



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: February 16, 2016
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 1 hour
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Takashi Wada, MD, MPH
Director(s) 681-5105
Contact Info: Susan Klein-Rothschild, MSW
681-5435

SUBJECT: Report on Progress to Implement AHA Recommendations

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form:

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.
- 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 D).

Summary Text:

On June 2, 2015, the American Humane Association presented a comprehensive assessment of the County Animal Services Program. The Public Health Department returned to the Board in September of 2015. The Board directed the Public Health Department to provide a progress report to the Board in three months. This report serves as the progress report.

Background:

In the fall of 2014, the County contracted with the American Humane Association to provide a comprehensive assessment of our Animal Services program. AHA representatives presented the findings of the comprehensive assessment to the Board of Supervisors at the June 2, 2015 meeting. The assessment included 464 recommendations of the County Animal Services Program.

In July of 2015, the Public Health Department established the Animal Services Oversight Team as an advisory body focused on thoughtful consideration, analysis and implementation of the recommendations in the AHA Assessment Report. In a 6 month period of time between July and December of 2015, twelve Oversight Team Meetings were held. The meetings were held on July 14, July 29, August 3, 11, 17 and 25, September 21, October 2 and 19, November 5 and 9, December 1.

There has been a great deal of progress in filling new staff positions as well as in regards to accomplishing many of the AHA recommendations. The Board of Supervisors approved budget for the current fiscal year resulted in four new positions.

The Oversight Team reviewed each of the 464 recommendations included in the AHA report, with the exception of governance related items that were held for a separate discussion and further direction from the Board of Supervisors. Each of the recommendations was categorized in one or more of five categories: already being done, quick win, future implementation, will not implement, or more discussion. Attachment A reflects the entire list of recommendations and categorization. The items noted as "completed" on the attachment reflect recommendations where implementation has been completed. Out of the 464 total recommendations, 45 have been completed (10%) and 101 are "already being done" (22%).

The Oversight Team has had in depth discussions of important topic areas such as recommendations related to intakes by appointment and behavior and enrichment for animals in the shelter. The Team has discussed approaches to recording observed animal behavior for individual animal planning. As a result of in depth discussions, consensus has been reached on a general approach to specific areas including owner relinquishments and open adoptions. Sub-committees have been formed to refine broad consensus developing policies and protocols. One sub-committee is focusing on developing a surrender counseling program for owners. One component is an alternative model where volunteers are on-site to talk to animal owners and help them solve some of the challenges that lead them to consider surrendering their pets. A second sub-committee is focusing on an overall approach to a community cat program appropriate for diverse communities throughout Santa Barbara County. These sub-committees have work ahead of them. The Oversight Team and Animal Services leadership also recognize that some of the recommendations are dependent upon key staff for leadership. For instance, the Director of Shelter Medicine will be working with partners on procedures related to Daily Rounds.

In addition to advising about specific AHA recommendations, the Oversight Team has provided consultation and advice regarding the ringworm outbreak, made recommendations regarding the Board approved position for the current budget year, and brought forward alternative suggestions to meet unmet needs such as a behavioral checklist.

Another area identified as a priority in the AHA report, was in regard to relationships with our partners and key stakeholders. The Oversight Team as a full body made a commitment to the 5 elements brought before the Board at the September report to the Board. (Attachment B reflects the 5 agreements.) We

continue to work towards transparency and direct communication. Dr. Relly Nadler has met separately with Santa Barbara Dog Volunteers, K-9 PALS, Santa Maria cat volunteers and staff in Santa Maria. He provided a safe environment for partners to raise issues and concerns and has provided guidelines for our work together. Participants have expressed themselves effectively in the Oversight Team despite strong opinions. There is sense of collegiality and teamwork in providing the best solutions for Animal Services. There is an appreciation for the challenges for the Animal Services Department and how dedicated the staff is. The Oversight Team has also seen the extreme dedication and professionalism of the participating agencies and volunteer groups.

There are some challenges inherent in the process of implementing over 450 recommendations. The number of recommendations is extensive and it will take time to implement. Many of the recommendations are dependent on other recommendations. We want and need to involve key staff and key partners, who have other responsibilities and commitments. Our partners are eager for input in areas related to the facilities and governance issues. These are issues that will follow high level decision-making by the Board of Supervisors.

We have clear next steps in the process of implementing AHA recommendations. The Oversight Team and Animal Services staff will continue progress to discuss recommendations, create an approach to key concerns, form subcommittees to refine the approaches, and develop clear policies and protocol. Our goal is to prioritize the categories of recommendations and set estimated time frames for completion to keep the process moving forward. We want to measure progress and impacts. The first priority recommendations being addressed are related to animal enrichment and the intake of animals into our shelters.

The Oversight Team is supportive of an ongoing Oversight Team or committee for Animal Services that is not just related to the AHA report and recommendations. We recognize that this is a long-term process. There is a separate Board agenda item on the issues of governance.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: N/A

Fiscal Analysis:

The American Humane Association Progress Report will have no fiscal impact at this time.

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@sbcpd.org.

Attachments:

- A. Oversight Team Review and Categorization of the AHA Recommendations
- B. Report on progress 5 Agreements
- C. AHA Progress Report Presentation
- D. CEQA Notice of Exemption

Authored by:

Susan Klein-Rothschild, MSW, Deputy Director of Community Health