



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



MINUTES

TUESDAY, June 23, 2015 at 7:00 PM

LOS ANGELES CITY HALL, ROOM 1060  
200 NORTH SPRING STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

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Audio MP-3 Recording is available at [www.laanimalservices.com](http://www.laanimalservices.com)

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

Meeting called to order at 10:09 a.m. by Board Secretary, Rita Moreno, Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS). Roll call. Commissioners present were Yañez, Brent, Gross and Wolfson. Commissioner Zaft was absent. Also present: General Manager (GM) Brenda Barnette, Chief Management Analyst (CMA) Dana Brown, Directors of Field Operations (DFO) Jan Selder and Louis Dedeaux, and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Dov Lesel.

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

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS**

**1. Barking Dog Case: BD 151003 EV**

Respondent: Michelle, Ronlevy and Divina Mercado

Complaining Witness: Ashwani Rohilla

North Central Animal Care and Control: Captain Wendell Bowers

Testimony was taken from the Respondents Ronlevy and Divina Mercado, and the Complaining Witnesses, Ashwani Rohilla. The Commission found that the evidence supported the General Manager's decision to reissue the license with terms and conditions, based on the hearing before the Hearing Examiner, in accordance with LAMC § 53.18.5.

**Commissioner Gross** made a motion to deny the appeal and uphold the order of the General Manager to reissue the licenses for **Rocky** (L15-454808) and **Yoshi** (L15-454801) with terms and conditions. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Brent** and was approved by a vote of 4 - 0.

**II. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS** (Item take out of order and heard after Item II.2.A.):

**Andrew Brown:** Concerned about the number of animals and the amount of time they are placed on hold; 46% of animals at East Valley are unavailable and does not include personal property or evidence dogs so the number is likely over 50%; too many unavailable animals causes more available dogs to die; we are not legally obligated to differentiate between strays and possible owners, nor to hold possible owner dogs longer; urges the department revert back to seven-day holds or less for possible owner dogs; some animals are held longer due to staff error: ACTs book animals and put the wrong "due out" date then the date can't be moved forward and animal has to wait extra days or weeks; possible owner dogs reach the end of 10-day

holds, but because letter was never sent out, they have to start all over again; microchips are missed on intake and found days/weeks/months later starting another 10-day hold; suggests placing protocols to catch these issues earlier – an ACT or Clerk can be assigned to check the previous day's intakes to make sure all letters were sent, on Mondays all intakes from previous weeks can be rescanned for missed microchips. **Teri Austin:** Reported on June 14 Amanda Foundation and Downtown Dog Rescue wellness clinic in Watts with participation by the President of the Southern CA Vet Association and 10 other Veterinarians – first time participation; Amanda vaccinated 150 animals and 40 more were spay/neutered; need more inclusion/participation from Dr. Prupas to build relationship with Veterinarians to help promote vouchers and licensing; and get volunteer services; the next event will be held in August. **Marian Fine:** Discussed Harbor exercise yard and its importance to the dogs; requested not to tear out grass for astro turf. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that the problem with cats is that they are not treated like dogs – not required to be licensed, people don't have to take responsibility for them; informed of planned protest at the Mayor's Mansion; questioned department's involvement/knowledge of 25 cats that were buried by construction crews.

## 2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

- A. Board Recognition of LAASEE Award Recipients** (Item taken out of order and heard after Item I.1. Administrative Appeal)
- a. Lori Weise, Executive Director, Downtown Dog Rescue (tabled)
  - b. Dr. Rolando Vasquez (Posthumous), Veterinarian, North Figueroa Animal Hospital (tabled)
  - c. Mark Dodge, Co-Founder, FixNation

Commissioner Wolfson discussed the purpose of the LAASEE Awards and provided background information on and the basis for his nomination of Mark Dodge. Karn Myers shared some remarks about Mark and her work to support Los Angeles' community cats.

**Commissioner Wolfson** made to approve the LAASEE Award for Mark Dodge. **Commissioner Brent** seconded. Motion carried 4 - 0.

- B. Approval of Minutes for May 26, 2015.** (Item taken out of order and heard after Item II.1.)

Minutes not available; item tabled until next meeting.

- C. Approval of Minutes for June 9, 2015.**

Minutes not available; item tabled until next meeting.

