



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



**MINUTES**  
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2015 at 7:00 PM**

WEST LOS ANGELES ANIMAL SHELTER  
11361 WEST PICO BOULEVARD  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90064

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

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

Commissioner Zaft recognized Tim Pershing from Assemblyman Bloom's Office, and opened the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

**REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Frederick Jordan:** ACO with Harbor discussed humane investigation and post-seizure in Watts that needed LAPD assistance, but they didn't show; suggested policy to have LAPD support when seizing animals, and that the uniforms have "Animal Control Officer" on shirt. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that Officer Jordan is a former Sheriff Deputy; that there has never been a meeting in North Central (**Commissioner Zaft** clarified that a meeting was held in Highland Park last year and that the December meeting will also be held in the area; the shelter is not big enough to accommodate a meeting); no receipt for feral being brought in to a shelter; provided Attorney General's opinion on licensing; Dr. Mackey just came back from Panama and has conducted 100,000 spay neuters. **Andrew Brown:** Stated that animals are being put on hold for the NKLA event 15 days prior to the event; East Valley jammed with dogs; desirable dogs being put on hold before public has opportunity. **Josh Liddy:** Thanked the Commission for the "Know Your Rights" workshop and asked how it is being publicized. **Sherry Brewer:** Handy Information Guide corrections; discussed senior dogs at shelters and asked why they are the same price as puppies – dogs over 8 or 9 years old should cost less. **Sergio Rios:** Stated that receipts are not given only impound numbers, you have to ask for it; receipts are given if animals are surrendered.

**2. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

**A. Approval of Minutes for October 13, 2015.**

Public Comment  
None

**Commissioner Gross** moved to approve the minutes of October 13, 2015, as amended, and **Commissioner Brent** seconded. The motion passed 5 – 0.

### 3. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

**GM Barnette** discussed the following:

- Reported that the department moved back to Figueroa Plaza and recognized the work of systems' staff
- Met with Mayor's budget team to discuss goals and strategies for next fiscal year; budget will remain flat
- Playgroups are doing their second round
- Conducted interviews for a Hearing Officer on Wednesday; Troy Boswell is being promoted to the position and will start the first week in November; the temporary Hearing Officer will no longer be with us
- Recreation and Parks awarded landscaping contract to BMC Landscape Management to maintain department facilities; started at South L.A. and will end in West Valley in January; initial deferred maintenance (audit and repair of irrigation systems, tree trimming, clean-up, planting and mulching / DG), then regular maintenance
- Exam portion of the ACO has been completed; working with Personnel for selection; five more test sessions in November; goal is 275 candidates for selection of 37 candidates
- October 10 humane complaint on Denny Avenue in North Hollywood; 142 animals were taken into protective custody: 1 lizard, 13 dogs and 129 cats; is being investigated and will be presented to City Attorney for prosecution
- Assisted LAFD with horse that fell 75 feet down a ravine
- Assisted LAFD with two dogs in the Tujunga wash
- Licensing canvassing team continues to recruit; three additional have been added for a total of six; a total of 12 positions
- November 7 and 8 NKLA super adoption event from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Attended meeting on pets in poverty conducted by Found Animals; people turn in pets because can't afford to give them the care they need; Lori Weiss keynote speaker, Lori Hendsley from Unchained Dogs; discussed possibilities for L.A.

Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugherty:** Requested that the GM report include the number of dog attacks, and what is happening with prosecutions, whether any felonies or fines; stated that in April, a shelter dog was adopted out and attacked a little girl and her mother; a pit bull was taken from our shelter unaltered, by a rescue, then transferred to a San Diego rescue (possible breeder), the dog is two years old now and has never been altered.

