

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
June 9, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Animal Care and Regulation

Subject: Report Back - Budget Workshop Of May 15, 2009

Supervisory
District: All

Contact: Pat Claerbout, Director, 875-5051

BACKGROUND

During the Budget Workshop several questions were raised regarding reducing shelter animal intake, cost comparison of programs and future community animal services. The following are the questions and responses.

DISCUSSION

As the Sacramento SPCA takes small dogs from shelters out of the Sacramento area for adoption at their facility, would it be possible that all small dogs go directly to the SPCA instead of coming into the County shelter?

Diverting all small stray dogs to the SPCA would require a contract with the SPCA for impounding services. County Counsel has advised a contract with the SPCA to handle administration of redemption, adoption and euthanasia would be a 71-J agreement. Discussion with the SPCA found that they only take dogs from other shelters when they have open kennel space. They do not currently have kennel space for additional contracting services. Such an arrangement would also be confusing to the public in determining which shelter to visit in locating lost pets and would reduce revenue to the County from redemptions and adoptions of small dogs.

What is the cost difference between operating the foster adoption program and simply euthanizing underage or injured animals?

The estimated average cost to euthanize a litter of kitten or puppies is \$12.00. This cost includes the euthanasia drugs and staff time. In some situations, animals not weaned are euthanized the day they enter the shelter. If they are weaned, they must be held 5 days prior to euthanasia.

The Foster Program is administered by a Senior Animal Control Officer in addition to their other duties. The officer conducts monthly training classes, chooses and prepares animals to be placed

in a foster home, monitors the animal's health while in the foster home and receives the animals back into the shelter for adoption. On average, the officer spends six hours per week on the foster program during the spring and summer months when the program is busiest. This equates to a program cost of approximately \$3,000 annually. Additional medical needs and food are provided by TEAM, our nonprofit.

In 2008, 613 animals were cared for in the foster program which resulted in 90% of the animals being successfully adopted. The revenue from the adoption of foster animals in 2008 was over \$9,000.

Given the revenue received from the adoption of foster animals is greater than the program costs, continuing the Foster Program rather than euthanizing these animals is most cost effective.

Can Volunteers be used in the Kennel Program?

Currently volunteers assist with adoptions, socialize dogs and cats, groom and provide help to staff in performing behavior evaluations. A grievance was filed by Union Local 39 when volunteers extended their work to include cleaning kennels. This grievance resulted in the determination that cleaning kennels is work specifically identified in the job classification as assigned to the Animal Care Attendant class and can not be performed by volunteers.

After the proposed program reductions, do the revenues exceed the program cost?

Some of the program information presented to the Board during the budget workshop has been corrected to accurately reflect the spread of revenue to program cost. Most programs do have some overlap of staff costs but there are no programs where revenue exceeds the cost of the program.

How, as a community, can the County, Cities and SPCA provide animal care services?

Exploration of the possibilities of a JPA or contracting arrangement among the Cities and SPCA to consolidate the Field and Sheltering services in the community is anticipated with a focus on maximizing the strong points of each agency and the economy of scale in providing service. There are currently two JPAs providing animal services in California and their models will be reviewed. Sacramento City Animal Services, SPCA and Elk Grove have already expressed an interest in examining the possibility of such an arrangement.

Respectfully submitted,

PAT CLAERBOUT, Director
Department of Animal Care and Regulation

By: _____
PAUL HAHN, Administrator
Municipal Services Agency