



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 Tme:** 1 hour  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Takashi Wada, MD, MPH, Director & Health Officer  
Director(s) Public Health Department  
Contact Info: Susan Klein-Rothschild, MSW  
681-5435  
**SUBJECT:** Governance of Animal Services Program

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors consider the following recommendations regarding the governance of the Animal Services Program in the Public Health Department:

- a) Receive preliminary information from the Public Health Department on various models of governance for Animal Services programs provided by different counties (Attachment A); and
- b) Provide direction to the Public Health Department as to next steps regarding governance:
  - i) Whether to obtain detailed information on any or all of the models of governance included in Attachment A;
  - ii) Whether to seek input from community stakeholders;
  - iii) Whether to issue a request for information from interested parties in the community who may have specialized knowledge, expertise or interest in this area; and/or
  - iv) Such other direction as the Board may provide; and
- c) Provide direction to the Public Health Department regarding a community body that provides feedback on animal services as follows:
  - i) Direct staff to research potential countywide commissions to focus on the broad issues of animal welfare in Santa Barbara County and return to the Board at a later date with recommendations regarding the establishment of such a body;

- ii) Direct staff to research a potential advisory committee that focuses on issues related to the provision of animal services through the County Animal Services program and return to the board at a later date with recommendations regarding the establishment of such a body; and/or
- iii) Direct that the current Animal Services Oversight Team will continue working on implementing the AHA recommendations until no later than June 2017;
- d) 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:**

In June of 2015, the American Humane Association (AHA) completed a program assessment of the Santa Barbara County Animal Services program. The first key finding of the assessment was “The present model of governance may not be the best business model to operate animal services.” The recommendation was to “Investigate financial implications of Privatization and Joint Powers of Authority versus County oversight of animal services.”

The Public Health Department has completed preliminary research (Attachment A) and is seeking Board of Supervisors direction before embarking on next steps.

**Background:** The Animal Services program in the Public Health Department provides mandated services including rabies control, stray animal shelters, the spaying and neutering of adopted animals, the provision of necessary emergency care, and enforcement of animal laws and regulations. These services are provided out of three shelter facilities (Santa Barbara, Lompoc, and Santa Maria) with a staff of 35 Full-time equivalents. There are an additional six to seven extra help employees. The Fiscal Year 15-16 adopted budget is \$4,900,000 and the General Fund contribution is \$1,418,000 (29%) of the total adopted budget. The FTE count for FY 15-16 is 35.

The AHA Program Assessment began in the fall of 2014 and site visits were conducted in January 2015 and April 2015. The final report was presented by the AHA to the Board of Supervisors in June of 2015.

Following the receipt of the report, The Public Health Department established an Oversight Team. The Animal Services AHA Report Oversight Team is an advisory body focused on thoughtful consideration, analysis, and implementation of the recommendations in the AHA Assessment Report. The AHA recommendation related to governance has not been included in the work of the Oversight Team due to the high level nature of this issue.

Public Health staff has completed initial research on the issue of governance. Preliminary interviews were conducted with Directors of animal services programs in a number of counties. A total of four governance models were identified. Each of the governance models can provide essential animal services. Information was sought on the operations of different models along with the key benefits and challenges of each model.

The preliminary interviews revealed that differences among counties and communities is significant in how programs are funded, local resources and capabilities of community-based outside entities, the geographic region, number of shelter facilities, the organizational structure, and the leadership. Decisions about which models to implement are largely based on the areas of difference noted along

with local community preferences, history and political considerations. Based on insufficient information of key considerations in our community, there is no ability to estimate financial implications of various models.

The chart of governance models attached with this Board Letter reflects preliminary work of gathering of information about governance models from other County Animal Services programs. We have insufficient information to estimate costs and any detail for the models other than the current Santa Barbara County model. We lack information about the level of interest and potential capacity of any organizations who may be interested in contracting or providing such services locally. We also lack information about contracting cities as they have not been approached about alternative models for service delivery.

Contracts with our city partners expire in June 2016. Contracts with cities include agreements on what the County Animal Services program will provide and the costs for provision of such services. For planning and budgetary purposes, it is best to initiate two year contracts with cities for the upcoming fiscal year. Decisions made by the Board of Supervisors regarding governance may impact the city contracts.

The Public Health Department seeks direction from the Board of Supervisors as to next steps for our community on the issue of governance of Animal Services. Some possible next steps the Board may direct the Public Health Department to pursue include but not limited to:

- Conduct further research on different models of governance.
- Provide community outreach to seek the input and feedback of our community partners on the issue of governance.
- Disseminate a Request for Information (RFI) to seek suggestions from the community and potential partners on the best approach to governance of animal services locally and to discern the level of interest by potential partners.
- Direct the department to continue the current County model of governance for animal services for the foreseeable future with a focus on implementation of the AHA recommendations and reconsider the governance issue in one year.

In addition to the issue of governance, the Board of Supervisors has raised the possibility of a continuous community body to provide ongoing feedback on animal services in the county. Several models of a community body exist in other jurisdictions. The Board can create the commission or Public Health can establish it. The Board of Supervisors may direct a number of steps including, but not limited to:

1. Establish a countywide commission to focus on the broad issues of animal welfare in Santa Barbara County.
2. Establish a County Animal Services Advisory Committee to focus on issues related to the provision of animal services through our County Animal Services program.
3. Continue the current Animal Services Oversight Team through the implementation of the AHA recommendations with a sunset date no later than June 2017.

Each of the options listed above needs further research. Broadly, the options above could be compared with existing community bodies. Option number 1, is similar to the County of Santa Barbara Commission for Women which takes a broad look at issues countywide related to women and extends beyond the specifics of any one department. Option number 2, is similar to the Advisory Board on

Alcohol and Drug Problems that advises the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services Department in Santa Barbara County. Option number 3, is continuing the existing Animal Services Oversight Team under the Public Health Department focused on implementation of the American Humane Association recommendations to a specified date in the future.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: N/A

**Fiscal Analysis:**

The Animal Services Governance 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. Animal Services Governance Models Chart
- B. Animal Services Governance Presentation
- C. CEQA Notice of Exemption

**Authored by:**

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