fourth year) we included firefighters from Paris Island, United States Marine Corps and from MCAS (Marine Corps Air Station). In 2015, we included on duty personnel from Lady's Island on the day of the BBQ. We also added personnel from the Beaufort County Coroner's office. In 2016, we added some of the Military Police at Paris Island, United States Marine Corps. We are trying to gradually increase our invitees and one day plan to include all the law enforcement officers in our county. In 2017, we were able to include members of the Beaufort County Sheriff's Department who were on duty and patrolling Lady's Island and we also added the Military Police at the Beaufort Marine Corps Air Station. In 2018, we were able to include some officers from other fire departments to see what we do for our local first responders. This included members from North Charleston Fire Department, Newberry City Fire Department. and Clarendon Country Fire Department. Our first year, there were approximately one hundred fifty dinners served. This year our Bar-B-Q was held on October 20, 2020. This past year, 2020, we served a little over 400 dinners.

This is a service provided by our funeral home and is done without any cost to our friends in public service. This has been a very positive outreach for our funeral home. We have

received a large number of “thank yous” from the departments and individuals. On March 15, 2012, Copeland Funeral Service received a plaque from the Beaufort County Fire Chiefs Association. On the plaque it states “We present this plaque to show our gratitude for generosity and support to the firefighters of Beaufort County.” This past year we received a letter for Mr. Gordon Bowers, Commission Chairman of Lady’s Island-St. Helena Fire District, thanking us for the service we provide to the men and women.

We are committed to continuing with this appreciation dinner.

Also this past year, on May 12th, Copeland Funeral Service made a donation to Burton Fire Department in order for the department to complete their goal of placing a Jacobkit in every one of the country schools and in every classroom. The trauma kit was named after Jacob Hall, a 6 year old student wounded in a 2016 school shooting in Townsville, SC. Jacob survived the wound but died three days later due to massive blood loss. The Jacobkit is an individual first aid bleeding control kit that is specially equipped to provide essential medical supplies to help stop life threatening bleeding.



As restrictions lifted, more and more families were opting to hold full services with all of the practices and rituals that were held pre-pandemic. This led to a surge in processions for our funeral home, where we were holding one or two a week. Coupled with the fact that we are situated in a summer vacation town, we faced traffic struggles often, and worried about the safety of the driving participants as less and less drivers are understanding of the reverence and right-of-way of a funeral procession.

When we go from a location to the final resting place with a procession, we call the local county sheriff's office to ask about providing traffic support if available. While they are unable to assist with *every* procession, they are able to support most of them, providing traffic assistance at a minimum where traffic is the heaviest. In one instance when driving through a very busy part of town, officers were present at every intersection the procession encountered. In another instance, officers re-routed the procession in real-time to avoid a traffic back up that would have caused a delay and possible dangerous conditions for the drivers in the procession. In yet another instance where there was a procession of motorcycles, a police vehicle escorted the procession from the church to the funeral home, ensuring that the cyclists arrive safely. As one can imagine, this police assistance is not only much safer for the procession, but also serves as a tremendous showing of support from the community for the grieving family.

With the spike in support that we were asking for, and local officers rising to the occasion without so much as a grumble, we felt it imperative to show our gratitude to the county team. Not only were we thankful for the officers who were physically present to assist us on the road, but we also wanted to thank the dispatchers who would talk to the funeral directors in planning the procession route, ensuring that we had officers where we needed them most. Office administrator Ingrid Klaasen reached out to the local sheriff's department and asked if we would be permitted to bring a gift basket to show our appreciation of the team's support. The office was delighted!

Lakeshore Memorial Services
11939 James Street, Holland, Michigan 49424
616-395-3630 Mark Wm. Neitzel, Manager

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With portability in mind, we put together a basket of goodies that consisted of “grab-and-go” foods and snacks that could be easily eaten in a vehicle or at a desk without needing refrigeration or heat.

On June 17, 2021, funeral apprentice Jason Edwards as well as office manager Suzanne Arends delivered the baskets to the office. It was received with great appreciation by the team! We aren't sure why we didn't do this before, but certainly will more regularly going forward. In fact, the idea was such a hit that our sister funeral home Ever Rest Funeral Home and Chapel in Muskegon made up a basket and delivered it to their local public servants as well.



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Support the Blue (especially the furry ones.)

We struggled to carry out even our most successful community events during these last twelve months. On top of that we were all mourning the lose of our first grief therapy dog, “Hope” the year before. I knew we wanted to do something to memorialize our beloved Hope and figure out a way to do “social distance” community service.



When I discovered that our police department’s K9 officers were not as well equipped as they could be I started talking with some of my police friends and was soon introduced to the sergeant in charge of the K9 unit. I was a little shocked to find out that our highly respected police department was cutting budgets in anticipation of the “Defund the Police Movement” that was sweeping our country and the K9 program was getting hit first.

