



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



MINUTES
TUESDAY, April 28, 2015 at 7:00 PM

East Valley Animal Shelter
14409 Vanowen Street
Van Nuys, California 91405

Audio MP-3 Recording is available at www.laanimalservices.com

David Zaft, President
Alana Yañez, Vice-President
Jennifer Brent
Larry Gross
Roger Wolfson

Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Board Secretary, Rita Moreno, Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS). Roll call. Commissioners present were Zaft, Yañez, Brent, Gross and Wolfson. Also present: General Manager (GM) Brenda Barnette and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Dov S. Lesel.

Commissioner Zaft opened the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

- 1. PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS: Phyllis Daugharty:** Stated that beginning on May 4, there would be no more Officers at the Harbor shelter as they are being moved to the South L.A. shelter and that the community was not made aware; discussed impact on community and staff. **Frederick Jordan:** Requested Commission support to express the need for more ACOs to the Mayor's office; more possibility for injured staff and animals; unable to go to schools to provide animal care education. **Pat Kramer:** Animal issues committee for Sunland-Tujunga NC; interested in working on RACO program to provide assistance to Officers; stated that calls for dog bites are not receiving response, no follow-up, no fines. **Dana Stangel:** Mentioned the 2nd Annual Sunland Summer Fest on June 27-28 at Sunland Park; discussed P22 protocol and inquired as to jurisdiction between Wildlife and LAAS. (**Commissioner Zaft** introduced Gabriel Marquez with Councilmember Nuri Martinez of district six who welcomed the Commission and community). **Marla Tauscher:** Stated Executive Directive 15-001 on impounds and seizure of animals is illegal and contradicts existing law; animals are being seized with indefinite holding periods and no notice of hearings – it circumvents legal due process. **Korinna Domingo:** Thanked department for insurance letter. **James Dimon:** Part of the Coastal San Pedro NC and Harbor Alliance; concerned with transfer of Officers from Harbor shelter to South L.A. (**Commissioner Zaft** clarified that the Commission was not aware of the staff changes; **GM Barnette** stated that Officers were not being transferred, only dispatch). **Pam Hanna:** Provided a physical description of the Harbor shelter and stated it is vulnerable and unsafe. **Nori Taylor:** Concerned that there will not be an ACO for the San Pedro/Harbor area and lack of notice. **Michelle Cornelius:** Commented on West Valley's efforts to save kittens through fosters; communication with volunteers and staff customer service needs to be improved; suggested creating a foster email account so that anyone can send out messages. **Daniel Guss:** Commented on the department's audit, Commissioner Gross' reappointment and the Commission's managing responsibility. **Beverly Mitchell:** Concerned that Chi Angeles Rescue continues to get rescues although they have been suspended; stated that sick animals are dumped back at a shelter, and

that forgery has been committed. **Andrew Brown:** Expressed concerns with dangerous animal labeling, the restrictions placed on dogs and the arbitrary and inconsistent labeling; recommended having a consistent policy. **Sybil Kohn:** Discussed her case and the impounding of three dogs and having to wait three months for a hearing; concerned about policy to not allow dog owners to visit their dogs. **Sherry Brewer:** Mentioned dogs being held for adoption events; informed that dogs over 40 lbs and in heat will not be spayed or price increases; concerned that dogs are listed with wrong breeds and dogs with any pit are not allowed by landlords so they're not adopted; disagrees with new impounding rule. **Josh Liddy:** Commented on directive 15-001 and that it ignores due process (read item 4); 80 dogs have been impounded last month. **Melody Miller:** Discussed holding of animals to go to the NKLA event for Best Friends; recommended the ability to refuse adoptions. **Gail Raff:** Asked that when sharing photos, that equal time be given to cats; asked how 2016-17 NKLA will be handled with the TNR injunction; New Hope funding not covering cats, pit bulls and Chihuahuas. **Whitney Smith:** Commented on the Adolhorst training video and Robert Cabral commenting on the training expertise of Cmdr. Dedeaux, suggested Cmdr. Dedeaux conduct staff training. **Mary Catalano:** Questioned AWTF monies approved for shelter expenditures; stated that there is no formula at the shelters or for fosters; staff needs to ask where kitten mothers are; asked that Best Friends take more neonatals. **Sara Harris:** Stated she has been terminated as a volunteer at North Central; concerned by mislabeling of behavioral issues with dangerous animals; need for experienced volunteers and staff. **Orly Kroh:** Stated that cats from Downey are being dropped off at West L.A. shelter and mentioned Sheila Choi as dropping off cats that are chipped to people in Downey.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes for April 14, 2015.

