



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



MINUTES

TUESDAY, July 28, 2015 at 7:00 PM

SOUTH L.A. CHESTERFIELD SQUARE ANIMAL SHELTER
1850 WEST 60th STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90047

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

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

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Roll call. Commissioners present were Yañez, Brent, Gross and Wolfson. Commissioner Zaft was absent. Also present Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS) Board Secretary, Rita Moreno; General Manager, Brenda Barnette; Chief Management Analyst (CMA), Dana Brown; and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Dov Lesel.

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

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS: Katie Marrie:** Vet with ASPCA discussed problems at South L.A. shelter: ditch around entrance to parking lot, buses block streets and parking. **Andrew Brown:** Discussed animals adopted after 10 days pay less, but if fostered and adopted by foster, they get a new intake number and the adoption fee goes up again; adopted and returned animals should stay at lower price. **Beverly Mitchell:** Would like to share free program providing space for animals coming out of medical for special care – it will help them get adopted out (provided packets to Commissioners). **Keith Renty:** Baldwin Hills Neighborhood Association; stated there is an infestation of coyotes killing pets and wants solution. **Frederick Jordan:** Read from Sunset Magazine article on taking dogs out for the day. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Offered apology for how protests are being conducted and misinformation being provided.

2. **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. Election of Board Officers

ACA Lesel provided guidance on process.

Public Comment
None

Commissioner Gross nominated Commissioner Zaft to serve a second term as President and **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Yañez nominated Commissioner Gross to serve as Vice President and **Commissioner Brent** seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Wolfson thanked Commissioner Yañez for her service as Vice President.

B. Board Recognition of LAASEE Award Recipients

- a. Dr. Rolando Vasquez (Posthumous), Veterinarian, North Figueroa Animal Hospital
- b. Lori Weise, Executive Director, Downtown Dog Rescue

Commissioner Wolfson gave a summary of the purpose of the LAASEE Award. **Commissioner Yañez** provided a biography and personal experience with Dr. Rolando Vasquez, her nominee, and presented the award to his wife, Lucy, and daughter, Jennifer. **Commissioner Brent** provided a biography for her nominee, Lori Weise, and presented the award to Ms Weise.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugherty: Shared comments about Dr. Vasquez and his last days.

Commissioner Gross moved to approve LAASEE Award recipients Dr. Rolando Vasquez (posthumously) and Lori Weise, and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.

C. Approval of Minutes for July 14, 2015.

Public Comment

None

Commissioner Brent moved to approve the minutes of July 14, 2015, and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. The motion passed 4 – 0.

3. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

GM Barnette reported on the following:

- On July 21 the City of Beverly Hills approved the interim agreement with LAAS; staff reported on positive experience with LAAS and willingness to continue service agreement and their puppy mill ordinance.
- RD Systems is continuing to install surveillance cameras simultaneously at our Harbor and West Los Angeles animal shelters. These cameras were purchased with monies from the Animal Welfare Trust Fund approved by the Board of Commissioners earlier this year in March. We expect to have all cameras up and running by the end of July.
- K9 Connections, a group that brings teens and canines together, is at the West L.A. Animal Shelter conducting a two-week training program from July 20-31. They selected six shelter dogs that they are training – they pick them up every day and take them to Virginia Avenue Park where they do basic training.
- The ASPCA has confirmed the award for LAAS of a \$6,000 grant to reduce the adoption fees for dogs and cats to \$20 for the “Clear the Shelter Day” on August 15.
- NBC Universal together with other media outlets such as Telemundo will host “Clear the Shelter’s Day” on August 15. Fees will be reduced at all six shelters. Terry Hernandez started this program and it extends to all of Southern California.
- General Services is still working on identifying the leaking water line at North Central.
- We’ve done a couple of rounds of interviews for a PR Specialist.
- We’ve been working with a neighborhood in Hollywood over the coyote problem; coyotes have lost their fear of people because there is water for the coyotes; recommending humane hazing to re-instill the fear; lethal means are not appropriate; working on

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program to work with community on systematic hazing methods with California Fish and Wildlife.

- Woofstat Report: A lot of underage kittens are coming in that we don't have fosters for; live/save rate for dogs is 82.18% and for cats 54.98%, but over a five year period, there has been an increase of 12% for cats as well as for dogs; euthanasia is down 7%.
- There are 32 ACO positions available (CMA Brown added that 140-160 applications have been received that need to be screened; the written and physical exam will take place August 22, and the list will be certified by the end of September). They Mayor will assist if delays occur.
- ACE program rolled out at North Central and will be moving to the South L.A. and Harbor Shelters in August; 332 citations have been issued, of which 60 have been sent to the City Attorney for fines, which means they are not correctible. The rest either didn't have licenses or their animals were not spayed or neutered.

