

County of Santa Clara

Board of Supervisors
Management Audit Division

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June 15, 2010

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Management Audit Manager *RMM*

Subject: FY 2010-11 Proposed Staffing Reduction at the Animal Shelter

The County Executive has proposed to reduce staffing by 1.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions (1.0 FTE Kennel Attendant and 0.5 FTE Office Specialist II) at the Animal Shelter as part of the FY 2010-11 Recommended Budget for Santa Clara County. On Friday afternoon, June 11, the Management Audit Division received a request from Supervisor Ken Yeager to review the proposed change. In response to this request, Management Audit Division staff interviewed Program and Administrative Managers with the Animal Care and Control Program in the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Management and met with the SB 90 Coordinator in the Controller-Treasurer Department. In addition to these interviews, we sought and reviewed statistical data regarding budget and staffing; rates of intake, positive outcomes and euthanasia at the shelter; SB 90 claims; and fee structures. It should be noted that Management Audit Division staff did not verify the accuracy of data provided by these departments. This report will briefly outline the proposed adjustment and our assessment of its potential impact on the operations and outcomes of the Animal Shelter. We wish to thank the staff of the Animal Care and Control Program and the Controller Treasurer Department for responding promptly and courteously to our questions and for providing us with detailed information on very short notice.

1. Animal Shelter Functions and Mandates

The mission of the Animal Care and Control Program is to "ensure and protect the health and safety of the unincorporated residents of Santa Clara County through rabies control, stray dog, cat and deceased animal removal, and control pet overpopulation through educations." The programs and services provided by the San Martin Animal Shelter include:

- Accepting lost, stray or owner-surrendered animals from the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County;
- Maintaining lost and found records at the shelter;
- Rescuing and cares for injured stray dogs, cats and other domestic animals from the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County;

- Actively working to reunite pet owners with their lost animals;
- Providing an adoption program to place unwanted pets with new, loving homes;
- Participating in school education programs and with local organizations to educate the public about pet ownership, safety and licensing requirements;
- Offering a variety of volunteer and community service opportunities; and
- Providing referrals for low cost spay/neuter, testing and vaccinations for stray or feral cats.

The State mandates that the County control rabies and provide shelter and medical care to sick or injured animals that are impounded at the Animal Shelter. The County is required to provide proper shelter and medical care until the animal is either retrieved by its owner or is humanely euthanized. Among other dictates, State law requires that the County provide care and maintenance for impounded animals for four business days from the day after impoundment, and that the shelter remain open for owner redemption on one weekday evening until at least 7:00 p.m. or one weekend day. The County's Animal Shelter provides these functions in accordance with PC 597.1 and 597f; Food & Agric. Code 31108, 31752, 31752.5, 31753, 32001, and 32003; Civ. Code 1834 and 1846, and further regulated by County Code of Ordinances, Division B31 Animals & Fowl.

2. Staffing

Currently, the Animal Shelter has nine staff members. Following is a list of the positions and their roles:

- Animal Care and Control Program Manager (1 FTE) – oversees the operation of the Animal Shelter and is responsible for the budgeting of this unit;
- Animal Shelter Supervisor (1 FTE) – responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Animal Shelter, coordination of volunteers and the foster program, and outreach within the community;
- Office Specialists II (1 FTE) and III (1 FTE) – process adoption, surrender, animal medical records, and lost and found paperwork; answer phone calls and assist customers at the Animal Shelter; process receipts; and
- Kennel Attendants (5 FTEs) – provide daily care of all animals in the Animal Shelter, including feeding, cleaning kennels, medicating, conducting behavior assessments, and when necessary euthanizing animals; also assist customers who come to the Animal Shelter.

The Animal Shelter is open to the public seven days per week and closed on holidays. All staff work eight hours per day, 40 hours per week, with varied schedules to cover the seven-day per week operation of the Animal Shelter. On holidays when the Animal Shelter is closed, assigned Kennel Attendants work four-hour shifts to ensure that animals are properly cared for.

The Animal Care and Control Program has service agreements with a licensed veterinarian and a vet technician to provide veterinary services. In addition to the paid staff and contractors, there are currently approximately 40 volunteers who help to socialize the animals, assist the public with adoptions, and serve various other

functions. The Animal Shelter has strong relationships with the community. In particular, the Friends of the San Martin Animal Shelter (FOSMAS) provides assistance with fundraising, donations to the Spay/Neuter fund, and foster and adoption placement for many animals throughout the year.

3. Budget

The FY 2009-10 Current Modified Budget for the Animal Care and Control cost center (5670), which includes Field Services (i.e., Animal Control) as well as the Animal Shelter, is \$1,502,778 net of a \$50,000 reimbursement from the Roads Fund for dead animal pick-up on County roads. In FY 2008-09, the Program charged the Road Fund for 1,094 dead animal pick-ups at \$60 per pick-up. The rate was increased from \$40 to \$60 per pick-up at the beginning of FY 2006-07. It is unknown whether this charge recovers the cost of this service.

