



Board of Supervisors Memorandum

November 18, 2014

County Obligation for Animal Care Services Inside Cities and Towns

Introduction

Pima County provides animal care services to incorporated cities and towns through intergovernmental agreements (IGAs). The County operates the Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) and is the management entity responsible for developing policy and procedures regarding animal care services. The extent to which they are provided and the level of service and all operational aspects of providing animal care services are decided by the County. For your information, attached is a copy of the present IGA with the City of Tucson.

Concerns Over Increased Costs

As you know, cities and towns, including the City of Tucson, have expressed concern over the increased animal care costs being incurred by the jurisdictions. These increased costs are in direct response to a changing management philosophy of how the animal care facility is operated. We have successfully transitioned from a euthanasia model to one of adoption. A few years ago, only 1 in 4 animals going into the PACC was ever adopted. Today, this number is 4 out of 5. This change in operational philosophy, generally demanded by the community at large and supported by the Animal Care Advisory Committee and all animal welfare groups, has resulted in increased costs, primarily in the following areas:

Personnel and Increased Staffing

A number of new personnel have been hired, and these positions all relate to the adoption model. An additional veterinarian has been employed, as has a development director who has dramatically increased donations to PACC; and a number of personnel were added to kennel management due to the increasing number of animals housed each day at the facility. It has grown on average from 700 a few years ago to over 900 today.

Increased Kennel Space, Including Utility Costs

As the Board knows, a temporary solution to the severe overcrowding in the existing kennels was implemented using a tent. This tent provided sufficient additional kennel capacity to facilitate the adoption model; but in implementing the tent, a total of \$445,600 of capital cost has been incurred to date. An additional \$29,400 in capital funds will be allocated to remaining and related issues such as drainage and electrical requirements. In addition, the tent has a much higher operating cost per kennel based on utilities needed to heat and cool the facility. The tent is approximately 7,200 square feet and costs approximately \$8,000 per year more for costs associated with operations and maintenance than kennel space in the existing facility. In addition, the tent costs \$38,232 annually to heat, cool and clean (water).

Spay and Neuter Program

The only long-term viable solution to pet overpopulation is an effective spay/neuter program advanced through community education and sufficient funding to carry out the program. Prior to 2008, there were few funds dedicated to spay and neuter. In 2004, the Board designated \$20,000 from the Contingency Fund for spay/neuter and did so again in 2006. In 2008, the County budgeted \$100,000; in 2009 increased it to \$200,000; and in 2010 increased it to \$220,000 per year. This year, funding was increased to \$600,000.

Recognizing the significant importance of spay/neuter programs, the County increased licensing fees from \$12 to \$15 in 2009 and dedicated the increased revenue to a spay/neuter program. This increased our spay/neuter investment from \$100,000 to \$200,000. The County, believing other jurisdictions would also see the benefit of the long-term investment in spay/neuter, asked other jurisdictions to make similar contributions. The only jurisdiction that did so was the Town of Oro Valley. Recognizing that voluntary contributions by jurisdictions would not increase spay/neuter funding, I directed that this cost be embedded as an operational cost of PACC. Hence, it would then be apportioned back to each jurisdiction in proportion to their use of animal care services.

Investing now in spay and neuter programs will, in the relative short term of 5 to 10 years, significantly reduce pet overpopulation, as well as reduce the annual operating and maintenance expenses of the animal care function operated regionally by Pima County on behalf of the County and the cities and towns within the County.

Benefits of the spay/neuter program are obvious when looking at annual intake statistics. Attachment 1 shows that during the last few years, when the program funding was increased, annual intakes decreased from 29,516 in 2010 to 24,332 in 2013.

Legal Obligations of the County to Provide Animal Care Services Inside Cities, Towns and Municipalities

A question was raised by the City of Tucson regarding the County's obligations inside cities and towns, specifically regarding the public health and welfare functions of animal care. Meaning, if the County has statutory obligations inside cities and towns, some costs would be borne by the County as overall operating expenses rather than those expenses being apportioned to the City of Tucson.

To determine this responsibility, I asked the County Attorney to provide a written legal opinion; this opinion is dated September 29, 2014. In order to release this opinion to the public, I will be asking the Board of Supervisors to waive attorney/client privilege so that all parties are aware of the conclusions in this legal opinion regarding the County's obligations to provide animal care services inside cities, towns and municipalities.

Timely Notice to Municipalities, Cities and Towns of Pending Increases in Animal Care Costs

Much has been said about the County's notice of the increasing cost of animal care services due to our transition to an adoption animal care model. The County's correspondence and interaction with municipalities and jurisdictions regarding these costs is extensive and has occurred continuously. They have occurred primarily between the staffs involved in these matters, with limited information directed to Managers or Mayors and Councils. With regard to the City of Tucson, a total of 7 communications were provided to various staff regarding these cost increases. In fact, the City has, on at least two occasions, discussed the increasing cost of spay/neuter services at the Mayor and Council level.

Concerned over these rising increases, the Marana Town Manager called for a special meeting and invited other city and town managers to the meeting. Unfortunately, other than the Marana Town Manager and staff, only the Oro Valley Town Manager attended the meeting. Staff presented the cost information again and made a PowerPoint Presentation that thoroughly identified the costs and their allocation. Notice by the County of these increased costs has obviously been provided to the jurisdictions.

Recommendation

I recommend the Board of Supervisors:

1. Waive privilege regarding the County Attorney's September 29, 2014 Legal Opinion regarding the obligations of the County inside cities, towns and municipalities for the provision of animal care services.
2. Direct staff to continue to negotiate with all cities and towns to reach intergovernmental agreements that fund the increasing cost of animal care services by December 31, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,



C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/mjk – October 31, 2014

Attachment

c: Jan Leshar, Deputy County Administrator for Medical and Health Services
Dr. Francisco Garcia, Director, Health Department

ATTACHMENT 1

Fiscal Year	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	*2009/10	**2008/09	2007/08
County Community Spay/ Neuter Support	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$200,000	\$100,000
Intakes	24,332	26,593	28,193	29,516	27,641	27,243	21,446
Euthanasia Rate Percentage	24	36	45	53	51	56	61
Average Number of Pets per Day**	877	761	795	771	735	---	---
Live Releases	13,752	12,404	11,345	10,542	8,918	10,161	8,163
*County increased licensing fees by \$3 and applied increase to spay neuter support.							
**Humane Society of Southern Arizona implemented a drop-off fee, which may have contributed to a significant increase in PACC intake numbers.							
Note: The average number of pets per day was not recorded prior to mid 2008/09.							