



**BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES**



MINUTES

TUESDAY, June 9, 2015 at 7:00 PM

**HARBOR SHELTER
957 NORTH GAFFEY STREET
SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA 90731**

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 7:04 p.m. by Board Secretary, Rita Moreno, Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS). Roll call. Commissioners present were Zaft, Brent, Gross and Wolfson (arrived during Item 1). Commissioner Yañez was absent. Also present: General Manager (GM) Brenda Barnette, Chief Management Analyst (CMA) Dana Brown, Director of Field Operations (DFO) Jan Selder and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Laurie Rittenberg.

Commissioner Zaft opened the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda. Ryan Ferguson from Councilmember Buscaino's Office welcomed the Commissioners, staff and public to Council District 15.

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1. PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS: Zoey Knittel: Spay Neuter Clinic of Los Angeles operating out of the Harbor shelter; last year spayed or neutered 24% of the animals at shelter; 13% of overall spayed or neutered animals are from shelters. **Kristi Navarro:** ACO concerned about not being dispatched from the Harbor; discussed injured dog and time it took to respond due to distance. [Item placed on hold to hear Item 2.A.] **Daisy Dsul on behalf of Susana Alejo:** Discussed her mother's impounded dog and requested to have the dog returned until the date of the hearing. **Andrew Brown:** Stated that there is a lack of consistency in the department regarding the blue alert list; discussed medical condition of "Jacko" and his not being blue listed in order to be rescued. **Phyllis Daugerty:** Recognized Dr. Marvin Mackie and his low-cost spay neuter work of animals at two months; recognized Lt. Transow who has run every shelter and the Special Ops teams. **Mary Catalano:** Landlord pet policy should be City law; asked about the \$48,000 for neonate formula; against animals given for free adoptions without screening. **Patty Naegely:** Concerned about ACOs taken from Harbor; ACOs are needed for background checks which resulted in a kitten not being able to be adopted. **Fred Jordan:** ACO at Harbor and South L.A.; recognized volunteers Karen Duprie, Marian Vine and Jane Yor, Heather, Patty Naegely, Carol Meserie and Teresa Sardisco, Anabelle Villanueva and Melody Harper; asked why volunteers Villanueva and Harper were suspended. **Anabelle Villanueva:** Discussed duties as a volunteer and asked to be reinstated as a volunteer. **Ryan Ferguson:** Read letter on behalf of Councilman Buscaino regarding the reassignment of ACOs from the Harbor to South L.A., and requested they be returned.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

- A. Board Recognition of LAASEE Award Recipients (Item heard between public speakers for Item 1)
- Judy Guth, Pet Friendly Landlord
 - Teri Austin, President, Amanda Foundation

Commissioner Wolfson discussed the purpose of the LAASEE Awards and requested that nominating Commissioners share a few words about their respective nominees. Commissioner Gross provided background information on and the basis for his nomination of landlord Judy Guth. Commissioner Zaft provided background information on and the basis for his nomination of Teri Austin. Ms Guth and Ms Austin each shared some remarks about their work to support Los Angeles' animals.

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to approve the LAASEE Award for Judy Guth and Teri Austin and **Commissioner Brent** seconded. Motion carried 4 - 0.

- B. Approval of Minutes for May 26, 2015.

Minutes not available; item tabled until next meeting.

3. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

GM Barnette shared the following:

- The Department has been notified that we will receive a \$400,000 ASPCA grant. The grant will cover adoption fees for all public cat adoptions and New Hope fees for all Pit Bulls/mixes, Chihuahua's/mixes and cats adopted by rescue. Currently, fees are waived for rescue groups for animals on the red and blue list.
- The new Client Service Specialist position (funded by Best Friends) is in its second week at our North Central Shelter and is progressing so well that Best Friends is in the process of funding a second position part time for the South Los Angeles Chesterfield Square Shelter. These individuals will assist with volunteers and volunteer training and with customer service.
- The Director of Shelter Operations met with the staff and volunteers at the Harbor animal shelter last week and implemented the Socialization for Unavailable Animals program. This completes training at four shelters. Training for this program is scheduled to take place on June 11, 2015 at the North Central animal shelter. Once this training is complete the only shelter remaining will be the South Los Angeles, Chesterfield Square which will be provided before the end of June.
- The Administrative Citation (ACE) program was launched last week as a pilot at North Central Animal Care Center. All Officers were trained the previous week and have been issuing citations to the public. About 40 citations have been issued, 4 were sent to the City Attorney's office for billing and 36 were for items that could be corrected.
- According to USA Today Los Angeles is the most dangerous city for postal workers; 74 out of the 5,767 bites occurred in our city. We believe that our stronger stance in the new directive will help curb this problem.
- The Department has eight vacancies for Animal Control Officers and there is no certified list of applicants. We have asked City Personnel to expedite this process as much as possible, but the best case scenario is that it will take four months to hire Officers.
- Working with City Personnel and labor, the Department has contracted three part-

