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To: sbcob
Subject: April 19 Agenda Item #4 - Animal Services



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My name is Elizabeth Reed. I am a SBCity resident and very long term volunteer at SBCAS, ASAP, and Care4Paws. I am writing this memo in case I can not connect on the zoom call for tomorrows meeting.

It is difficult to get any official information about or from SBCAS, but my basis for stating some of the listed items below are from a reliable source and personal experience over a period starting in 2005 to present, in one capacity or another. My current understanding of the purpose for Agenda item #4 (Animal Services) is the following:

1. Various Cities and other areas pay SBCAS to service their areas at different levels. For example, in SB City, the police do animal control, but pay SBCAS to do kenneling, etc. In SM, SBCAS does control and shelter.
2. For the last few years, SBCAS has not raised rates to those places because, according to their write-up to the Board, the Cities, etc. have had a harder time financially than the County due to pot sales are only County. However, SBCAS received portions of the Tobacco Settlement grant to soften the losses, and the BOS let the overruns of costs slide during this time
3. The Cities, et al, say SBCAS is providing fewer services and they just can't pay what SBCAS wants them to.
4. In addition, SBHumane has stepped into all this and said THEY can offer services for cheaper than SBCAS.

This concerns me greatly. While I have not agreed with SBCAS leadership decisions and practices for some time, I firmly believe any level of care for the animals at SBHumane will be quantitatively and qualitatively worse, with no means for the County to apply oversight or control. Despite the vast amount of money in SBH coffers, it is not, either in my or most other people I know doing animal welfare efforts, treating either the animals nor the public well, despite all their self-praise in advertisements and inherited name recognition. It is a private entity and not subject to the Board of Supervisors or Citizen FOIA or oversight commissions. SBCAS and PHD are. If SBCAS loses those contracts (in whole or in part) it will be minimized to the point of mostly doing Protective Custody and Dangerous Dog hearings for

the 34% of unincorporated County entities. Once those services are gone from the County, it will be close to impossible to get them back.

Here are concerns some of my fellow Volunteers and I have spoken about – I'm sure, given the opportunity, Volunteers at Santa Maria and Lompoc could come up with more.

1. Please re-read the Indy articles about the SBH and their former employees, and consider the difference between them and SBH press persona.
2. County wide public health continuity is important and PHD has no role possible with the SBH organization.
3. Cities and SBCAS have a mutually dependent relationship – the Cities need the service, SBCAS needs the contracts. There is zero mutual relationship currently or in the future with SBH
4. With the change in SBCAS leadership, a change to effective management is now possible.

Some of the ideas for change we'd suggest to balance costs and revenues and again provide some of the services and efforts by SBCAS that have been lost are:

1. Explore options for additional grants from public and private entities – Maddies fund, ASPCA, etc. Traditionally, the County hasn't wanted to try for those (County bureaucracy issues) to make up the shortfall. There are lots of pockets that can open to a receptive Animal Service.
2. Engage the Community at large and existing animal welfare/rescue orgs with the shelter by asking for grant writing help and suggestions, decent statistical, policy, practice transparency to the Community in a regular format with responsive answers to questions and concerns.
3. Involve service groups and community service requirements for high schoolers to provide services such as staffing an accessible and sustainable food pantry in an decent fashion. The one they opened with great fanfare in SB was quickly overrun by rats and made worthless. All that donated food gone to waste, and only 3 separate people in two months coming in to try to avail themselves of the pantry. During that same time, Care4Paws was handing out literally tons of food across the County.
4. Actively engage past and future volunteers to be at the shelter – with a volunteer coordinator who doesn't refuse to deal with volunteers.
5. Create a 'subject matter expert' oversight team to help re-initiate formerly vibrant programs or for assessments, write-ups on animals, photography, website issues.
6. Now that DAWG isn't there, the 'too small lateral sewer line to have commercial washers at the shelter' nonsense should be done, making the laundry chores so much easier.

7. Recognized LOCAL leaders from the Rescue side of Animal Welfare in SBC have a knowledge base far beyond what former leadership provided and has been trying to help but not allowed to do necessary things
8. Figuring out actual job scope and boundaries for Kennel Staff and, looking at desk behavior and interactions with the public.
9. Take the #2 spot (Operations Superintendent) off the books to avoid that cost in the future.
10. Actually partner with other animal welfare groups to enhance outreach to the community – we know C4P does a ton, SBCAS doesn't – but they could symbiotically work on issues and services.
11. SBCAS has property. Get a realtor to scope out DAWG and Lompoc. Could be sites for Community services not just for animals, but vaccination clinics, service sign-ups, whatever.
12. Let clinic like C4P sell licenses and provide that service to the City, also. Create a sliding scale for licenses based on income (have food stamps, section 8 housing, etc, = cheaper license). Donation program for more financially able to pay for homeless pet rabies and license fees.

Grants and increased license sales could make up the difference, keeping it possible to have SBCAS service the contracts a better rate, even if BOS needs to carry them a bit.

Please do not let SBCAS become defunct. They have been better service providers, they can be again.

I am sending this memo under my name, but other Volunteers are in agreement with this starting list. We want to do better by the animals and the people who do or will care for them. That has not been happening in the last few years. Different leadership should help tremendously. Bring in some of the highly engaged to sit on interviews or oversight commissions. You don't need to spend a bunch of money to make this work well – SBCAS needs to be welcoming and transparently communicative to the Public, to Volunteers and Staff and maintain high standards for the care of the animals. You, as the Board of Supervisors, need to be able to require better than rubber stamp accountability and oversight to the changes.

Thank you – I hope to be able to speak to you at tomorrow's meeting.

Elizabeth Reed

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