The Animal Care and Control budget is offset by \$327,000 in budgeted revenues, consisting of animal license and shelter fees. The FY 2010-11 Recommended Budget is \$1,377,702, which includes reducing the staff by 1.0 FTE Kennel Attendant. The FY 2008-09 Mandate Study identified the cost of the Animal Shelter only as \$871,666.

In a separate cost center for Administration (5665), the Department of Agriculture and Environment Management is eliminating 2.0 FTEs for clerical support, including 1.0 FTE Office Specialist II that currently supports the Animal Shelter. That leaves 3.0 FTE Office Specialist II within Administration. The Department plans to move 0.5 FTE Office Specialist II from the Administrative Office to the Animal Shelter, so the actual impact on Animal Shelter clerical staff will be 0.5 FTE. Since this reduction will affect operations at both the San Martin Animal Shelter and Morgan Hill Administrative Office, it may necessitate back-up resources from the Shelter Supervisor, support staff at other work locations, or extra help usage in order to provide adequate coverage.

4. License Fees and Other Revenues

All of Animal Care and Control's revenue is fee generated, except for donations and SB 90 reimbursement, which has been discontinued. Donations are deposited into the Program's Trust Fund (Fund 370) under two categories: shelter donations and spay/neuter donations. Additionally, SB 90 reimbursements (when available) go directly to the General Fund through the Controller-Treasurer Department.

The Animal Care and Control Program issues approximately 4,500 dog and cat licenses annually and realized revenues in FY 2009-10 of approximately \$90,000. This revenue offsets expenses for the entire Animal Care and Control Program, which includes the Animal Shelter.

The license fees are set at \$30 for unaltered dogs, \$15 for altered dogs, \$24 for unaltered cats, and \$12 for altered cats. These fees have not been increased since 2003. At that time, the Program conducted a fee comparison with surrounding jurisdictions to determine an appropriate fee. Our review showed that the fee in Santa Clara County is similar to surrounding counties, as shown in Table 1 on the next page.

Table 1

**Comparison of FY 2009-10 License Fees in the
County of Santa Clara and Neighboring Counties**

County	Dogs (unaltered)	Dogs (altered)	Cats (unaltered)	Cats (altered)
Alameda	\$30	\$15	\$24	\$12
San Mateo	\$30	\$12	\$11	\$6
Santa Clara	\$30	\$15	\$24	\$15
Santa Cruz	\$65	\$26 – one year \$46 – two years \$66 – three years	N/A	N/A

Source: County Websites

Santa Cruz County charges significantly more than other nearby counties, and also offers multiple year licenses. Santa Clara County has not pursued a multi-year license, which could potentially offer a bump in revenue in its first year. Staff with the Animal Care and Control Program indicated that they deliberately do not set their license fees at a rate commensurate with costs in order to achieve better compliance rates.

The FY 2009-10 Current Modified Budget for Animal Shelter revenue is \$237,000, and estimated at \$171,000 for FY 2010-11. This represents revenue received for adoptions, owner surrenders, owner redemption, Gilroy/Morgan Hill intakes (pursuant to MOU with these cities), disposal fees, and owner requested euthanasia fees. Adoption fees are set at \$110 for dogs, \$120 for puppies, \$90 for cats, and \$100 for kittens. These fees include spaying/neutering, vaccination, and microchip ID services, and are deliberately set at a price that encourages adoptions.

5. SB 90 Claims

In FY 2008-09, the County received \$335,463 from the State in SB 90 revenues for providing animal adoption and shelter services. This amount is over and above the animal license and shelter fees included in the budget for the Animal Care and Control cost center. In an attempt to end the euthanasia of adoptable and treatable animals, the State mandated an increased holding period for stray and abandoned dogs and cats; required verification of the temperament of feral cats; required the posting of lost and found lists; required the maintenance of records for impounded animals; and required that impounded animals receive “necessary and prompt veterinary care.” This claim was based on actual costs, including the salaries and benefits of Animal Shelter staff.

The State suspended SB 90 funding for animal adoption in FY 2009-10; however, the County is still required by State mandate to provide the same shelter and adoption services. The Controller-Treasurer Department reported that the State is considering basing SB 90 claims on payments per animal per day, rather than on actual costs.

Animal Shelter management reported that it will continue to provide services at the same level, despite this suspension of funding. Additionally, staff reported that it will have no difficulty providing these services if the kennel attendant staff is reduced from five to four. If the State's proposed change were adopted and the County was thus required to report per-day-per-animal data, rather than actual costs, any change in staffing would have no impact on SB 90 funding. Alternatively, if the State continues to reimburse based on actual costs, the portion of the salaries and benefits for the deleted positions that had been expended on SB 90 reimbursable activities will no longer be reimbursed.