Commissioner Gross made a motion to approve the minutes and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. The vote was 5 – 0 in favor.

3. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

GM Barnette shared the following:

- Attended the Best Friend's leadership Forum, a group of approximately 30 national leaders in animal welfare who assemble by invitation. In previous meetings, the concentration has been on the subjects of Big Dogs and Sustainability of the No Kill Movement as a national model. This discussion continued with the object of defining some specific next steps and planning for them. In addition, I attended the national Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) National Conference and Expo.
- The Department recently applied for a grant from the ASPCA in the amount of \$10,000. The grant is for fee waived adoptions to occur on June 6, 2015 at The East Valley Shelter in conjunction with Animal Planet's promotion of the 'Road to Puppy Bowl 2016'. The grant was approved on April 13th and will be paid within 30 days. Event details will be announced closer to the event date, Animal Planet is working on media and event fliers.
- The Department was invited to apply for grant through The ASPCA to offer fee waived adoptions for all New Hope Rescue Partners to receive fee waived adoptions

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for all cats and Pit Bulls/mixes and Chihuahuas/mixes in the amount of \$200,000 and for all public adoptions of cats in the amount of \$200,000, for a total grant of \$400,000. If approved, the fee waived adoptions would start right away in an effort to increase the live save rate for our most at risk animals, cats, Pit Bulls and Chihuahua's.

- Our systems staff and volunteer coordinator continue to work on setting up volunteer 'kiosk' stations at each shelter, allowing our volunteers to sign in and out and check hours and information through our Volgistics volunteer database. So far 3 shelters, East and West Valley and South Los Angeles, Chesterfield Square are fully operational. Systems delivered a kiosk to West Los Angeles that will be set up this week and is in the process of building a kiosk for Harbor. North Central will require new data ports and is on hold at this time.
- The Department held emergency appointment promotional interviews for four Sr. Animal Control I positions. 16 Animal Control Officers applied. The successful candidates were John Cessna, Armando Navarrete, Annette Ramirez and Yvette Smith. They will supervise areas such as the Animal Cruelty Task Force, Permits Division, Wildlife, License Canvassing, Specialized Mobile Animal Rescue Team (SMART), Volunteer Equine Emergency Response Team (VEERT) as well as support field services and administration. The Department has not been able to promote for these positions in over ten years.
- Both DFOs for Shelters and Clerical/Community have been working with Personnel and staff regarding complaints about volunteers. The complaints are in regards to animal handling, dog walking and interactions with staff and volunteers.
- Harbor Shelter had an incident on April 12th in which three volunteers exchanged harsh words and one volunteer slapped the other, LAPD was called and a battery report was filed. The Department has terminated the volunteer accused of battery and issued warnings to the other volunteers involved.
- Clerical staffing is still an issue, currently we are hoping to fill one vacancy and once a Senior Clerk is hired for our Administration section, the Clerk filling in can return to a shelter. Personnel is working on cases of long term leaves. The shelters continue to borrow when coverage is needed and/or if someone calls in.
- Last week the staff at the Chesterfield Square South Los Angeles animal shelter received a call from LAPD officers requesting staff presents at the new South Los Angeles Annex. Upon staffs arrival LAPD advised staff that a large hole had been cut in the chain link fence at the rear of the property. Staff had to find a temporary solution to close the opening in the fence. While staff was there they noticed that vagrants have set up temporary housing. These trespassers continue to destroy the property vandalizing what they can and leave hazardous materials such as dirty hypodermic needles and other drug paraphernalia.
- On April 11th, a South Los Angeles Animal Control Officer injured his hand while attempting to secure an animal in his vehicle. This places another officer on light duty for certain period of time. Field Services is up nearly 350% in work related

injuries which are associated with limited staff working extra to cover the field service calls.

- On April 8th, an Animal Control Officer responded to a call for a horse's head in a trash bag on a bicycle trail at Hansen Dam. The officer located the bag and the head was fairly decomposed. The matter was referred to the Animal Cruelty Task Force for further investigation.
- Due to continued staffing shortages, Field Services is moving the field officers from Harbor to SLA next Monday. The Harbor shelter will be open to the public as always.

Officers will be able to be dispatched to the Harbor shelter, if needed, but will not work from there. **There should always be an officer in the field available for calls in the Harbor during day shift 7 days a week.** Priority calls may pull that officer out of the district as would priority calls in the Harbor bring officers from SLA to assist. **Again, this should provide increased support.** We are trying to have dispatching from one location for both districts to add an additional officer to the field.