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

**Commissioner Wolfson:** Attended the Found Animals conference; stated that helping people in low-income neighborhoods with the care of their animals builds self-esteem and helps lift people out of poverty; would like kiosk in every shelter – low income areas don't have pet stores; would like to discuss need to enforce existing laws to increase spay and neuter and revenue, by increasing dog licensing - ticketing people with dogs with no tags – allow pet stores to sell and get a portion of funds; would like to discuss managed admissions - don't take animals in if no space; reduce cost of senior animals, second animal, and undesirable animals; personal property hold was reduced to 20 days and would like to reduce to 10 days; volunteer at North Central reached out to Wag who will provide five free walks for adopted dogs; those previously adopted will receive a coupon for one free walk;

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they will decorate kennel of animals difficult to adopt and provide collar or bandana.

**Commissioner Brent:** Clinic on November 1 in Watts to provide wellness and vaccines; would like to discuss reduction of redemption fees for folks who want to get animals back.

**Commissioner Zaft:** Passed.

**Commissioner Yañez:** Attended Pets in Poverty workshop; Laurie Hensley of Unchained Dogs is going door-to-door providing fences and free spay neuter to low-income community members; would like to discuss having Canvassers take voucher or form door-to-door; would like to discuss reduction in fees; would like reduction in personal property hold to 10 days especially if owners passed away.

**Commissioner Gross:** Reported on October 18 Sherman Oaks Street Fair; LAAS booth had 17 cats and dogs and none went back – 13 adoptions and Best Friends took the remaining 3 dogs and 1 cat; recognized East Valley volunteers and staff: Sherry Brewer, Andrew Brown, Gail Raff, Orly Kroh, Shaghig Dadaian, Melody Miller, ACT Eardley Norman, ACT Veronica Perry, ACO Tammy Shepphird; Attended Stray Cat Alliance Gala celebrating 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary; acknowledged work of Christi Metropole and her team – saved 175,000 cats throughout So. CA; awards to Director of San Jose Animal Care and Control Jon Cicirelli, Found Animals Amy Galbraith, and Marc Peralta of Best Friends; LAAS partnering with LAHCID to conduct educational workshops on tenants and landlords rights and responsibilities on pets in rental housing, most conducted in shelters; 64% of City's residents are tenants; thanked Public Relations Specialist Jastine Tabagin for creating leaflet; would like report on the reestablishment of LAAS non-profit, and vaccination clinics and zip code targeted spay neuter mobile; would like to discuss requiring vets to post that dogs must be licensed and dogs must be on a leach, and discount for senior dogs and cats.

#### Public Comment

**Paulina Murphy:** Discussed case where she was assigned by Pet Co to show kittens and cats in Santa Barbara – called LAAS and Officers went to her house and treated like a criminal. **Andrew Brown:** Does not support offering discount for certain breeds; stated that it is cheap to surrender animal, but very expensive to redeem animal; would also encourage signage on spay neuter and leash law at boarding facilities and groomers. **Josh Liddy:** Stated that people in poverty experience selective enforcement of laws and don't have the resources to hire attorneys; disagrees with reducing 20 day personal property hold to 10 days.

## 5. Discussion Items

### A. Proposal for Pilot to Have One Shelter Open One Evening Per Week with Volunteer Support

**Commissioner Wolfson** discussed his proposal to keep one shelter open one evening each week with the help of volunteers. City shelters close at 5:00 p.m., while County shelters close at 7:00 p.m. and Best Friends at 8:00 p.m.; people tend to adopt animals at end of the day – it's hard to take time off of work; there are some labor concerns even if shelter opens later and closes later; would like a pilot program picking one shelter to stay open later and allowing volunteers to work so that less staff is needed – shelter would stay open until 8:00 p.m. on Thursday night to see results; launch in early December take advantage of holiday season. **GM Barnette** responded that the

