



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Public Health
Department No.: 041
For Agenda Of: October 4, 2016
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 45 minutes
Continued Item:
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Takashi Wada, MD, MPH, Public Health Director, 681-5105
Director(s)
Contact Info: Jan E. Glick, MS, Animal Services Director, 934-6953

SUBJECT: **Animal Services Update on Implementation of American Humane Association Recommendations**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors receive an update on the implementation of recommendations for the County of Santa Barbara Animal Services Program from the American Humane Association Program Assessment as follows:

- a) Receive and file a progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the American Humane Association (AHA) Program Assessment of the County Animal Services program.
- b) Determine that the above actions are organizational and administrative activities of government that are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to section 15378(b)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines, and direct staff to file the Notice of Exemption (Attachment A).

Summary Text:

County Animal Services has been actively prioritizing and implementing recommendations in the American Humane Association Program Assessment Report that was presented to the Board of Supervisors on June 2, 2015. The assessment included a review of the policies, practices, procedures, and facilities of the County Animal Services program along with 463 recommendations. Significant improvements have been made through a collaborative approach which includes Animal Services staff, Public Health Administration, volunteers, the Oversight Team, partner organizations and community stakeholders.

Background:

In 2014 the Public Health Department contracted with the AHA to provide a program assessment of the Santa Barbara County Animal Services Program. The AHA evaluation team visited for four days in January of 2015. A second visit from Robin Brennen, DVM, occurred in April of 2015. Representatives from the AHA presented on the comprehensive assessment report to the Board of Supervisors on June 2, 2016.

The final report contains seventeen sections and has 463 recommendations. Significant progress has been made on evaluation and implementation of the recommendations.

The Process and Results to Date

An initial step was the formation of the AHA Oversight Team, which is comprised of staff, representatives of long-term partner organizations, volunteers and community stakeholders. The Animal Services AHA Report Oversight Team is an advisory body focused on thoughtful consideration, analysis and implementation of the recommendations in the American Humane Association Assessment Report. The Oversight Team began with frequent meetings starting July of 2015 and has met at least once monthly since then. A facilitator and project manager were contracted to assist in the implementation. The Oversight Team reviewed the 463 recommendations by section and classified them as Quick Wins, Already Being Done, Implement in Future, More Discussion or Will Not Implement.

There has been a great deal of progress in filling new staff and contract positions, as well as in regard to accomplishing many of the AHA recommendations. The Board of Supervisors approved a budget for the fiscal year 2015-2016 that resulted in four new positions. Progress has resulted in the areas of medical care and behavior and enrichment with the addition of these new roles:

- A full-time Registered Veterinary Technician
- A contract Director of Shelter Medicine
- A contract Behavior and Enrichment Coordinator
- An Operations Manager

In late March of 2016, the new Operations Manager came on board. She has been working diligently with the Animal Services Leadership Team to continue to move the recommendations forward and to update the Policy and Procedures Manual in concert with the AHA recommendations. She is also reviewing operations and working closely with supervisory staff to increase consistency and customer service at all three shelter locations.

A new position of Dispatcher has been approved for FY 2016-2017 and the recruitment was opened on August 15, 2016. This position will support improved efficiency and safety in Animal Services field operations.

Attachment B reflects the status of the recommendations by the sections in the report. Out of the 463 total recommendations, 167 have been completed (36%) and 131 are partially complete (28%), 33 are on hold to be implemented when resources can be identified and available (7%), 36 will not be implemented (8%) and 96 still need to be done (21%).

Following the review, categorization and prioritization of the Task List by the AHA Oversight Team, sub-committees were established to develop solutions and strategies to address specific areas and create policy recommendations. Sub-committees include representatives from staff and stakeholders with a

chair and co-chair leading each group. The sub-committee structure includes designation of a working group to participate in a detailed review of a specific topic and a “charge”. They are working on recommendations for policies and procedures for consideration for future implementation to bring back to the AHA Oversight Team.

Sub-committees are focused on making recommendations in the following areas:

- Owner Surrender: Identify how SBCAS can help keep pets and their families together while preserving the safety and well-being of the animals and public we serve.
- Adoption: Identify current roadblocks to adoption, implementing new strategies, and creating consistent Standard Operating Procedures for adoption at all SBCAS locations.
- Community Cats: Develop an overall approach for a community cat program appropriate for the diverse communities throughout Santa Barbara County.
- Volunteer: Revise Santa Barbara County Animal Services volunteer program and policies, mission and vision, and volunteer roles and responsibilities; developing professional standards and establishing performance metrics.