6. Statistics on Animal Shelter Intakes, Euthanasia and Positive Outcomes

The Animal Shelter maintains statistics to meet the requirements of a grant of \$20,000 from Maddie's Fund, as well as to support SB 90 claims. The Animal Shelter has about 25 dog kennels and 90 cat kennels. While the total capacity varies depending upon the size of the animals impounded (e.g., one Great Dane will take up more space than five Chihuahuas), on average the Shelter houses at any one time approximately 30-35 dogs and 70-80 cats.

Pursuant to current policies and procedures, the Animal Shelter records intakes, outgoing transfers, and euthanized animals in four categories: Healthy, Treatable/Rehabilitatable, Treatable/Manageable, and Unhealthy and Untreatable. For Calendar Year 2009, the Animal Shelter started the year with 119 dogs and cats and had a total intake of 3,062 dogs and cats during the year, resulting in a total animal count of 3,181. The owners of 144 dogs and cats requested euthanasia, and there were a total of 968 euthanized animals. According to Animal Shelter staff, 90 percent of the euthanized animals were feral cats. Based on the Animal Shelter's intake and disposition statistics, 95.4 percent of the euthanized animals were unhealthy and untreatable, as shown in Table 2 on the next page.

Table 2

County Animal Shelter Animal Intake and Disposition Statistics
Calendar Year 2009

	Dogs	Cats	Total
Beginning Animal Count - January 1, 2009	29	90	119
<u>Animal Intakes:</u>			
Healthy or Treatable	784	1,021	1,805
Unhealthy & Untreatable	594	663	1,257
Total Animal Intakes	1,378	1,684	3,062
Total 2009 Animal Count	1,407	1,774	3,181
<u>Animal Dispositions:</u>			
Adoptions	693	1,036	1,729
Outgoing Transfers	63	4	67
Return to Owner	275	24	299
Euthanized*1			
Healthy	2	1	3
Treatable/Rehabilitatable	0	26	26
Treatable/Manageable	14	2	16
Unhealthy & Untreatable	297	626	923
Total Euthanized	313	655	968
Died or Lost in Shelter Care	9	78	87
Total Animal Dispositions	1,353	1,797	3,150
Ending Animal Count - December 31, 2009	107	41	148
Total 2009 Animal Count	1,460	1,838	3,298
Count Variance*2	53	64	117
• Percent Euthanized of Total Animals*3	17.1%	34.8%	27.1%
• Percent Euthanized that are Unhealthy & Untreatable	94.9%	95.6%	95.4%

Notes:

*1 Including owner requested euthanasia of 87 dogs and 57 cats.

*2 CY 2009 animal intake, disposition and inventory shelter statistics do not precisely reconcile.

*3 Excludes owner requested euthanasia.

Source: Animal Care and Control Program

The Animal Shelter reports Positive Outcome Statistics quarterly in its report to the Housing Land Use, Environment and Transportation Committee of the Board of Supervisors. Animals that have been adopted, placed in foster care or a rescue group, or returned to their owners are considered to have achieved a "positive outcome." In the first three quarters of FY 2009-10, the Animal Shelter reported positive outcomes at a rate of 66 percent (Q1), 78 percent (Q2), and 75 percent (Q3). The Animal Shelter reports that these rates are almost double the national average.

7. Potential Impact of Staffing Reduction on Euthanization

Animal Care and Control Program management does not believe that a reduction of the Kennel Attendant staff from 5.0 FTE to 4.0 FTE will affect euthanization statistics. Staff report that their significant outreach efforts into the rescue community and strong public support will help the Program to maintain and enhance their positive outcome statistics. Data regarding the positive outcome rate (i.e., no euthanized animals) provided by the Program is displayed in Table 3 below. It should be noted that the Animal Shelter operated with 4.0 FTE Kennel Attendants until October 2005.

Table 3

Percent of Animals Euthanized and Euthanasia Avoided in the County of Santa Clara by Fiscal Year

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Percent of Animals Euthanized</u>	<u>Percent of Euthanasia Avoided</u>
2001-02	37%	63%
2002-03	39%	61%
2003-04	36%	64%
2004-05	38%	62%
2005-06	37%	63%
2006-07	27%	73%
2007-08	31%	69%
2008-09	28%	72%

Source: Animal Care and Control Program

8. Animal Shelter Capacity and Euthanization

The Animal Care and Control Program staff report that all healthy and adoptable animals are made available for adoption, and animals are not routinely euthanized due to lack of space in the Animal Shelter. They said they have not euthanized any animals due to lack of space in more than six years, and the likelihood of that happening is "remote." The Program expects this trend to continue in the future regardless of the proposed staffing reductions.