department can do a pilot at one shelter for a determined period of time; **AGM Brown** stated that a specific plan will be discussed with labor at the JLMC (Joint Labor Management Committee). **Commissioner Gross** stated that everyone is in favor, in theory, but rights of workers also need to be considered; good idea to put together a plan to present to the JLMC. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if there were specific concerns raised. **AGM Brown** responded that questions involved worker deployment, overtime pay, pay for night differential, bidding, etc. **Commissioner Brent** suggested replicating what the County is doing – open later and close later - people who work can't go to shelter to adopt animals. **Commissioner Yañez** stated that County is union as well; will encourage more adoptions. **Commissioner Brent** suggested considering the shelter that is most centrally located, where the most animals are being euthanized, days where we see the most spikes. **Commissioner Gross** asked how the department will get buy-in from shelter workers and how quickly. **AGM Brown** responded that she will start with JLMC and will work with those supportive to discuss concerns – they have greater insight; can have report for meeting after next. **Commissioner Brent** suggested partnering with County – Marsha Mayeda to discuss the types of hurdles they overcame. **Commissioner Wolfson** stated that shelter employees want more adoptions; this will make their job easier in the long run; this will increase the hours for volunteers who can't work in the mornings; if publicized properly there should be a spike in volunteer hours and adoptions. **Commissioner Brent** stated that some staff might want to work 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. **AGM Brown** responded that change is not looked on favorably unless it comes with a tangible benefit that is compounded daily. **GM Barnette** responded that it was tried in the past and that statistics didn't show an increase in adoptions. **Commissioner Brent** stated that the public didn't know.

#### Public Comment

**Andrew Brown:** Asked why labor would object; suggested thoughtful consideration be given to the selection of the pilot location – South L.A. and North Central will not draw crowds in the evening; logistically, night-time lighting in kennels is abysmal – can't see dogs. **Josh Liddy:** Stated that every shelter should be doing this every day – staff serves the community and animals; important how it is communicated to public. (**Commissioner Zaft** clarified that hours would be shifted, not that there would be more hours; **AGM Brown** responded that she thought that the shelter would be open longer hours; **GM Barnette** clarified that ACTs would be there, but not the public counter; **Commissioner Zaft** indicated that it would be the Clerks who would have their hours shifted). **Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that the shift in hours was done 8-10 years ago as a result of the Hayden bill and there was no difference in adoptions: dogs are different at night, they can't see, they got fed too late – fighting more over food; staff was hired under certain contracts and should not be forced – they may need to pick-up children and have other obligations – shouldn't be looked at as bad people.

**Commissioner Zaft** stated that people may need to go to shelter for other reasons, not just to adopt animals; requested staff report back on this issue for December or January meeting.

## 6. Board Reports

### A. Update on Playgroups and the Number at Each Shelter

**Commander Louis Dedeaux** provided an oral report on the playgroups at each shelter. There have been 199 playgroups from August to September 2015:

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	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>
Harbor	61 (2/ day, 18 vol/staff)	47 (2 / day, 18 vol/staff)
North Central	2 (12 dogs, 4 staff)	1 (4 dogs, 4 staff)
West Valley	0	2
East Valley	2 (24 dogs)	6 (36 dogs, 8 volunteers/staff)
South L.A.	10 (68 dogs/13 adopted)	11 (18 dogs, 9 vol/staff)
West L.A.	27	27

Challenge is getting staff and volunteers on board; will post signs letting people know “dog playgroup is in session” to encourage participation; Jastine will advertise on department website calendar; systems will create drop down to track dogs being adopted out of playgroups; will conduct another round of playgroups at all shelters to get more people trained; once volunteers are trained and certified, they can hold playgroups without staff; three people are needed at a time to ensure safety.

**Commissioner Brent** noted the hot temperatures in the Valley over the summer months and **Cmdr. Dedeaux** added that it is not safe for people or animals. **Commissioner Gross** asked Robert Cabral if anything occurred that he did not expect. **Robert Cabral** responded that more public awareness and training is needed. **Commissioner Zaft** requested that a system be developed to determine which animals get out so that staff and volunteers know. **Cmdr. Dedeaux** responded that he is working on that to ensure that not only the favorites get out. **Commissioner Brent** stressed importance of tracking the number of animals that get adopted; asked whether other items are needed from AWFT to make program more successful. **Commissioner Wolfson** would like the program extended to cats through a cat community room. **GM Barnette** stated that the use of a laser light or toy can be used to provide agility training for cats. **Cmdr. Dedeaux** responded that he will be starting after he is done with the dogs. **Commissioner Yañez** congratulated Cmdr. Dedeaux and looking forward to having stats.