## 3. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

GM Barnette shared the following:

- RD Systems is currently in the process of installing surveillance cameras at our East and West Valley animal shelters. These cameras were purchased with monies from the Animal Welfare Trust Fund which was approved by the Board

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earlier this year in March. Once RD Systems completes the installation at both of the valley animal shelters, they will begin installation at our West Los Angeles and Harbor locations. We expect that the installation of cameras at all of the approved locations will be completed by mid August 2015.

- Cmdr. Dedeaux has met with the staff and volunteers at the North Central animal shelter last week and implemented the Socialization for Unavailable Animals program. The final training for this program is scheduled to take place on June 25, 2015 at the South Los Angeles, Chesterfield Square animal shelter. Dangerous dogs are not being walked, but volunteers are allowed to sit and read to them.
- Lucky Dog will be filming an episode of their show on June 22nd at The East Valley Shelter. Trainer Brandon McMillan will be adopting a shelter dog for a family and donating several dog beds.
- Starbucks representatives from the Woodland Hills store will be stopping by The East Valley Shelter on June 17th to tour the facility and plan a "Day of Service" to help beautify the shelter by weeding and general clean up.
- The South Los Angeles Wellness Clinic was a huge success! The event was a collaboration between LAAS, Found Animals, Downtown Dog and the Veterinary Medical Association. People were lined up around the block to participate. We had approximately 170 dogs that received vaccinations and microchips that were donated by Found Animals. The veterinarians donated their time and they were very enthusiastic to be able to participate in future wellness clinics. I've been working closely with Peter Weinstein, President of the SCVA, and will get more Veterinarians involved, as well as ensure Jeremy Prupas is involved.
- The Administrative Citation Enforcement (ACE) program on June 1st. The program is being initially piloted out of the North Central district and in License Canvassing citywide. A total of 88 ACE citations were issued during the first two weeks of the program. Of those, 8 citations were forwarded to the City Attorney's Office for fines to be imposed. In most citable offenses, violators are allowed a certain amount of time to make corrections before the fine is imposed. The other 80 citations were either corrected or are awaiting compliance dates to review if fines should be imposed.
- A small group of vocal activists are planning a demonstration at the home of the Mayor at 9 AM on Sunday, June 28th.
- Online donations are not processing correctly. This has been an off and on ongoing problem since the December 8, 2014 downtown fire that moved our administrative staff. City ITA had been trying to assist our ITA staff to resolve, but the "fixes" have not been stable to date.
- We had a community meeting last night with the Hollywood United Neighborhood Council, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, LA Recreation & Parks and about 100 community members at the Fire Station 82 Annex, 1800 N. Bronson Avenue to talk about "Co-Existing with Urban Wildlife" and to take public comment due to an increase in coyotes in neighborhoods near Griffith Park. There were people on both sides of the issue. Most of the people who wanted to kill the coyotes had lost an animal and were still in a lot of pain. The Lt. from the CA Fish and Wildlife has a program with community volunteers to determine where the animals are coming from and establish hazing methods. About five people volunteered to participate. If it's effective the program will be made available to other neighborhoods. Travis Longcore was there and tried to explain that killing the coyotes was not the solution.

- We're still down Clerk Typists and are working with City Personnel to get a list to interview Animal Control Officers – the positions are approved for next fiscal year and we now have eight vacancies. (CMA Brown added that the City will release the exam bulletin this Friday, which will also be posted online, and encouraged attendees to spread the word to those who might be interested. The exam will be a pass/fail physical abilities test, 100% written, and certification oral at the department). It will be a three or four month process because most will not have the training and will need to be trained.
- This week Animal Services received a check for \$1,859.00 from a resident who was charged and convicted of a Wild Animal permit violation earlier this year - an approximate 8-foot long alligator was located in a covered box in the rear yard. The alligator is estimated to be nearly 40 years old. Also located in the box with the alligator were what appeared to be two carcasses of deceased cats. The carcasses were impounded along with the alligator. The case was pursued by the City Attorney's Office and we got restitution.
- Cat-A-Palooza was a very successful adoption weekend for cats. The Pet Care Foundation subsidized cat adoptions fees, paying \$50 for each cat adopted, boosting cat adoptions well above dog adoptions for the weekend; 117 cats found new homes, compared to 105 dogs. The total number of adoptions for all animals over the weekend was 273 as compared to 266 in 2014.
- Woofstat Report: Incoming cats are up 4%, live save rate dropped from 71.1% to 70.8% due to increase in cats; we released 4% more; reduction in incoming dogs by 4%; the trend is that there will be a slight increase in the summer and then we go down again in the fall; we are behind in licensing as a result of the three moves, but we are up for the month 13%; spay neuters for our vets are down because of the number of cruelty cases and large busts – within the last month 70 cats came in on a Friday night – that interrupt the vets from taking care of the animals and doing spay neuter so they can examine animals on intake. This is the end of the fiscal year report.