The Animal Services Leadership Team has worked with the Oversight Team to explore new approaches to key issues and implement critical organizational updates, including:

- Veterinary Medicine: Under the leadership of the new Director of Shelter Medicine, medical protocols have been updated, daily rounds have been initiated, and emergency and routine treatments have been clearly outlined. With more medical professionals available to assess animals, the quality of animal care has been significantly elevated.
- Behavior and Enrichment Coordinator: New types of enrichment are being provided and implementation of dog play groups has occurred. Expansion of the use of behavior plans for individual animals is improving outcomes for these animals. Implementation of S.A.F.E.R.™, a predictive, consistent method for evaluating the probability of canine aggression in individual dogs, is the next step in the area of behavior and enrichment improvements.
- The Animal Services Leadership Team (comprised of the Director, Operations Manager, Director of Shelter Medicine, Shelter and Field Operations Supervisors and the Community Outreach Coordinators): Introduced an approach to non-medical euthanasia decision making and the guiding principle “To support public safety and minimize public risk while saving as many animals as possible”. Recommendations included expanded outreach to adoption partner organizations with an “urgent needs list” and the formation of an Animal Welfare Panel to deliberate on animals with needs that are beyond the resources of County Animal Services.

The AHA Report recommended formalizing agreements with long term internal partners of County Animal Services. Collaboration with the Santa Barbara County Animal Care Foundation (SBCACF), the Animal Shelter Assistance Program (ASAP), Companion Animal Placement Assistance (CAPA) and Bunnies Urgently Needing Shelter (BUNS) on the elements of MOUs has been strengthened. At this writing, two agreements are close to finalization and the other two are making progress toward final language and provisions. These MOUs will be brought back to your Board for approval at a later date. We look forward to finalizing agreements and continuing our long term partnerships with these highly valued organizations.

In mid-August 2016 a survey was sent out to initiate community outreach and seek community perspectives on the approach to our Animal Services operations from community stakeholders.

Individuals and organizations were asked to complete an initial survey with questions describing what they envision working best in Santa Barbara County in the future. Animal welfare organizations were asked to complete additional information to help us understand their capacity and interest in providing future services. The survey stated “Input on the future organization will be gathered from a wide range of interested individuals and organizations. We will share the results of the input with others and bring them forward to decision-makers, most notably the Board of Supervisors.”

As we go through the process of implementing the 463 recommendations from the AHA assessment’ a number of key challenges have impacted our ability to achieve all of the desired improvements. The Animal Services program and the Public Health Department lack sufficient resources to make the recommended facility improvements. Most of the operational recommendations require additional staff time to implement them.. While the new positions have been instrumental in establishing new policies and procedures and processes for improvements, the same staff who perform daily job tasks and duties are also being tasked with implementing additional new systemic improvements.

Statistical Highlights from FY 2015-2016 (Attachment C)

The total number of animals taken in between fiscal year 12-13 and fiscal year 15-16 decreased 19%. This represents an overall trend of decreasing animal intakes over the four year timeframe.

There was:

- An increase in animals redeemed by owners between those years (1,567 to 1,683). That is a 7% increase in owner redemptions with 19% less animals taken in
- A decrease in the total number of animals euthanized (1,631 to 840). That is a 48% decrease
- Non-owner requested euthanasia showed a 75% decrease for dogs, a 54% decrease for cats and a 69% decrease for rabbits.

Summary

The AHA Assessment Report contains many important recommendations and resources to improve our Animal Services program. The synergy that has been created by the formation of the AHA Oversight Team, additional resources provided by the County, and staff and volunteers working collaboratively to initiate change is moving the program forward in a very positive direction. We look forward to returning to the Board of Supervisors again in eight or nine months to provide additional information on the progress and positive results as we continue on this pathway.

Performance Measure:

N/A

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

N/A

Fiscal Analysis:

Receiving and filing the Animal Services progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the American Humane Association (AHA) Program Assessment will result in no fiscal impact.

Key Contract Risks:

N/A

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

0

FTEs:

0

Special Instructions:

Please send an electronic copy of the Minute Order to the PHD Contracts Unit at: PHDCU@sbcphd.org.

Attachments:

- A. CEQA Notice of Exemption
- B. AHA Recommendations Status
- C. Animal Services Statistics
- D. Update on Implementation of AHA Recommendations Presentation

Authored by:

Jan E. Glick, MS,
Animal Services Director