#### Public Comment

**Andrew Brown:** Playgroups at East Valley are every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m., but not the best time for volunteers – more volunteers on weekends; stated that showing prospective adopters and rescues videos of dogs in playgroups is successful; there have been a couple of animal fights in playgroups and a dog was euthanized likely because of fight – animals should be given amnesty because we put them in this position. **Debbie Kozin:** Shared information on her dog “Jake” that was aggressive, but adjusted after coming out of a kennel and lives with two other dogs.

**Commissioner Zaft** asked staff to return for questions. **Cmdr. Dedeaux** stated that there have not been major fights and not aware of incident mentioned; dogs that don't fight are picked for playgroups; stated that if a dog behaves terribly, there is a responsibility to public safety. **Commissioner Zaft** asked that video of playgroups be uploaded to website and facebook page).

#### B. Shelter Request to Authorize the Department to Host and Sponsor Bound Angels University at a Los Angeles City Shelter

**GM Barnette** provided a summary and asked Robert Cabral to provide an overview of the program. **Robert Cabral** stated that no one else is doing this type of training that teaches RVTs, ACTs, ACOs the basics of canine behavior; theory; understanding breeds, drives and temperaments; injured animals and fearful animals, in a scholastic

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format; three-day workshop will go through behavior theory and application, introducing and understanding dogs, and playgroups; workshops will be held at LAAS shelter and slots will be provided for LAAS staff; workshops open to other neighboring animal shelters.

**Commissioner Gross** asked if the training is being provided instead of the police academy in Riverside. **Cmdr. Dedeaux** responded that it will work similarly by helping with safety, but it is not instead of; it will help by bringing other agencies together. **Commissioner Zaft** commented that it was exciting proposal; recommended building in time to allow for information sharing and collaboration between our staff and other agencies. **Robert Cabral** said that the collaboration will allow for discussions on behavioral problems, which is the leading reason after medical for euthanasia; fixing behavioral problems will lead to healthy and happier animals and more adoptions. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if it needs to go out to bid and whether there is any cost (**Robert Cabral** responded that there is no cost). **GM Barnette** stated that the number of slots will be distributed among ACTs, Vet Assistants, RVTs and ACTs. **ACA Lesel** indicated that there will be the need for a written agreement. **Commissioner Zaft** asked how often the workshops would be conducted. **Robert Cabral** responded it will be a monthly program.

#### Public Comment

**Andrew Brown:** Suggested that the training be extended to volunteers because they are handling the animals as much as staff and, in some shelters, more often than staff. **Josh Liddy:** Concerned with some language in the proposal such as "breed characteristics" and "inherent temperament" because it may reinforce stereotypes - dogs are individuals.

**Commissioner Zaft** asked Robert to address the concerns. **Robert Cabral** responded that these are the types of things they want to diminish and sees each dog as a unique entity.

**Commissioner Wolfson** moved to authorize the Department to Host and Sponsor Bound Angels University at a Los Angeles City Shelter. **Commissioner Yañez** seconded and the motion passed 5 - 0.

**Commissioner Zaft** asked how long it would take to get the draft agreement. **ACA Lesel** responded that it would take a couple of weeks.

