

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
BOARD AGENDA LETTER**



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 07/12/04
Department Name: CAO
Department No.: 012
Agenda Date: 07/27/04
Placement: Departmental
Estimate Time: 10 minutes
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michael F. Brown
County Administrator

STAFF CONTACT: Lori Norton, Analyst
X 3421

SUBJECT: **Board of Supervisors Response to the FY 2003-2004 Grand Jury Report Titled: Animal Shelter Donations— “Wait a Doggone Minute”**

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Consider adopting the recommended responses contained in Attachment A as the Board’s responses to the 2003-2004 Grand Jury Report on Animal Shelter Donations— “Wait a Doggone Minute”
- B. Authorize the Chair of the Board to sign the attached transmittal letter (Attachment A) to Clifford R. Anderson, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, transmitting the adopted responses to the Grand Jury Report.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendations are primarily aligned with the Board of Supervisors’ Strategic Goal # I : An Efficient Government Able to Anticipate and Respond Effectively to the Needs of the Community.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The Grand Jury Report was released on May 5, 2004. In accordance with Penal Code Section 933(c), the governing body of the agency (Board of Supervisors) must respond within 90 days after issuance of the Grand Jury report. Consequently, the Board of Supervisors’ response must be finalized and transmitted to the Presiding Judge of the Courts no later than Wednesday, August 4, 2004. The Board has two opportunities, if necessary, to discuss and adopt a response. If necessary, a second discussion will be scheduled for August 3.

The Animal Shelter Donations Grand Jury Report (Attachment B) contains a total of 2 Findings and 2 Recommendations. The Public Health Department (County Animal Health and Regulation) the Auditor-Controller, and the Board of Supervisors are the only required respondents. The proposed Board responses are consistent with the Public Health and Auditor-Controller responses.

Mandates and Service Levels:

California Penal Code Section 933(c) requires that no later than 90 days after the Grand Jury submits a final report on the operations of a public agency, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under their control. These comments, in and of themselves, do not change existing programs or services levels.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

The recommended responses do not have a fiscal or facilities impact.

Special Instructions:

None

**C: Robert Geis, County Auditor-Controller
Roger Heroux, Director, Public Health Department
Jan Glick, Animal Services Manager**

Attachments: Attachment A – Letter of Transmittal to Clifford R. Anderson, Presiding Judge
Attachment B – Grand Jury Report titled: Animal Shelter Donations— “Wait a Doggone Minute”
Attachment C – Public Health Department Response
Attachment D – Auditor-Controller Response

ANIMAL SHELTER DONATIONS

“WAIT A DOGGONE MINUTE!”

Introduction

A County’s Animal Services brochure lists “make a donation” as one of the ways citizens can help the three animal shelters in Santa Barbara County. But where does money donated to the shelters go? The Grand Jury received a complaint that the routing of such donations went into the County General Fund and were not used at the shelters. The Jury found that if money is donated to the shelter, it goes into the County’s Animal Health and Regulation (AH&R) shelter programs in the Public Health budget. It then helps support general operating expenses such as maintenance, salaries, veterinary care, and food. The donations cannot be designated for a specific purpose at any shelter. However, money given directly to volunteer organizations can be used for special needs at the shelter of donation.

Background

There are five volunteer organizations that help support the animal shelters: in Santa Maria, Shelter Animal Volunteer Effort (SAVE); in Lompoc, County Animal Placement Assistance (CAPA); in Santa Barbara, Animal Shelter Assistance Program (ASAP) for cats, Bunnies Under Needed Shelter (BUNS) for rabbits, and K-9 Placement & Assistance League (K-9 PALS) for dogs. Other volunteer organizations exist, and the Santa Barbara County Animal Care Foundation also raises funds for the shelters. The main purpose of these organizations is to facilitate the adoption of the animals, assist with education programs, and improve living conditions for the animals. They increasingly help pay for veterinary care and medical services. Donations from volunteer organizations supplement the county’s budget allocations for the operation of the shelters.

Members of the Grand Jury looked into the routing of donations by visiting the various shelters and interviewing employees and volunteers, as well as the County Auditor-Controller and the Director of the Public Health Department.

Observations

As a result of inquiries with the Auditor-Controller’s Department, the Internal Audit Division reviewed the process of revenue collection, including donations, at the shelters. They found that donations were allocated into a Special Revenue Fund for the three county shelters. However, such donations become part of the expenditures for operating expenses and cannot be earmarked for any specific purpose. In fact, the donations help offset budget deficits that the shelters run. Because of this, the staff at the Lompoc shelter informs people that if they want

to directly help the animals at that shelter, they should donate to the volunteer organization and not to the county shelter. This process has provided the volunteer organization at the Lompoc shelter more money for immediate use to address special needs at the shelter.

In a memo dated December 4, 2003, the Auditor-Controller and Internal Audit Division recommended that the Public Health Department train shelter staff regarding the routing of donations and that signs be placed at the reception counter to inform the public that donations will be used in the general operations of the shelters. As of this writing, no signs have been posted.

Conclusion

While the complaint initially seemed one of fiscal tracking and accountability, the problem of donations turned out to be more a matter of clarity and openness, both at the shelters and in the County Audit Department.

Finding 1

Donations made directly to the animal shelters in Santa Barbara County go to Special Revenue Funds within the county's budget, and the funds cannot be re-directed for specific shelter uses.

Recommendation 1

The County should proceed with the posting a sign at each shelter clarifying that money donated to the shelters goes to the county's budget for shelter general operating expenses if not written to a charitable or volunteer organization.

Finding 2

The shelters are not self-sustaining and run at a considerable cost to the County. Volunteer organizations contribute funding and hours which help offset these costs. Given current county deficits, care for the animals can be improved only as to the extent as volunteer organizations can raise money.

Recommendation 2

To meet specific needs at the shelter, donations should be made to such organizations as SAVE, CAPA, ASAP, BUNS, or K-9 PALS, or the shelters' Animal Care Foundation. They will help provide the volunteer staff, the supplies, the medical care, and even housing to make it possible for stray and unwanted animals to survive and live better.

Affected Agencies

Santa Barbara County Animal Health and Regulation (Animal Shelters):

Findings 1, 2

Recommendations 1, 2

County Audit Department:

Finding 1

Recommendation 1