The County Animal Control Department has 191 officers and supervisors. The City Department has 74 officers and supervisors, but we both have similar human and animal populations and neighborhoods to serve. The Department's request was for 24 new Animal Control Officers (ACOs). The Mayor's budget recommends 12 new ACOs funded for only 5 months. We are hopeful that the Budget Committee and the Council members will consider funding the 12 new ACOs for the full 12 months or that they may even add additional officers.

We anticipate moving WVA in with EV in June.

The February 2015 Woofstat Report showed a significant increase in work injury hours of 310% for field personnel by year to date. There was an increase of 480 hours alone between February 2014 and February 2015. Overtime was up 11% and vacations were down 12%. Sick time was up 15%, FMLA was up 16% and Leave of Absences were down 58%. In short, the few officers we have are burning themselves out and getting injured trying to cover shifts.

No services or service levels are anticipated to be lost or interrupted. Service levels are anticipated to increase. Officers can respond to Harbor or West Valley districts, as needed to meet with the public. This does not eliminate the need for additional resources. Department and Personnel staff are attempting to meet and advise labor prior to the Department's announcement.

- May 2nd and 3rd NKLA LA will host The NKLA Super Adoption event at The La Brea Tar Pits will be at West Los Angeles Shelter and will focus on the importance of volunteering and our volunteer program and will also discuss adoptions and other services.
- On April 13th, Animal Control Officers received a call for a possible Mountain Lion under a house which is under construction in the 2700 block of Glendower. The Department's Wildlife Team was dispatched along with State Fish and Wildlife. The cat was located tucked away under a porch and would not move from its location

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despite attempts by Fish and Wildlife. The cat was identified at P-22 which is a tagged and collared resident of Griffith Park. Officers remained on location until 10:00 P.M. hoping to coax the cat the cat out. Fish and Wildlife wanted to allow the cat an opportunity to leave the location undisturbed during the night hours. Officers returned the following morning and discovered the cat had left the location. State officials used a tracking device to confirm that the cat was no longer in the neighborhood. There was significant media attention and interviews regarding this incident.

- Thanked and congratulated Commissioner Gross for his reappointment.
- The audit is a historical look at the department and involves records from 2000 and 2002, which we do not know still exist but have responded that as soon as we get all our records from storage we will search for them.
- We are impounding animals that killed another animal or have injured another animal or person and sent them to the hospital, to make the community safe. We worked with the City Attorney's Office and there is a release that individuals can sign and take the animals home, if we believe the animals can be safely maintained at home until the hearing.
- Woofstat report: Cat euthanasia is down only 1% and dogs are down 19% even with the impounds thanks to the rescues and volunteers helping to get them into homes. Euthanasia is down 8% overall. Licensing is still down 11% but it's in admin; we are working on systems improvements to get caught up. Cat impounds are up 3% in March, and dog impounds are down 4%.

Commissioner Zaft asked for the numbers on licensing.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugharty: Questioned moving Harbor Officers to South L.A. and ability to respond to community, and the merit of promotions. **Pam Hanna:** Stated that there will be no Officers or Supervisors at the Harbor shelter for the community; community will have to go to South L.A. for assistance, but no parking at South L.A.; no space for computers and desks for Harbor Officers at South L.A. **Nori Taylor:** Officer needed at Harbor shelter; concern with amount of time animals housed after impounded. **Michele Cornelius:** Stated that animals sent to fosters are down at all shelters except one – not sure if due to reduced intake or another reason; South L.A. sent zero animals to fosters in March. **Gail Raff:** Stated that there is no formula available for fosters; raised \$1,500 in three days for formula. **Pat Kramer:** Wanted to speak on RACO, but not in GM report. **Dana Stangel:** RACO would help address staffing issues; protocols are needed to address issues like P22. **Josh Liddy:** Stated that evidence dog impounds are up 250% as a result of directive 15-001; stated that dogs are not being returned to owners. **Marla Tauscher:** Suggested animals not be impounded if hearings are backed up and asked about criteria being used to make determination to return animals; concerned that department is complainant when there is no victim. **Whitney Smith:** Stated that there are no fosters for neos and department's lack of recruitment. **Mary Catalano:** Stated that fosters are not getting any formula and questioned funds for formula; dangerous dogs are not being fixed. **Andrew Brown:** Discussed dangerous animals and stated good dogs are euthanized because there is no room. **James Hart:** Does not agree with directive and depriving

citizens of their private property without due process.

4. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Brent: Attended Mayor's State of the City and the department's strides to decrease euthanasia were recognized; asked for report on fleet allocation as requested before October 2014; concerned with increase in evidence and personal property animals and impact on shelter capacity; dog impounds are almost equal, but euthanasia rates are down - indicates a crowded shelter – don't want to euthanize animals that don't need to be euthanized and don't want to see animals go cage crazy; vet spay/neuter numbers are down except for rabbits and would like agenda item to talk about spending of the Animal Sterilization money and number of animals being held and number of sterilizations being done by City vets.

Commissioner Yañez: Mentioned May 9 outreach event in the 90023 zip code area at Salazar Park – free basic vaccines for cats and dogs, free food, free nail trim and free spay/neuter sign-up.

Commissioner Gross: Mentioned April 17th reappointment by the Mayor and City Council and comments regarding work of volunteers, staff and Commission, and need to reduce shelter animal intake and increase adoptions, and greater spay/neuter programs for dogs and cats; asked about approved formula expenditure and timeline for purchase and distribution to shelters; asked about monitoring the spreading dog influenza now in Chicago and whether we are prepared to respond; thanked new attendees to Commission meeting.

Commissioner Wolfson: Congratulated shelter staff for look of shelter and volunteers; dogs looked like walked recently and not barking.

Commissioner Zafft: Agreed with Commissioner Wolfson's comments and mentioned the dog habitat; indicated East Valley, Chesterfield Square and North Central shelters have an intervention program for which a report will be provided next meeting.

Public Comment
None

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Proposal for Placing Pet Supply Kiosks in Shelters

Commissioner Zafft indicated that this was an item requested by Commissioner Wolfson for general discussion to examine the possibilities. **Commissioner Wolfson** indicated idea inspired by fact that the first thing people do when they adopt an animal is go to nearest pet store for basic necessities; in order to better assist the consumer, it is better to provide the means to purchase the items at the same time and place as animal is being adopted; allowing a pet store to provide the service brings an additional staff person into the shelter to answer customer questions, and brings in a source of revenue; this type of public-private partnership can provide more revenue for more staff. **Commissioner Brent** asked for clarification whether there would be vending machines or a staff member needed to be present. **Commissioner Wolfson** responded that there would be all sorts of products and that a staff member of

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whichever chain gives the best bid and percentage would provide the service, so it would not require LAAS staff time. **GM Barnette** added that some shelters use volunteers when the business does not provide a staff member. **Commissioner Brent** stated that would necessitate the purchase of inventory for sale, but that it would be a good source for revenue. **Commissioner Wolfson** gave example of Homeboy Industries at City Hall and that non-profits can also bid. **Commissioner Yañez** indicated support for the proposal and need given staff constraints. **GM Barnette** stated that she had wanted to institute a "take home kit," but unable due to Prop F funding for construction, which disallows commercial enterprises; City Attorney is researching to determine if it is still an obstacle. **Commissioner Zaft** indicated that ACA Lesel will need time to review the issue.

Public Comment

Mary Catalano: Stated that volunteers need to focus on getting animals adopted not on selling items; indicated that people don't know what type of animal to adopt and volunteers provide information; need flyers on how to care for animals. **Gail Raff:** Stated that volunteers need to provide info on how to care for animal and none available at shelters. **Melody Miller:** Stated that no space for kiosks; habitat opened just today and months in construction; recommended vending machines (**Commissioner Brent** interjected that shelters provide scratching posts and are a good fundraiser). **Sara Harris:** Provided example of locker with donated items that are offered to persons adopting for free.

6. BOARD REPORTS

A. Animal Welfare Trust and Animal Sterilization Fund Balances

GM Barnette briefly discussed the reports, mentioned MOU with Sue Taylor to distribute vouchers for a pilot spay / neuter program, indicated that there are 50 vets that accept our vouchers and handle our overflow due to cruelty cases, and added that the department receives \$7 for every \$20 collected from dog licensing.