We invited the K9 officers into our funeral home, without the command staff present, to discuss their needs and wants. It was decided that all the K9s needed custom fitted tactical vest instead of the one size fits all vest that they were currently using, and a few dogs would also get ballistic vest. We purchased a couple new training suits. They did discuss a new tool that is a ball with a gyroscopic mounted camera that could be tossed into a dangerous situation (i.e. attic, crawlspace, or culvert) so that the handler can see that he is not putting his dog into an ambush situation, so we added that to the shopping list.



As we were researching the needs of the K9 unit, I discovered that as the K9s age out of service they become the property of the handler along with all the expenses associated with it, like feeding, vet bills, maintenance supplements, and boarding if they go on vacation. Because these dogs cannot be left with a neighbor to look after them. This can cost \$1200 to several thousand dollars a year, depending on the dog’s health. All this comes out of the officer’s pocket, and depending on the handler’s length of service and dog’s health, they may have two K9s to care for.

Chesterfield County Police K9 Association was born. We are a fund raising 501 c3 that in the last year has held a several events, with social distancing, like our first “Run for Da Dogs” poker run and a trifecta golf tournament in conjunction with our sheriff and fire departments. We also instituted an “Adopt a Retired K9” program that we have rolled out to our business community in Chesterfield County.

“Have Hope” is embroidered on each vest in memory of our Hope, which is incredibly special to us. However, writing a check to outfit the K9 unit was not anything special, it was just a matter of having the cash flow to afford it.

Helping to set up the K9 Association on the other hand has been very meaningful to us.

Getting the K9 association off the ground and into the community awareness has been an exceptionally good outreach for our funeral home. It incorporates our grief therapy dogs, who act as police K9 ambassadors when we go out to fund raising events or to give presentations and it also allows our community to vote with their wallets when they are opposed to the “Defund” movement.

Respectfully,


Larry Spiaggi & Morrissett Team

**1st Annual Poker Run
4 da Dogs!
May 8, 2021**

www.K9PD.org



Saturday, May 8, 2021
Start at: Morrissett Funeral Home 6500 Iron Bridge Rd. N. Chesterfield, VA 23234
Sign Up begins at 9 am Pull Off begins at 10 am
Route is approx. 2 hours
Finish at: Steel Horse 11501 Hull Street Rd. Middlethian, VA 23112
Cost is \$20 per hand (No Limit)
Prizes: \$250 to best hand, \$125 to second best, \$75 to third best, & \$50 to worst hands
Lunch provided by Mission BBQ.



CHESTERFIELD COUNTY POLICE K9 ASSOCIATION was formed to ensure that the dogs that were purchased and trained to protect the citizens of Chesterfield County, Virginia are given all the care and attention that they deserve after they have been removed from active duty.



These specially trained dogs have assisted in apprehending criminals, helped in solving dangerous situations off our streets, detected illegal alcohol, discovered potential explosive devices, tracked lost children, and comforted adults. These dogs have earned the right for a peaceful retirement. Once retired, their magnificent creators become the responsibility of their handler, without assistance from county funds.

There is where the K9 association comes in, we actively raise money to pay for all the expenses that are incurred in keeping these retired dogs on good physical and emotional shape.

You can help us by adopting a retired public safety K9. It cost approximately \$100 per month to cover each dog with food and necessary care.

If you can adopt one of these dogs, you will receive a photograph and short bio of the K9's life and service to our county along with a Certificate of Appreciation from the handler and our association.



- Levels of giving:**
- \$1200 - Great Dog best (One Year Sponsorship of a K9)
 - \$100 - Month level (One Month Sponsorship of a K9)
 - \$75 - Bi-monthly level (Five & Ten donation for a year)
 - \$50 - Bi-monthly donation level (One bag of dog food)
 - \$40 - German Shepherd level (One bag of dog food)
 - \$25 - Beagle level (One bag of dog food)
 - \$20 - Labrador Retriever level (One bag of dog food)
 - \$10 - Boston Terrier level (New leash)
 - \$5 - Pug level (New collar)
 - \$10 - The Poodle level (One treat)
 - \$7 - Chihuahua level (One of dog food)



A pandemic inconveniences a farewell to a Hero

Throughout the years, our beloved profession has been exemplary at honoring our heroes who have died tragically. Whether a soldier fallen in battle or a public servant dying during the course of their normal duty day, the community looks to us for leadership and guidance to plan a commemoration so befitting a sacrifice. 2020 presented funeral service another challenge in the form of a Pandemic, yet this difficulty only provided an incredible opportunity to rise to our level of professionalism and provide service that is beyond expectation to our communities.

