



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: September 15, 2015
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 30 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Takashi M. Wada, MD, MPH, Public Health Director, 681-5105
Director(s)
Contact Info: Susan Klein-Rothschild, MSW
681-5435

SUBJECT: The County of Santa Barbara Animal Services Program Assessment performed by the American Humane Association-Findings and Recommendations

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors consider 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 report presenting an approach to the implementation of recommendations from the American Humane Association (AHA) Program Assessment of the County Animal Services program; and
- b) Provide direction on the approach to implement the AHA report recommendations; and
- c) 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 C).

Summary Text:

On June 2, 2015, the American Humane Association presented a comprehensive assessment of the County Animal Services Program. The Board of Supervisors directed the Public Health Department to return to the Board in three months with an approach to the implementation of the AHA's

recommendations. The Public Health Department established an Oversight Team to advise the department on the approach taken and the implementation of the recommendations.

Background:

In the fall of 2014, the County contracted with the American Humane Association to provide a comprehensive assessment of our Animal Services program. The assessment included a review of the policies, practices, procedures and facilities of the County's Animal Services program. The AHA team observed aspects of shelter operations and field services at our three locations, taking photographs of the internal and external facilities, examining records, and interviewing staff, management and stakeholders. The AHA Team was on-site for four days in January of 2015. A second visit was completed April 22 through April 27, 2015. The process was designed to provide a comprehensive picture of Animal Services and provide recommendations regarding best-practices and recommended standards of care. American Humane Association representatives presented the findings of the comprehensive assessment to the Board of Supervisors at the June 2, 2015 meeting. The report was detailed and extensive. A number of County Animal Services current practices are noted as commendable. Compassionate care of animals was seen across the board. The assessment includes hundreds of recommendations related to policies and practices. Along with these recommendations, AHA has also provided various resources, guides and specialized manuals to assist Santa Barbara County in the development and implementation of recommended policies and practices.

The Board directed the Public Health Department to return in three months providing an action plan towards the implementation of the recommendations. Since the June 2nd Board meeting, the Department has taken the following actions:

- Opened a recruitment to hire a full-time Registered Veterinary Technician
- Initiated a recruitment to hire a contract Director of Shelter Medicine
- Initiated a recruitment to hire a contract Behavior Consultant
- Initiated development of an Operations Position classification
- Created an Oversight Team with representation from key partner agencies
- Addressed a number of report recommendations related to safety and facilities
- Established a process to move beyond historical tension and conflict with key stakeholders

The Oversight Team began meeting in July and it includes the following members:

- Charlotte Alexander Santa Maria Valley Humane Society
- Jill Anderson Shadow's Fund
- Dr. Darcie Barnes Veterinarian - Shelter Medicine
- Amy Black Volunteer At Large
- Robbie Filkorn CAPA
- Jan Glick Animal Services Director
- Linda Greco Animal Care Foundation
- Shirley Jansen DAWG
- Susan Klein-Rothschild Public Health Department
- Peter Miller Animal Services Staff
- Relly Nadler, Psy.D Facilitator
- Angela Rockwell ASAP
- Phil Seymour BUNS

- Nancy Vasquez Project Manager
- Takashi Wada, MD Public Health Department Director

The Oversight Team held meetings on July 14, July 29, August 3, 11, 17 and 25. Additional meetings have been scheduled for September. Since July, the Oversight Team has focused on two primary areas: 1) The creation of a position for Central Dispatcher or an Operations Manager, and 2) An approach to prioritize the recommendations and implement them successfully.

The Public Health Department requested the creation of a Central Dispatch position for Animal Services during the budget process. During budget hearings, it was suggested that an Operations Manager position would be a higher priority. Although the Board approved the existing position requests – including the Dispatcher – the Public Health Department agreed to consider this recommendation and confer with the Oversight Team.

The Oversight Team considered the pros and cons of each position and recommended that the County support an Operations Manager position as the priority now, look to the Operations Manager to review and improve inefficiencies in the system and within dispatch functions, and consider requesting a dispatch position in the next budget year. The Department has proceeded with advice of the Oversight Team and a job description for an Operations Manager is now in development.

Identifying an approach to the many recommendations in the AHA report was a challenge for the Oversight Team. Team members noted that all recommendations embedded in the report were not included in the Task Lists provided by AHA. The Team took the following approach to prioritize recommendations:

- The Project Manager reviewed the report in depth and included all recommendations in a revised Task Listing.
- The Oversight Team reviewed the revised Task Listings by group, with the sections that were closely associated with each other.
- Oversight Team members categorized each task in one or more of five categories: already being done, quick win, future implementation, will not implement, or more discussion.

The “already being done” category includes recommendations that are complete as well as those that are in progress. The “quick win” category includes recommendations that can be met with current resources and within three months. The Oversight Team began by focusing on achieving success with recommendations in these two categories.

With key stakeholder groups where there was a history of tension, the AHA report recommended the assistance of a third party facilitator. Dr. Nadler facilitated separate meetings with representatives from K-9 PALS and from the Santa Barbara County dog volunteers. These meetings resulted in agreements with the County that we jointly participate in a constructive manner, demonstrate “best practice” guidelines, including letting go of the past, accept a decision making framework understanding that many decisions will be made by the County, and that we share a joint vision of improving the safety and welfare of the animals and the community. With these agreements, K-9 PALS and Santa Barbara Dog Volunteers were invited to have representative members of the Oversight Team.

It has become apparent that many of the American Humane Association Assessment Report recommendations will require extensive discussion and decision-making. The AHA Executive

Summary (Attachment A) reflects some of the significant recommendations. The recommendations designated “future implementation” and “more discussion” are important issues and will require a clear process to move forward and achieve success. Examples of items for more discussion are recommendations related to creating standard operating procedures where there are different perspectives and strategies. An example of an item for future implementation is implementation of daily medical rounds which will be guided by the Director of Veterinary Medicine. These recommendations will be the future work of the Oversight Team. The AHA recommendation related to governance is being addressed on a separate track and is not included in the work of the Oversight Team.

Key Contract Risks:

N/A

Fiscal Analysis:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the acceptance of this report.

Special Instructions:

1. Request the Planning and Development Department to post the Notice of Exemption (Attachment 1) for the ordinance in the County Planning and Development Department at least six (6) days prior to consideration of the activity by the Board of Supervisors to comply with the County CEQA guidelines.
2. Please email the Minute Order to phdcu@sbcphd.org.

Attachments:

- A. AHA Introduction and Executive Summary
- B. AHA Implementation Presentation
- C. CEQA Notice of Exemption

Authored by:

Susan Klein-Rothschild, MSW