#### C. Board Report on Proposed Changes to Barking Dog Ordinance

**ACA Lesel** discussed the impetus for the changes and provided an overview of the report and draft language.

**Commissioner Zaft** asked whether the Hearing Officers had the opportunity to review the draft language and provide input. **ACA Lesel** responded affirmatively. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that the guidelines are appropriate and helpful. **Commissioner Brent** agreed and said it reflected prior discussion with Commissioners. **Commissioner Gross** noted that item was discussed in April 2014 and asked what took so long. **ACA Lesel** responded that numerous conversations took place to discuss whether to revert to prior language or to develop additional guidelines such as the ones presented. **Commissioner Wolfson** expressed that there will be different standards

because there will be different Hearing Officers; can't come up with perfect language; noted typo. **ACA Lesel** stated that before changes were made, there were not any major problems from public that results were blatantly unfair; Hearing Examiners have been sensitive to facts of whether there was excessive barking and evidence provided. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if item will go directly to Council or to PAW Committee. **ACA Lesel** responded to Council unless PAW wants to look at it, but they've seen it once before and may waive it.

Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that sometimes decisions are made without an understanding of the practical application; mentioned situation with howling dog and that issue is "annoying noise" not just barking dog; added that ACOs also work on barking dog cases and keep them from become hearing cases; commended Officer Perea for his work in this regard. **Alexa Bold:** Thanked for the language; asked it be expedited; requested monitoring of how long it takes for cases to get to the Hearing Examiner – her case took a year; stated that Hearing Officers and ACOs are talented, efficient, knowledgeable and fair (Troy Boswell).

**Commissioner Gross** moved to adopt the recommended changes to the Barking Dog Ordinance. **Commissioner Brent** seconded and the motion passed 5 - 0.

**Commissioner Zaft** requested a report back to track the status.

D. Review of Final WoofStat Report for Fiscal Year 2014-15

**GM Barnette** highlighted some items from the report: there are 3% more cats and 4% less dogs; overall, 1% increase in total population; 4% more cats going out alive – thanks to public and rescue partners; dogs are down 2% for year; cats are at 54.98%, dogs at 82.18%; ASPCA grant helps with cat numbers; June 2015 is up 70% over last year due to processing; hoarding cases has impacted in-house surgeries; euthanasia down 2% for cats and 17% for dogs; overall, 7%; disparity between shelters – more euthanized in South L.A.; live save rate: East Valley 73%; NC at 71%; West L.A. at 88.21%; West Valley at 75%.

**Commissioner Wolfson** asked about volunteers and animals sent to foster on page 2 – reduction in numbers from June, but not reflected in total number; 0% in right-hand column is not accurate. **GM Barnette** responded that volunteer numbers have not been maintained – some electronic and some paper-based; will add a professional volunteer coordinator in next budget; bequest was dedicated to volunteers – would like to do a special recognition. **Commissioner Wolfson** asked about financial incentives for fosters. **Commissioner Brent** stated that it was tried in the past with staff – animal had to be in home for 60 days, but didn't motivate them because people do this work because it is in their hearts, it would be an accounting nightmare. **Commissioner Brent** stated that they have paid and unpaid fosters at foundation to help offset expenses – need to do thorough screening; ASPCA has grants available for fostering – can focus on neo-natal kittens that need 24/7. **Commissioner Wolfson** asked why foster numbers are down. **GM Barnette** responded that system not able to personalize program. **Commissioner Brent** added that many may be fostering with other organizations where there is more support; noted that West L.A. has great numbers, opportunity to move animals throughout city shelters. **Commissioner Zaft** noted the increase in impounds by animals and distress, evidence, personal property – big jump; with fire and moves,

