

**Mayor**  
Joe Piper



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### **STATHAM’S NEWEST OFFICER**

After more than two years, the City of Statham has added back a valuable program and member to its team. Nora, a one-year-old Belgian Sheperd, also known as a Dutch Shepherd, was sworn-in by Mayor Joe Piper and surrounded by her Chief, Ira Underwood, and fellow officers on July 14th. Elected Officials and other members of staff were also in attendance.

Officer Nora arrived from Holland in early June and is trained in detection of narcotics and articles searches. Her and her handler, Sgt. Russo, recently completed a K-9 Handler Training & Certification Course.

“After several discussions with elected officials, it was unanimously agreed that Statham needed to bring the K-9 program back to the community. This program is different than past programs in that it specializes in non-aggressive tracking,” says Police Chief, Ira Underwood.

“In the event a search is called for an elderly individual or school-aged child, Officer Nora is trained in and will be able to assist our department with the search, and because she is a no-bite dog, an individual will be without fear of being attacked by a K-9,” Underwood continues.

“There are many benefits of having this officer on our team. She can be utilized to assist in school searches, participate in community events or aid our department when the duty calls for narcotics search as well. It’s taken a couple of years to reinvent this program, and we are very excited to offer it to Statham. Officer Nora brings an additional sense of security to the community and provides an additional service to all our citizens.”

Sergeant Russo has been with the City of Statham since 2020. He has received multiple community recognitions for his contributions to the Department and assistance to those who required it. When Chief Underwood and elected officials agreed to return the K-9 program, Sgt. Russo stepped up and offered to be the handler.

“Officer Nora is a no-bite dog,” says Sgt. Russo. “She is a tracking K-9. She’s not only great at tracking, but it’s her favorite thing to do as well. She did exceptionally well in training, and I am appreciative of the opportunity to work alongside her.”

The City of Statham recently purchased and fully equipped a new K-9 vehicle which has been clearly marked for assured visibility and identification to the community.

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