Commissioner Gross indicated that there are only three months remaining in fiscal year and only 19.5% of contract funds have been spent - what happens to unspent money and whether monies are issued as reimbursement. **GM Barnette** responded that the AWTF and SNTF monies do not get swept into the general fund, and money remains in our account. **Commissioner Gross** asked if the \$430,000 for Value Vet could be reallocated out if not spent. **GM Barnette** responded that funds for a contract are encumbered for the duration of the contract; stated that the Amanda Foundation is the only one that spends all of its funds; added that vets are stationary. **Commissioner Gross** suggested more funds be allocated to mobile units; asked for additional RFPs to get the money out. **Commissioner Zaft** added that an RFP was approved to target certain zip codes; asked whether contracted vendor would be another one under this list. **GM Barnette** responded affirmatively and added that the list of zip codes was approved, but not a particular vendor. **Commissioners Zaft and Brent** responded that Spay for L.A. was selected and approved. **GM Barnette** clarified that clinics on list are stationary except for the Amanda Foundation and there are an additional 50 vets that accept the vouchers. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if Spay for L.A. would then be added once the contract is finalized. **GM Barnette** responded affirmatively. **Commissioner Gross** asked if funds would come from the same pot. **GM Barnette** responded affirmatively and indicated that the 4 million dollars have not

been over pledged; clarified that voucher funds are encumbered for 60 days then roll back into the fund if not used. **Commissioner Zaft** provided information efforts to utilize funds: zip code pilot voucher program and upcoming MOU with Actor and Others for Animals to get vouchers out to community; indicated that year's numbers are lower than last year's utilization rates. **GM Barnette** responded that the pilot zip code program includes those with low-income, low-transportation and low English-speaking, and can use piece of mail to prove residence in area. **Commissioner Zaft** added that the same zip codes used in the Downtown Dog Rescue program. **Commissioner Gross** added that more mobile clinics should be added. **GM Barnette** stated that we may already be contracting with all the mobile clinics out there and that a higher level marketing position would be filled to increase outreach and marketing efforts. **Commissioner Zaft** noted that the AWTF reflects approval of rabbit cages, but only at Harbor and not at all shelters; asked for follow-up. **Commissioner Brent** stated that there is a need to increase the voucher amount and asked what needs to be done. **GM Barnette** responded that it would need to come to the Commission and PAW Committee because it involves the expenditure of funds; a report back will include this and the results of the survey. **Commissioner Brent** requested a report on approved expenditures and when items will be purchased.

Public Comment

Whitney Smith: Mentioned Marie Timer's donation and purpose of AWTF - \$286,000 from people who passed away delineated for maintenance of specific shelters – not intended use. **Frederick Jordan:** ACOs used to have packets of vouchers, now only pass out pamphlet with required qualifications and people need to drive to shelter to get voucher. **Mary Catalano:** Recommended making it easy to get the vouchers – people are uneducated.

B. Approve Release of Bid Letter to List of Qualified Wild and Exotic Animal Veterinarians

GM Barnette indicated that more names need to be added to the list. **Secretary Moreno** recommended that given the time constraints, a bid letter be issued to the existing list of qualified providers. **ACA Lesel** responded that we need to have someone on contract by mid to late June; if draft bid letter is used, recommended to include conflict of interest disclosure and background with any of the companies that might be in Los Angeles that would be investigated. **GM Barnette** indicated that it is difficult to get a vet that is acceptable to both sides; there are two on existing list – one acceptable to one side and the other to the other side. **Commissioner Zaft** asked for the status of what happened last year and does it impact the process for this year. **GM Barnette** responded that the staff completed a lengthy report based on the veterinarian report; the veterinarian report has not been released publicly because it has been turned over with staff notes to the City Attorney's Office for review and decision on whether there are any violations that warrant any kind of action. **Commissioner Zaft** asked about the timeline. **ACA Lesel** responded that it was being reviewed by the Criminal Branch who received it earlier this month; not certain as to length of time or report. **GM Barnette** added that the veterinarian involved is one of the two on the existing list. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if the bid letter will be sent to the vets on the list. **Secretary Moreno** added that there were no responses to the RFQ released last year and that it was released at the beginning of April and concerned about sufficient time to release. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if the department's recommendation is to send the bid letter to the three vets on the list. **GM Barnette** responded that it was preferable to issue the RFQ; send to AVMA, the Zoo

veterinarians, but possibility others may respond. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that RFQ was approved last year and description is similar to bid letter so we can move to approve release of RFQ with last year's language and include conflict of interest disclosure language.

Public Comments

Mary Catalano: Stated that it is a disgrace to pay for the veterinarian for the circus.

Commissioner Zaft stated that the increase in the fee will be discussed at a future meeting.

Commissioner Gross made a motion to approve the release of RFQ with language approved last year and with additional language requested by the City Attorney and **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded. The vote was 5 – 0 in favor.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Yañez made a motion to adjourn the meeting and **Commissioner Brent** seconded. Motion carried 5 - 0.

Meeting ended at 9:10 p.m.