**Commissioner Gross** asked about the 22% increase on others; **GM Barnette** responded that it can be the chickens, ducks and/or rabbits. **Commissioner Brent** asked why the DOA outcome is higher this month by 111% and 18% for the end of the year, and whether it is due to cruelty cases where animals are dying under our care. **GM Barnette** responded that it is due to panleukopenia and neonates. **Commissioner Brent** stated that 300 more over last year is really high. Staff present responded that there are a lot of kittens are coming in very sick. **GM Barnette** added that since there are fewer services for feral cats, more kittens are coming in. **Commissioner Gross** asked for clarification on increase in hearings, increase in redeemed vouchers, and decrease in volunteers. **GM Barnette** responded the Volunteer Coordinator is doing double-duty on orientations so we need to ensure that the numbers are being updated; **CMA Brown** responded that three part-time Hearing Officers have been hired: two are LAPD Hearing Officers and the third was with law enforcement; able to do more hearings to deal with backlog, but officers are taken out of the field to testify – working with the City Attorney to see if changes can be made.

**GM Barnette** provided an update on the items approved by the Board on March 24, 2015, as follows:

Equipment for Dog Walking Program

A requisition has been issued for the nylon martingale collars in the amount of \$1,067.16 back on April 1, 2015. The Department has been waiting for General Services to issue the purchase order; however, the fiscal year closed and General Services never issued the purchase order claiming staff shortages. We will re-issue the requisition in July when the new fiscal year opens.

Playgroup Training Equipment

A purchase order was issued for the personal safety horns in the amount of \$1,449.53. This order has been received by the Department and the equipment will be distributed at the next Animal Care Technician Supervisor meeting.

A requisition has been issued for the dog treat pouches in the amount of \$980.34 on April 1, 2015. The Department has been waiting for General Services to issue the purchase order; however, the fiscal year closed and General Services never issued the purchase order claiming staff shortages. We will re-issue the requisition in July when the new fiscal year opens.

No purchase order has been issued for the following items – Leerburg Bamboo Clat Sticks, Fox 40 Sonik Blast w/ mouth guard and breakaway lanyard, leather covered soft sticks and Mendota British-style slip leads. There are no city vendors available to purchase these items. The Department and General Services will need to seek out vendors and request that they become a city vendor in order to place orders for these items.

Puppy and Kitten Formula

A purchase order was issued in the amount of \$35,319.27. This order has been received by the Department and the equipment will be distributed at the next Animal Care Technician Supervisor meeting.

Wayfair Bubble Club Sofa

No purchase order has been issued. We are waiting for General Services to make them a vendor with the city in order to place the order. In waiting for this to happen the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council has graciously agreed to purchase these items for us. They will be issuing a check to Bound Angels. Bound Angels will be placing the order as soon as they receive the check.

Zone Equipment for Music Installation

Funding for the zoning equipment and installation will need to be transferred to the city's Information Technology Agency (ITA). We are in communication with ITA to have funding transferred. We anticipate this transfer of funding to take place in July when the new fiscal year opens.

Stand-Alone Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

The purchase orders have been issued for East Valley, West Valley, West Los Angeles and the Harbor for a total cost of \$227,632.02. On June 12, 2015 they began installation at East and West Valley. They will be working at both locations intermittently over the next few weeks. They are expected to be completed at both locations by mid July 2015. Once completed at those locations, we will coordinate the installation of cameras at West Los Angeles and the Harbor.

Maneri Sign Co. Kennel Card Holders



The requisition was issued on April 29, 2015 in the amount of \$13,734.00; however, this item was delayed by General Services and sent out for bid. The purchase order was issued on June 1, 2015. In going through the bid process, a vendor came back with a lower cost of \$6,094.44 which saved us \$7,639.56. This item is currently in fabrication and is expected to be received by the Department in July 2015.

#### Stainless Steel Bowls

A purchase order has been issued in the amount of \$1,622.73. This order has been received by the Department and the equipment will be distributed at the next Animal Care Technician Supervisor meeting.