On August 3, 2020, during the height of the Covid-19 Pandemic, our funeral home was called upon to care for the family of a public safety officer who died in the line of duty the day prior. This officer was a longtime member of a local city public safety department, which provides both Police & Fire service to that community. In addition, he was also a former longtime member of another local Volunteer Fire Department, and was well known throughout the Police & Fire departments in our area. The officer was survived by his wife, four children and many other relatives. That fact in and of itself would create a challenge for the funeral home to accommodate all of the family, much less representatives of numerous Police & Fire Departments. Pixley Funeral Home has been honored to be called upon frequently to serve those who have fallen in the line of duty, however this particular service was going to present a new challenge that we had yet to experience in our 100 years of service. At that particular point in time, the state of Michigan, as well as Public Health Departments, were limiting funeral home services to a maximum of 10 people. This officer's family had made it very well known that they in fact did want to honor their loved one with a 'traditional' public service, and we also heard from the community (especially Police & Fire organizations) that a public, community, service was of extreme importance. A tremendous concern was also expressed by the authorities that all health department rules were being followed, and favoritism was not being granted because of the deceased's occupation and notoriety.

After we had met with the family to determine their wishes, the Pixley staff began to research the Health Department orders and receive clarification from the authorities. We discovered that we would be allowed to utilize a church building, yet be required to maintain social distancing in accordance with the size of the auditorium. Fortunately, we were able to quickly receive permission from a local church that typically seats 3,000, but we would have to reduce that to 1,500 to maintain appropriate distancing. Although the facility did not have as great a capacity as we had hoped, it did offer the best option under the circumstances. Our next task was to arrange a meeting with the representatives of the Public Safety department to review their needs, and also to engage their leadership to assist in communicating the arrangement details to all of the departments in the Tri-County/ Greater Detroit area. Following our meeting with the Public Safety command staff, as well as members of the Michigan Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police Association Memorial Team, a plan was developed that would meet the needs of the family, as well as the Law Enforcement & Fire Service community. A private visitation for the immediate family would be held at the church followed by a public visitation, as well as a public

funeral service and procession the following day. The funeral home staff would control the number and flow of guests by restricting entrance to the church. Stanchions were utilized to direct the attendees and to assist in maintaining social distancing. Four 'stations' were established outside of the church under canopies. The register stations would each have 1-2 funeral home staff members that were masked and wearing disposable gloves. Each station would also contain a register book, disinfected pens, memorial cards, and a large number of disposable masks, black mourning badge bands, hand sanitizer and bottled water. Guests were directed to an open station where they could sign the register book, take cards and water (a long line to pay respects was expected), mask and badge band if necessary. Once the guests entered the church, additional staff would be in place to ensure the six-foot distance rule was being followed, and the aisle in the center of the church was properly marked in six-foot increments so the guests would have visual reference. During the visitation, stanchions would be in place to keep the family separated from guests, unless the family wished to have close contact. A private gathering room in the church would likewise be prepared so family could remain in seclusion if they wished. All guests would likewise be informed that upon entering the church that they would need to follow health & safety guidelines, and that all of the family would very likely not be available to greet them. Staff members would also be posted at the casket throughout the visitation to provide direction and to facilitate the periodic changing of the Honor Guard. Hand Sanitizing stations were to be set up throughout the church and funeral home staff would provide additional disinfecting support as needed.

The Funeral Service logistics were closely reviewed and seating arrangements in the church were arranged as follows: the family would all be seated close together as they had been in close contact for the previous 48 hours. A very limited section of general seating would be reserved for non-public servant guests and the pews would be marked in six-foot increments. Also, it was determined that according to the health department, Police & Fire department members that worked on the same shift could be seated together and not have to follow the distancing guidelines. Sections of church pews would be cordoned off and reserved for specific departments. In addition, six-foot no seating zones were created to separate the various departments, as well as the family and guests. The church grounds also includes a large lawn area and we were granted permission to erect large tents and use folding chairs, appropriately distanced of course, in order to provide outdoor seating for those who may be more comfortable being out of doors, or to act as an overflow. In addition, the funeral home made arrangements to have the service livestreamed from the church in order to utilize audio/visual equipment in the tents to provide attendees the opportunity to participate in the service. Cards would also be created with the livestream link and would be distributed to guests who would be given the opportunity to remain in their cars during the service and view from their phones. In addition, the livestream link was provided to all police and fire departments in the greater Detroit/tri-county area in order to allow participation without them being present. In addition, all Police-Fire Department chiefs were notified of the seating arrangements and asked to provide direction to their officers. Additional space would be cordoned off in the lot to

Pixley Funeral Home, Rochester, MI

accommodate an overflow of officers. Following the funeral, a procession to the Cemetery was to take place and the funeral home staff coordinated details at the cemetery that would allow the maximum number of attendees to be near the gravesite, and audio equipment was provided to the cemetery.