Commissioner Brent asked about the DOA (died during our care) increase to 16% (500 animals) and whether it is due to neonates. **GM Barnette** responded that there was a scare about panleuk, but haven't heard more; believe it has to do with neonates; all New Hope Partners are trying to help; NKLA is helping by encouraging all to do cats. **Commissioner Gross** asked the about the spay/neuter surgeries and contracts. **GM Barnette** responded that the more animal cruelty cases we handle, the less spay/neuter our vets handle and they are referred to partner vets; need to have conversation with City Attorney about changing contract amount if not performing to put money in other places. **Commissioner Gross** asked why adoptions and fosters are down, as well as no volunteer numbers. **GM Barnette** responded that the numbers were being done by hand and volistics is just now being used. **Commissioner Brent** suggested being able to log in remotely for North Central to be able to track. **GM Barnette** responded that she will ask Systems. **Commissioner Gross** noted that hearings are up. **GM Barnette** responded that Dana was able to bring on three part-time hearing officers and is streamlining the program. **CMA Brown** added that she has been working with ACA Lesel on streamlining the process to work better for the public and staff.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugherty: Asked how many of the ACE cases involves humane issues – that's what it was for; how much money has come in – revenue is to bring in more Officers; discussed experience with coyotes and that you can't put them into other areas; when you put a strange animal into the territory of other wildlife, it will be killed. **Andrew Brown:** Stated that the impound evidence animals numbers are actually much higher; more are coming in and not getting out; you can't clear animals that are on hold; SNPLA East Valley max of 10 dogs per day, but being held to 5 dogs per day – causing problem because animals being adopted have to wait 2-4 weeks to spay/neuter.

4. COMMISSIONERS' ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Wolfson: Shared that three puppies that he and his wife fostered at North Central had found homes; asked for update on proposal to place kiosks in shelters to provided supplies needed (**ACA Lesel** responded that the CAO needs to finish their analysis on the bond documents for public facilities with private use); would like to discuss allowing pet stores and vets to sell licenses.

Commissioner Brent: Would like update report on Feline-ality program; the use of the

South L.A. Shelter Annex to handle the overflow of evidence dogs; would like a queue on items coming up; and report at each meeting on unfilled positions by job and locations to understand staffing issues.

Commissioner Yañez: No report.

Commissioner Gross: Discussed workshops on pets and rental housing with HCID, the first to take place on November 18, at 2:00 p.m., at the South L.A. Shelter; would like signage directing the public to shelters; and would like a report on discounted price for fosters.

Public Comment

Michelle Kelly: Stated that there is a hierarchy in the shelters with dogs at the top; would like to see rabbit housing on the agenda; need more cages and freezers; discussed need for rabbit adoption program.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Discussion re Commissioner Wolfson's Proposal for a Pilot Program to Allow Select Volunteers Access to a Shelter on Mondays

Commissioner Wolfson provided background on his proposal and the need for volunteers; the amount of work at the shelters requires more hours, but can't get more from staff; we're losing volunteer hours, but we can increase if we use the Best Friends model where volunteers feel welcomed; stated that staff approved exceptional volunteers should be able to work after hours, weekends, holidays, Mondays and in emergency situations. **GM Barnette** responded that a discussion is needed with the Joint Labor Management Committee. **CMA Brown** stated that she would speak further with Commissioner Wolfson and a shelter supervisor since there are employee relations implications. **Commissioner Gross** asked for clarification as to why volunteers are not allowed on Mondays. **GM Barnette** responded that Mondays are used to deep clean the shelters; after hours there is a limited number of staff to keep staff, volunteers and animals safe. **Commissioner Wolfson** added that staff can pick which volunteers can have access on Mondays and after hours. **GM Barnette** responded that a working group can meet to discuss the pros and cons. **Commissioner Yañez** stated that when she worked at the shelter, they had volunteers every day; non-profit so did not have the same labor issues. **Commissioner Brent** stated that the County allows volunteers and expressed concerns with staff selection of "best" volunteers. **Commissioner Wolfson** recommended that staff and volunteers be asked to help set the criteria for selecting the volunteers. **Commissioner Yañez** responded that it is important that specific volunteers be picked because you don't have enough staff for supervision. **Commissioner Gross** stated that is a good intent; supported moving forward and identifying issues. **Commissioner Wolfson** noted the presence of stated support for this initiative from all four Commissioners present; stated that volunteers lead to fosters and fosters lead to adoption.

Public Comment

Andrew Brown: Stated that the comparison with Best Friends is difficult because many are former LAAS volunteers who left because of euthanasia; stated that he has been asked multiple times to help out after hours with transports and to video animals for New Hope. **Michelle Kelly:** Stated that not all volunteers allowed to do everything (example

dog walkers 1, 2 and 3); and that it depends on who you get along with on staff.

Commissioner Gross asked for a staff report. **Commissioner Wolfson** asked when it would come back. **CMA Brown** responded next meeting and **GM Barnette** added that a discussion will come back before a formal report from Jan. **Commissioner Wolfson** asked about the authority of the Board and what they can expect from staff. **Commissioner Gross** added that an overview of the real powers of the board and responsibilities is needed. **GM Barnette** stated that job descriptions are taken into account although it volunteer duties vary from shelter to shelter.