#### Pressure Washer

The requisition was issued on September 25, 2014 in the amount of \$2,174.55; however, this item was delayed by General Services and sent out for bid. The purchase order was issued on April 23, 2015. In going through the bid process, a vendor came back with a higher cost of \$2,330.42 which put us over budget on this item by \$155.42. This item was received by the West Los Angeles facility on May 29, 2015 and is currently being used by the district.

#### Automatic Dog Waterers

No purchase order has been issued. We are waiting for General Services to make Nelson Manufacturing Company a vendor with the city in order to place the order.

#### Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugherty:** Recommended using vans for new Officers that will be hired; leave the key on to keep air conditioning running; Greg Randall absent from community meeting last night – discussed dog attack incident and requested he be brought back to the Wildlife Program. **Teri Austin:** Clarified that 170 vaccines were given at mobile clinic; 100 people had to be turned away – if we can get the vets on board we can do twice as much in half the time; seeing more “Notice to Comply” cases – calls Officer listed on notice to let them know who has complied. **Whitney Smith:** Announced the protest at the Mayor’s from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at 605 S. Irving to reform the department; discussed bottle formula and that shelters don’t have any for fosters. **Andrew Brown:** Requested that the Woofstat report list spay neuter by shelter vets; noted that more males are neutered because easier; adoptable females don’t get spayed, instead red-listed males get neutered then euthanized days later; requested to stop dogs and cats from being spayed/neutered on the same day they become available – people come during lunch to see an animal that has become available, but aren’t able to do so.

#### 4. COMMISSIONERS’ ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

**Commissioner Gross:** Recognized the SMART team for quick response to rescue kitten trapped in North Hollywood house, kitten being fostered by brother of a member of the Beach Boys; announced dates for workshops on pets and rental housing as part of the Housing and Community Innovation Department’s regular meetings on the Rent Stabilization Ordinance – four will be held at shelters in November in conjunction with LAAS on tenant and landlord rights in relation to pets.

**Commissioner Brent:** Noted that personal property and evidence animals are up 60% - brings attention to overcrowding and taking up space for stray or those available

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for adoption; suggested enlisting volunteers to help staff the old South L.A. shelter for animals awaiting a hearing; requested report on Feline-ality program and possible expansion to West L.A.; founders of Heigl Foundation honored at Pet Co Gala (Pet Co second largest animal welfare grantor in the nation); mentioned death of Dick Van Patten, founder of Natural Balance pet food, who donated millions of pounds of pet food for homeless animals and animal welfare groups, and founder of National Guide Dog Month.

**Commissioner Wolfson:** Thanked Jan and Brenda for eliminating the 10 hour requirement of volunteer time before being able to be trained to walk dogs – this will help with volunteer retention and staff efficiency; asked for status on piping music in shelters; requested discussion on changing shelter hours because adoptions happen after hours; requested allowing for expanded volunteer hours to work evenings; would like kiosks in shelters operated by pet stores so that those adopting/fostering have items readily available, and can bring in revenue for needed items.

**Commissioner Yañez:** Discussed third and final outreach event for the year to occur the first Saturday in August at Salazar Park, open to L.A. City; requested follow-up report on increasing voucher amounts, and status of contract with Sniff for vaccines.

#### Public Comment

**Whitney Smith:** Mentioned Deputy District Attorney Debbie Knaan extended hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays to 7:00 p.m. when she was a Commissioner, and volunteers were allowed at night; asked that Arlene McNeel be requested to report on her work and specific outreach to recruit new volunteers. **Andrew Brown:** Thanked Commissioner Brent for suggestion to find alternative housing for personal property and evidence animals.

## 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A.** Update on Playgroup Classes and Presentation of Certificates of Completion by Cmdr. Dedeaux and Robert Cabral (Item taken out of order and heard after Item II.1. Public Comment)

**Cmdr. Dedeaux** provided an update stating that there would be another round of playgroup training classes at each shelter for those who missed the first class, and to identify any unique problems being experienced. He stated that certificates will be given to those who have completed the training and clarified that those trained were trained to train other volunteers, and will be able to hold play groups without the presence of staff. He indicated that everyone was doing great and that dogs are getting adopted out of playgroups.