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- time Hearing Officers to assist us with the backlog caused by the three moves since the December 8th fire and sick leave for both of our staff Hearing Officers. We will be scheduling four hearings a day when the part-time Officers start.
- Last week the staff at the East Valley animal shelter visited the LAPD's Van Nuys Division and requested a Trespass Order be issued to deal with transients camping alongside the Shelter as well as additional patrols.
 - On Monday, June 1, 2015 the East Valley animal shelter staff met with the Watch Commander from LAPD's Van Nuys Division to discuss the situation regarding the vagrants that have taken up residency along Lennox Avenue. While meeting with LAPD a couple of the vagrants began to exhibit aggressive behavior which ultimately resulted in two more arrests. During this meeting, staff inquired about the removal of all debris belonging to the vagrants. LAPD advised the staff that they were cleared to remove all items.
 - General Services Plumbers are continuing to work at the North Central animal shelter. To date, they have been unsuccessful in isolating the leak in the hot water line. It has been determined that the water leak is actually somewhere under the concrete lifted puppy kennels where it is unreachable. They are currently evaluating other options to make the necessary repairs.
 - North Central is the last shelter that is going to have major construction to finish Prop F expansions. We are meeting with the Council Offices served by the shelter to disperse some of the services to different locations like the old Jefferson Park shelter in order to save 1 million to 1.5 million on temporary shelter during construction.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugherty: Mentioned that prior vacant positions should have been kept open in order to be filled when needed; recommended keeping count of dog attacks in the City and mentioned dog attack in Granada Hills, boy in San Pedro, boy and mail carrier in Atwater, and woman attacked and dog killed. **Mary Catalano:** Suggested that mail carriers are getting bitten because there is not spay neuter enforcement; suggested placing spay neuter bumper stickers on police cars.

4. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Wolfson: Liked suggestion of placing spay neuter bumper stickers on police cars; suggested changing the name from Animal Shelters to "Animal Adoption Centers"; thanked department for volunteer "Volunteer Liaison" at North Central who is doing weekly dog walking classes; thanked North Central Shelter supervisor who allowed him and his wife to stay late to wash fostered puppies.

Commissioner Brent: Thanked Phyllis for recognizing Dr. Mackie for everything he has been able to do for animal welfare; has been working with Cmdr. Dedeaux on artificial turf for shelters due to water shortage, dirt runs at East and West Valley shelters are difficult on animals and impact adoptions; will be asking for AWTF dedicated shelter maintenance funds for artificial turf and to name the yards after individuals who included us in their trusts.

Commissioner Zaft: Thanked those in attendance who are concerned about the Harbor ACO reassignment which is the result of a staffing crisis; recognized City Council support in approving 24 new positions; looks forward to a staff report on an evaluation of the effectiveness of the reassignment; requested a staff report once shelter housing options during North Central construction have been completed; requested a report back on incidents of animals dying after being left in department vans (DFO Salazar reported that

there had been 11 animals).

Commissioner Gross: Attended Cat Con and Best Friends was there with animals from our shelters; attended Friends of Moorpark Pet Adoption in Studio City with Valerie Bertanelli filming her food program wearing her volunteer shirt; went by East Valley and saw Road to Puppy Bowl under a grant from the ASPCA in cooperation with Animal Planet there was a no-fee day and there was a long line and a lot of adoptions; mentioned City of Las Cruces, New Mexico program that allows people to check-out cats as a way to adopt them out and asked staff to research the possibility for Los Angeles.

Public Comment

Andrew Brown: Recommended that the artificial turf selected not get hot in the sun as it is painful for the dogs; mentioned that 89 animals were adopted at the East Valley; however, at 3:00 p.m., RVT and ACTs who had been working hard all day had to still go back to euthanize animals. **Mary Catalano:** Requested that money from adoptions be used for spay neuter van in every area in the City that doesn't spay neuter; upset that Best Friends adopted out animals at two for \$25 because they will be dumped.

Commissioner Gross requested a staff report on animals being euthanized at 3:00 p.m. after space had been made with all the adoptions – what like to know what happened and how it can be avoided in the future. **Commissioner Zaft** mentioned Feline-Ality Program piloted at the Harbor Shelter and looks forward to future agenda item on expansion of program, and recognized Patty and ASPCA.

5. BOARD REPORTS

A. Board Report to Request Approval of Recommended Changes to the New Hope Program Policy

DFO Selder reiterated prior approved changes and provided a summary of the written report and recommended new changes, then asked for questions.