6. Board Reports

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

CMA Brown provided an overview of the report and the concerns previously raised by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Brent stated that few groups will be impacted by new policy.

Public Comment

None

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to approve the staff recommendation and **Commissioner Yañez** seconded. Motion carried 4 - 0.

Commissioner Yañez recused herself and left the meeting.

B. Board Report from Staff with Recommendation to Increase Spay / Neuter Voucher Amounts

GM Barnette shared discussion with Dr. Weinstein (CVMA) about what it will take for vets to participate as AFE Vets; survey distributed was too general that did not answer Commission questions; they want to know about free health exams after adoption, which has been expanded to five days; they don't accept \$70 free vouchers, only the reduced fee vouchers; some vets will take rabbits and some won't; report should state that only three rabbits per household. **CMA Brown** provided an overview of the report and indicated that rabbits have been added.

Commissioner Brent supported increasing the vouchers, but thinks \$125 for dogs, \$50 for cats and \$125 for rabbits; asked if the cost will include e-collar, pain meds, cryptorchid, pregnant animals, senior pets; asked if the person getting the voucher commits to a particular vet and can't go to a cheaper vet. **GM Barnette** responded that they do not commit; believes contract states that the cost is to include e-collar and perhaps pain meds. **Commissioner Gross** expressed concern about whether \$125 covers the costs and whether an add-on can be substantiated; suggested leveraging vouchers with vets to provide information on licensing. **Commissioner Brent** stated that \$125 for dogs and \$60 for cats in normal cases is adequate. **GM Barnette** responded that we can amend the fee schedule; most of the AFE vets do not do the higher price spay neuters and do not take the higher priced vouchers. **Commissioner Wolfson** suggested asking vets to ask their clients if their dogs are licensed, and to sell the licenses. **Commissioner Gross** added that minimally, they should post signs indicating

it's the law to license, spay and neuter animals. **GM Barnette** responded that vets felt like they were turning in their clients if they were not licensed, but contractually they can be required to post signs about the law; they didn't want to sell the licenses even though they keep \$2 for each one. **CMA Brown** suggested putting vets on the department's website if they sell licenses. **Commissioner Wolfson** added that he knows vets who are interested in selling licenses.

Public Comment

GM Barnette paraphrased an email from **Sue Taylor** stating that \$125 is good for dogs and \$70 for cats; suggested raising the \$30 voucher as well - \$50 for dogs and \$30 for cats; stated that \$70 only for sterilization surgery; helpful to see how much more money is needed for blood test, vaccinations, pain medications, etc.; willing to help contacting people who have used the \$70 voucher. **Phyllis Daugherty**: Stated that everything needs to be worked out before approving; what if animal needs to be kept over-night and emergencies; recommended checking whether vets will take credit card or cash; agreed with pricing suggested by Sue; recommended posting signs as to where pets can be licensed as opposed to punitive. **Michelle Kelly**: Requested the voucher be increased to \$125, but no higher for rabbits because some clinics do not have a good survival rate; need to find clinics that do rabbits safely; need pre- and post-op sheet for rabbits. **Noel Jackson**: SNPLA; take vouchers as all inclusive except when special situations such as pyometra or cryptorchid because then losing \$140 on surgery; used to have a pregnancy voucher so person would have regular voucher and pregnancy voucher to handle "extraordinary care" situations; added that has asked for licenses to sell at clinic and hasn't gotten them. **Aimee Gilbreath**: Found Animals Foundation; current structure does not cover costs; other funding sources are no longer available; no organizations have mission to sterilize shelter animals for adoption, only the public's pets; contract is not for 10 dogs a day, it's 10 animals a day, and they want to get paid for procedures they do; \$125 adequate for dogs, but \$50 or \$60 for cats is too low. (**Commissioner Brent** added that non-profits have higher volume so their costs are lower than private vets) **Andrew Brown**: Requested notification of mandatory licensing but also spay neuter; asked if grooming and boarding facilities are licensed by the City and can be required to post the information as well. (**Commissioner Wolfson** added that groomer asks for rabies certificate; **GM Barnette** added that boarding facilities require dog license).

Commissioner Brent recommended tabling the report to include free and subsidized vouchers, and cats vs dogs vs rabbits. **Commissioner Gross** agreed and suggested looking at extraordinary issues and mandatory posting on licensing. **CMA Brown** responded that special circumstances are taken into account; challenges on reporting requirement that meets Controller requirements but not too onerous for vets; would like to talk to vendors about frequency of special circumstances. **GM Barnette** recommended talking with partners and contract vets. **ACA Lesel** added that reports need to be very clear before going to Committee and Council. **GM Barnette** suggested looking at how the pregnancy voucher was handled in the past. **Commissioner Brent** stated that it is an opportunity to solicit costs from primary vendors.

Commissioner Brent made a motion to continue the item to the next meeting and **Commissioner Wolfson** seconded. The motion carried 4 - 0.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wolfson made a motion to adjourn the meeting in honor of the Zaft Family and **Commissioner Brent** seconded. Motion carried 4 - 0.

Meeting ended at 9:13 p.m.