**Commissioner Yañez** asked if the playgroups are now at all the shelters; **Cmdr. Dedeaux** responded affirmatively. **Commissioner Brent** asked if staff had all the equipment needed for playgroups; **Cmdr. Dedeaux** responded that some items had been ordered and some are awaiting a purchase order, and thanked the Commission for approving the purchase of the items. **Commissioner Wolfson** remarked on the creativity and intelligent thinking, and recognized staff efforts. **GM Barnette** recognized Robert Cabral for his volunteer service to LAAS. **Mr. Cabral** introduced his dog, a female German Shepherd; thanked Commission and Department for playgroups and thinking outside the box; playgroup training is hard

to do properly – some dogs can't be placed in certain groups; training is first phase and will need to conduct a formal second round at no additional cost; 14 hour training includes reading body language, understanding drives; understanding different types of aggression and play aggression; some dogs that would never make it into a yard made it into a group, and those that couldn't be in a group made it into a smaller couple or threesome; everyone did so well and benefited; one dog was rescued because it was taken out and someone saw it on facebook and it was their dog; many dogs got adopted and medically they have less stress and behavioral issues. **Commissioner Brent** mentioned a conversation with Amy Sadler who has a lot of faith in Robert's ability and highly recommends the program. **Mr. Cabral** added that videos were shot every single day and they are available free online through Found Animals video channel, and there are a lot of training videos on aggression training and temperament training that can be used while participating in training and as refresher training. **Commissioner Yañez** mentioned watching the videos and importance of being able to see dogs playing to encourage adoption; thanked Cmdr. Dedeaux and Mr. Cabral for work.

**Cmdr. Dedeaux and Robert Cabral** then called out the names of those who completed the playgroup training and distributed certificates of completion.

Public Comment

**Whitney Smith:** Thanked volunteers and requested schedule for playgroups.  
**Kerry Armstrong:** Thanked Cmdr. Dedeaux and Robert Cabral, recognized Debbie Zitman (sp?) for photographs and videos for North Central Shelter and for the Friends of North Central facebook page she runs; mentioned North Central playgroups are held Friday mornings.

## 6. BOARD REPORTS

- A. Board Report to Accept ASPCA Grant in the Amount of \$400,000 to Allow for Fee Waived Public Adoptions of Cats and Fee Waived New Hope Partner Adoptions of Cats, Pit Bull/Mixes and Chihuahuas/Mixes (Item taken out of order after Item 4)

**DFO Selder** provided a summary of the written report and clarified that the adoption process for fee waived cats is the same as that for any other animal; **GM Barnette** added that the grant is a result of ASPCA invitation to Marcia Mayeda from the County and LAAS to discuss how to best leverage their funds to increase adoptions.

**Commissioner Brent** mentioned analysis conducted on Found Animals' adoption events offering free animals, and found no increase in returned animals or dissatisfied adopters than when charging for animals. **DFO Selder** mentioned fee-waived adoption event on June 7 and 30-day return period – no change in number of animals normally returned; will have a report in 30 days on increase or decrease.

Public Comment  
None

**Commissioner Brent** moved to accept the ASPCA grant in the amount of \$400,000 for the stated purposes and **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.



**B. Animal Welfare Trust and Animal Sterilization Fund Balances and Update on Approved Expenditures**

**GM Barnette** provided a summary of the written report and asked for questions.

**Commissioner Gross** expressed concern about the spending by Value Vet and Snip LA, thanked Amanda Foundation for spending funds; **GM Barnette** responded that when contract renewals come up the department can reduce the amount of the contract; added that vendors may not list all of their information on the vet portal, and that the department does not pay until we receive hard copy receipts and can match them up; an analysis will be conducted to determine spending trends. **CMA Brown** added that the Controller changes its requirements for payment, but it is inconsistent with contract language; more paperwork and administrative work is required for vendors and some don't have the staff or time, and we can't require them to do it because of the contract language. **GM Barnette** added that there was \$46,691.68 in donations for the AWTF. **Commissioner Brent** mentioned artificial turf in some shelter locations for which dedicated trusts can be used; areas will have sufficient shade and drainage.

**Public Comment**

**Teri Austin:** Asked about the renewal of the spay neuter mobile clinic contract and department's intention to renew (**GM Barnette** responded affirmatively); recommended biannual encumbrance of funds so that funds can be moved around in the middle of the year. **Whitney Smith:** Mentioned Marie Tinner estate funds not being spent in the past three years; mentioned East Valley interior play area for dogs and cats – recommended using funds to construct one at North Central.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Yañez** made a motion to adjourn the meeting in honor of Dick Van Patten and **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded. Motion carried 4 - 0.

Meeting ended at 12:04 p.m.