Commissioner Brent thanked staff and especially Maria for her responsiveness; stated that the issue she hears mostly about from Rescues is the holding of small animals over the weekend, but feels they should be available to the public for adoption; discussed L.A. County shelter transports and third party ownership transfer; opportunity for untruthful documentation on the part of New Hope Partners, but need for efficiency for staff; supports limiting persons pulling for New Hope Partners as well. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that it is sensible to limit the number of people who can pull in order to control process; would like to give more thought to transports because of concerns of animals being transported to another shelter around the country under suspicious circumstances (mentioned report by Lisa McCurdy and Dr. Jensvold). **Commissioner Brent** added that department has provided New Hope Coordinators at each shelter as a result of feedback provided and thanked the department - having staff member makes a difference. **Commissioner Zaft** recognized staff as important in this partnership; happy with results; asked for information before and after the change of how much of shelter population is affected by transport. **DFO Selder** responded that the information from the Woofstat report needs to be broken down; added that some people are not New Hope Partners and simply adopt animals at regular price but are transporting them, and are not addressed by this recommended change.

Public Comment

Andrew Brown: Stated that rescue organizations who wish to pull animals for free like Best Friends should bear the cost to spay or neuter and microchip them. **Patty Naegely:** Stated that the blue list is inconsistent in information provided as to need for medical attention. **Judy Guth:** Stated that not all animals understand English and that if mail carriers speak with dogs, they won't bark as much.

Commissioner Zaft moved to table action on the report until the first meeting in July and **Commissioner Brent** seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.

B. Board Report on Findings of Department Survey of Veterinarians and Recommendation to Increase Spay / Neuter Voucher Amounts

CMA Brown provided a summary of the written report and asked for questions.

Commissioner Brent asked if \$125 is enough and if it is inclusive of pain medication, e-collar, etc. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if this item would then go to City Council for approval (**GM Barnette** responded that it would go to the PAW Committee and may or may not be referred to Budget Committee, then to the City Council); wants to make sure amount is right before approving and sending to City Council.

Public Comment

Fred Jordan: Expressed support for recommendation; recommended giving vouchers to Officers to distribute in areas such as Watts; acknowledged Jennifer from ASPCA for work in South L.A. and offers a lot of free services. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Supports increase; spay neuter victim of our own success – once mandated, the price increased. **Zoey Knittel:** Stated that an increase is needed; SnipLA's average cost per surgery is between \$110 and \$125 per pet; taking a loss but will continue to accept voucher; recommended giving vouchers to ACOs to take into the field. **Teri Austin:** Suggested that if ACOs give a notice to comply, they can give a voucher at the same time because it would be the City telling the person they have to get it done; stated that one of the problems was veterinarians taking the vouchers from rescue groups to pay for other things, 70% were going to cats; should be strict rules as to distribution (species, size and appropriate cost). **Jessica Grothe:** Recommended one stated amount is better for people who do high volume because it helps to offset the cost.

Commissioner Wolfson asked for follow-up on allowing the ACOs to take the vouchers into the field for distribution. **GM Barnette** responded affirmatively if a system can be created that will pass the Controller's scrutiny. **GM Barnette** offered tiered system for vouchers to take into account the species and size. **Commissioner Brent** added that other factors need to be considered such as pregnant, in-heat, crypt orchid that adds to cost, but can be exploited by veterinarians; there need to be rules and regulations and strict follow-up. **Commissioner Gross** requested that staff provide two options. **GM Barnette** responded that further input can be obtained from contract clinics and spay neuter vans and contracted veterinarians. **Commissioner Zaft** suggested keeping in simple so that it's not too difficult to implement.

Commissioner Wolfson moved to table the item until more information is obtained for a final recommendation and **Commissioner Zaft** seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.

- C. Board Report to Accept a Donation from the Jimmy M. Mitchell Trust in the Amount of \$133,333.40 for the Animal Welfare Trust Fund

CMA Brown provided a summary of the written report and asked for questions.

Commissioner Zaft asked about Mr. Mitchell and why he made this bequest. **CMA Brown** responded no additional information was provided. **Commissioner Brent** thanked Mr. Mitchell. **GM Barnette** responded that we may be able to find the Trust Officer at the bank to get more information. **Commissioner Zaft** asked for a report back if further information is obtained and extend a thank you for the bequest to the Estate. **Commissioner Wolfson** recommended approval in order to process the donation and hear additional information at a later time. **Commissioner Brent** recommended naming one of the artificial turf fields after Mr. Mitchell. **Commissioner Wolfson** asked if there is a volunteer fund. **DFO Selder** responded affirmatively.

Public Comment
None

Commissioner Brent moved to accept the generous contribution from the Jimmy M. Mitchell Trust and **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to adjourn the meeting and **Commissioner Gross** seconded. Motion carried 4 - 0.

Meeting ended at 9:02 p.m.