licensing looks similar to last year; asked about upgrades to Chameleon for licensing module to streamline. **GM Barnette** responded that the main Chameleon has been updated; **AGM Brown** added that there is an issue with money for the licensing module – they want to be paid prior to services being completed – it's being worked out. **Commissioner Zaft** asked about the 10% of impounded animals that are not cats, dogs, or rabbits. **GM Barnette** responded that there were chickens, slider turtles and mice. **Commissioner Wolfson** asked if "released" refers to wildlife. **GM Barnette** responded that sometimes it is released to an owner and there is not a fee; will include key. **Commissioner Yañez** asked what is "duplicate" under licenses issued. **GM Barnette** responded that sometimes people lose them and they have to be replaced. **Commissioner Zaft** asked about "pending." **GM Barnette** responded that sometimes they need to submit their spay neuter or rabies certificate. **Commissioner Yañez** noted that the \$70 vouchers are down 22% - need to work harder to get those out. **GM Barnette** responded that ACOs are more aware; giving vouchers through the ACE program with citation. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if those are the \$30 vouchers. **GM Barnette** responded that Officers tell people how to get the \$70 vouchers. **Commissioner Yañez** stated that having Canvassers carry vouchers would help. **GM Barnette** responded that we have to come up with system that works for Controller. **Commissioner Zaft** added that he likes having the Officer carry it because when a citation is issued, resources can be offered – if it works, there should be an increase in licenses next year. **Commissioner Gross** noted that the number of \$70 vouchers redeemed was down 23%. **GM Barnette** responded that about 20% of people don't show up for appointments even when they have the \$70 vouchers. **Commissioner Yañez** added that transportation is a big issue for low-income people; Pets for Life has a 90% completion rate because of the extensive follow-up. **Commissioner Gross** noted spay neuter is down with our vets and contractors. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that he discussed this with Vince and thinks the number reflects the number of surgeries requested be done by the department, contract vet has no control over how many will be requested. **GM Barnette** responded that sometimes there is not the number of surgeries needed to meet the contract numbers; would like to reduce contract after six months if not getting enough sterilizations, they get paid for the sterilizations for the public through the vouchers; if they are not meeting the goals of the contract for the rent of their building, would like to renegotiate the contract six months into the year. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that it would be helpful to know what they are doing for us and for the community. **Commissioner Brent** noted that spay neuter done by department and contract vets is a little over 1,200 and live release rate is 3,500 – asked where the other 2,300 animals come from. **GM Barnette** responded that some are already altered and a few go out on the D300s; staff takes animals to AFE vets that have contracts and the numbers are not in report; animals taken by Best Friends are not sterilized. **Commissioner Gross** noted that citations are down 9%; asked if program was up and running in June; no community presentations listed; adoption to the public are down. **GM Barnette** unsure if they are ACE or 84As; coyote meetings are not being counted and Officers go to schools; rescues are taking adoptable animals, not the ones that don't need to be rescued. **Commissioner Zaft** noted that bulk of live release is adoptions to the public. **Commissioner Gross** asked why there were not many service dog tags. **GM Barnette** responded that we have been working with the Department on Disability. **AGM Brown** added that "service blue" took the place of "service." **Commissioner Zaft** requested a report back next time we discuss the Woofstat report.

Public Comment

**Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that cats are up and PAW Committee and City Council

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approved five cats, but they don't need to be microchipped – the County requires it. **Andrew Brown:** Acknowledged East Valley volunteer, Dani Cohen, who is focusing on seniors – put out a blast requesting fosters – got seven out in one day and provided donations of leashes, collars, harnesses, food, bowls, etc.

**Commissioner Zaft** asked about a rumor of massive euthanasia at East Valley. **GM Barnette** responded that it is not true - people say that to encourage adoptions. **Andrew Brown** clarified that the number of animals on the red list jumped and people thought it meant they were going to be euthanized.

- E. Board Report to Accept a Donation from the Jimmy M. Mitchell Trust in the Amount of \$136,755.98 for the Animal Welfare Trust Fund

**AGM Brown** provided an overview of the staff report.

Public Comment  
None

**Commissioner Wolfson** moved to accept the donation from the Jimmy M. Mitchell Trust. **Commissioner Yañez** seconded and the motion passed 5 - 0.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

**Commissioner Wolfson** made a motion to adjourn the meeting in honor of Jimmy M. Mitchell and **Commissioner Zaft** seconded. Motion passed 5 - 0.

Meeting ended at 9:41 p.m.