The visitation was held on August 6 and the funeral service on August 7th. Despite having only 3 days to plan and prepare, all went exactly as planned. Well over 2,000 people were able to attend and pay their respects throughout the two day period. On the day of the funeral, the church seating was maximized as well as the outdoor seating. Many guests that arrived on the day of the funeral had assumed they would not be allowed in the church due to the pandemic, but were very appreciative of the ability to livestream the service directly into their vehicles. Despite the unusual circumstances at the time, a most fitting and memorable tribute was provided to the family, fellow public servants, and the community at large. The funeral home received much recognition and appreciation from the attending departments, but most importantly the family felt that all of their needs were met and expectations were exceeded. Rising to meet the needs of others in any and every circumstance is what funeral service has always been about. Pixley Funeral Home is proud to be part of an Association that will carry the torch of service beyond expectation well into the future.



Category 1: (F)

Law Enforcement and First Responders in our town are a group of men and women who put their life on the line each day to protect our community. With that said we wanted to try and find a unique way to give back and give them something they could have forever. We decided to partner with a local photographer and offer a free family photo session to any first responder in our county. We know many of these men and women typically don't have the time or the abilities to get their families together and create a memorable photo op. So we wanted to take away any barriers and let them know they are appreciated for what they do each and every day. We found an up and coming photographer that was trying to promote her business and she agreed to partner with us at a nominal fee and we cover the cost of each session. The first responder family receives a 30 minute session with 10 edited shots that they can do whatever they like with it. We promoted our event heavily on Facebook, through both our site as well as the photographers site. Since we are small town, newspapers are still a big thing and we promoted locally in our newspaper as well. We received a ton of positive feedback and booked about 20 families with some still trickling in. This opportunity has no expiration date and is something we are willing to do at any point, because we know that schedules are hectic we want to make sure they are aware the offer is always on the table. This really elevated our "backing the blue" rather than just a simple sign out front or a couple blue ribbons tied on a tree, it really shows that we are a hometown funeral home that truly believes in giving back to our first responders. We are also the predominate funeral home that is called upon for unattended deaths, so it's crucial for the first responders to know who we are and that we truly back them in their daily efforts. This has gone over so well, that we have now expanded it to medical workers (dr's, nurses, lvn's, home health, hospice, nursing homes) which again helps build our relationship in the community and I believe overall it helps to build the reputation of the funeral professional. Throughout town we are stopped quite often by people who thank us for going above and beyond to give back and that they see value in what we do and how much we truly care to be a part of this community. What started as a simple idea, has now brought families together for a life-long photo opportunity that they can cherish forever, free of charge, courtesy of Sneed Funeral Chapel.

TETRICK FUNERAL SERVICES; JOHNSON CITY, TN

Being in the middle of the Corona Virus, Tetrick Funeral Services like the entire United States has basically been shut down in being able to reach out and continue or initiating a new program for the benefit of our community.

However, we had a brief opening in July 2020, to have an event to honor and show support to our local first responders. Being a very patriotic business, staff and community and while we had a break in how many we could be allowed to have in a crowd, Tetrick Funeral Services chose to host a cookout for the Johnson City Fire Fighters, Johnson City Police Department, EMS, and 911.

It was an all hands on deck day for the entire staff of Tetrick Funeral Services and two of our sister funeral homes along with some volunteers. The event was scheduled for Wednesday, July 22, 2020, with lunch being served from 11:30 a.m. until all first responders had time to stop by and enjoy a lunch in their honor. If a fire station was busy, we would pack up their lunch and deliver it to them to have when they were available to eat lunch. We also packed up lunches and delivered 40 lunches to the 911 office as they were not able to leave their post long enough to come into town and eat.

Johnson City Fire Chief James Stables was in attendance along with Police Chief Karl Turner. Tetrick Funeral Services wanted to show our support to both of these entities since so many cities were not supporting these valiant warriors for our safety. The chiefs were contacted and asked what donation project they would like for us to invest in. Tetrick Funeral Services donated \$500.00 to the Fire Fighters Association to start their project to purchase the official jackets to be worn by the Honor Guard when they are called upon to participate in the funeral service of a fallen fire fighter or asked to perform in a civic ceremony. Each jacket costs \$300.00.

To the Johnson City Police Department, Tetrick Funeral Services donated \$500.00 to the Junior Police Academy. This program is entirely run on donations so this gave them seed money to begin the project or have funds to carry over to the next time the City is allowed to hold major events involving a large crowd.

After lunch was served, a ceremony was held with checks being presented to each entity by Billy Gillenwater, David Mathes, and Alfred Dugger who were the respective managers of Tetrick Funeral Services, Appalachian Funeral Home & Cremation Services, and Woodall-Anderson & Dugger Funeral Home & Cremation Services. WJHL-TV covered the presentation of the checks and this news story was shown on the local evening news along with an article in the *News & Neighbor* weekly newspaper.

Tetrick Funeral Services will always back our first responders in any way that we can help!