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Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

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**From:** Bernard Kelmenson <bernard@asapcats.org>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 17, 2022 10:17 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Comments re: Agenda Item #4 Animal Services City and Jurisdictional Contract Fee Scenarios Presentation.  
**Attachments:** ASAP-BoS letter.bk.docx

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Please see the attached comments regarding the referenced Agenda Item.

Thank you,  
Bernard  
(805) 886-4930

April 15, 2022

**To:** Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

**From:** ASAP Cats (Animal Shelter Assistance Program)

**Subject:** 4/19/2022 Meeting, **agenda item #4** Animal Services City and Jurisdictional Contract Fee Scenarios Presentation

ASAP Cats has been working in partnership with the County for the past 33 years to save the lives of cats and kittens in Santa Barbara by providing shelter, veterinary care, adoption and foster services, behavioral support, education and community outreach. No local entity has more experience with cat care or as much invested in the welfare of cats than we do, and we seek the best outcomes for all of them who need our help.

As the Board of Supervisors considers the issue of how much to charge municipalities in exchange for providing animal control and care services and how to make that process feasible within the Public Health Dept. budget, we at ASAP Cats want to weigh in for a decision that keeps communities around the County working with Animal Services to provide the best quality of care rather than looking for a bargain.

ASAP Cats' concern is that when cities are faced with sudden, significant increases in the cost of doing what they are obligated to do for animals in their jurisdictions, they will splinter in different directions, creating confusion for the communities we all serve, substituting cost for value. Eventually this can lead to the county as a whole doing less for animal care and, unfortunately, euthanize more.

Of the four options presented we believe Scenario A—total cost recovery with continued Tobacco Settlement and General Fund Contribution support—is the one that will keep municipalities and unincorporated areas together in the fold with Animal Services, and thus offer the best chance for quality care. This short term, gradual approach to cost recovery, would provide an opportunity for all the stakeholders in the community; the County, Municipalities, and NGO's to develop an overall plan that could benefit the residents of Santa Barbara County, and potentially provide an opportunity to get better value for the combined budget we allocate to Animal Services.

The foundation of ASAP Cat's relationship with the County is the recognition of how much more can be done for cats than just collecting them in cages, feeding them, and hoping someone claims their lost pet or wanders in looking for a new one. Cats often require careful observation, health care or behavioral training before they become attractive to potential adopters. Kittens born in unspeakably rough circumstances are expertly socialized when we tame them as "Tiny Lions." Unsocialized cats can become valuable "workers" on ranches, vineyards, and in nurseries and feed stores if we have a hand in placing them. Owners who are no longer able to care for their cats can turn them over to us without worry about their fate.

With a lean staff, trained volunteers, and over 4,000 generous donors, ASAP Cats has been providing these enhanced resources at no extra expense to the County. But it is crucial to keep the team together pulling in the same direction, each stakeholder looking for innovative, humane solutions to the challenges of community animal care. Unexpected or unaffordable cost increases at the municipal level is likely to disrupt the achievements we all value.

ASAP Cat's is an example of how working together we provide better care and better value to the communities we serve. Our model of co-operation and collaboration should be continued and be looked to as a model for the future of animal welfare in the County.

Respectfully,  
Bernard Kelmenson,  
President of the Board, ASAP Cats