

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

791



FROM: Community Health Agency, Department of Animal Services

SUBMITTAL DATE:
9/02/05

SUBJECT: Department of Animal Services Response to Blue Ribbon Committee Report and Recommendations on Cat Population Control

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Receive and File Response to the Blue Ribbon Committee Report and Recommendations on Cat Population.

BACKGROUND:

On April 19, 2005, the Board of Supervisors received the Blue Ribbon Committee Report and Recommendations on Cat Population Control and directed the Department of Animal Services to present a plan to implement those recommendations. As stated on April 19, the Department of Animal Services substantially concurs with the Blue Ribbon Committee recommendations. The Board of Supervisors approved financial assistance within the Fiscal Year 05/06 budget that provides funding for several of these recommendations and the Department has begun implementation and/or is beginning the planning of programs to address many of these recommendations.

Robert Miller, Director of Animal Service

RM:bw

FINANCIAL DATA	Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$ 0	In Current Year Budget:	n/a
	Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$ 0	Budget Adjustment:	No
	Annual Net County Cost:	\$ 0	For Fiscal Year:	05/06

SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A	Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires 4/5 Vote	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE

County Executive Office Signature

Consent
 Policy

 Consent
 Policy

 Dep't Recomm.:
 Per Exec. Ofc.:

Prev. Agn. Ref.: 3.4 of 4/19/05.

District: All

Agenda Number:

3.8

**Department of Animal Services Response to the
REPORT OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
ON
RECOMMENDATIONS TO HELP CONTROL CAT POPULATION**

The Blue Ribbon Committee provided the following recommendations to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors on April 19, 2005. The Department of Animal Services (DAS) response to those recommendations follows:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Hire another full time veterinarian. The County needs two full time veterinarians to accomplish the following goals.

The Board of Supervisors approved the addition of two Veterinarians effective Fiscal Year 05/06. One of these positions has been filled by Allan Drusys, DVM who will serve as the Chief Veterinarian. The other position is currently in recruitment. Once that position is filled, there will be three veterinarians in the Department.

2. County to buy and staff a Spay/Neuter Mobile Clinic. The County needs to be able to provide low cost spay/neuter services to areas within the county where there are no low cost spay/neuter clinics.

The Board of Supervisor approved the acquisition and staffing of a mobile spay/neuter clinic effective Fiscal Year 05/06. DAS has acquired a super bus from Riverside Transit Authority. This vehicle will be retrofitted, staffed and is anticipated to be in service early in the calendar year 2006.

3. County to have a Spay/Neuter Clinic open to the public seven days a week. Being open only during the week is too limited. Many people work during the week. If spay/neuter services were offered on Saturdays and Sundays it would increase the number of spay/neuters.

The Board of Supervisors did not approve the policy item requesting funds to open the Riverside City/County Animal Shelter 7 days a week. DAS agrees that there is merit to expanding hours of service to include Sundays. As an alternative to remaining open 7 days a week, DAS is developing a pilot program to shift days of operation to include Sunday and close on a weekday. This program will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for review and will consider contractual obligations for days of service.

4. To reduce euthanasia of future cats brought into the county shelters, the Blue Ribbon Committee recommends a Micro-chip Program. We feel if the shelter staff could notify the owners, more cats would be claimed and returned to their homes. When a cat doesn't come home for dinner, many people think the cat will show up later. The County holding period is only five days. By the time most owners start looking for their cat, their cat

may have already been euthanized at the shelter. County statistics shows approximately one percent of cats are ever redeemed from the shelter.

The Blue Ribbon Committee recommends the following Micro-chip Program:

A. All cats adopted are microchipped before leaving the shelter.

Currently DAS offers those who adopt cats from our shelters the option of purchasing a microchip for their pet at the discounted cost of \$10. (Actual cost to DAS is approximately \$15.) Requiring micro-chipping of all cats adopted in the County of Riverside is an option available to the Board of Supervisors and would require an ordinance change. DAS is developing a flat adoption rate that would establish consistent pricing for adoption of all dogs and all cats and include spaying/neutering, vaccinations, and micro-chips. This would require micro-chipping of all adopted cats before leaving the shelter. This change will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for review and will consider contractual obligations for animal adoptions.

B. Owners of cats to have the option of having a micro-chip implanted in their cat at the time of redemption at no additional cost.

See response under C (below).

C. Incorporate an increase of \$10.00 to the adoption fee and an increase of \$10.00 to impound fees to cover the county's increased cost due to the above recommendation. **(Opposed by 2 members, Pat Merritt & Garry Grant).**

Currently DAS offers those who are redeeming their pets the option of purchasing a microchip for the full cost of \$15 (not discounted as indicated in Item A above). DAS does not agree that these fees should be inconsistent. Requiring micro-chipping of all cats redeemed by owners in the County of Riverside is an option available to the Board of Supervisors and would require an ordinance change. DAS is developing a flat rate redemption package that will include the cost of micro-chipping pets. This would require micro-chipping of all redeemed cats before leaving the shelter. This ordinance and fee change will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for review and will consider contractual obligations for animal redemptions.

D. Enforce laws on books regarding "no unaltered cat is allowed to roam".

While this is a requirement of the current County Ordinance 6.08.030, and is an available tool for officers to ensure the health of constituents and protection of property, absolute enforcement would require an inconceivable increase in time and staffing of Animal Control Officers.

E. County to offer implant of micro-chips when they hold their vaccine/rabies clinics.

DAS agrees with this recommendation and has implemented it. At the recent two-day Homeless Animals Awareness Day event, 31 pets were micro-chipped.

Members recommending the five suggestions feel they are trying to save as many cats as possible from being euthanized. All cats are scanned and if a cat has a micro-chip this will greatly increase the probability of finding the owner.

DAS agrees and strongly supports micro-chipping and scanning for micro-chips to increase the rate of return of lost animals to owners.

5. To build a better rapport with 501c3 rescue groups, the Blue Ribbon Committee recommends an amendment to the ordinance to waive the \$5 adoption fee. **(Opposed by Pat Merritt)**. Other members feel even though the fee is small it may act as a deterrent to some 501c3 rescue groups.

Waiving the \$5 fee for 501(c)3 rescue groups is an option available to the Board of Supervisors and would require a Fee Ordinance change. DAS supports this recommendation and feels the fee is minimal and unnecessary. This change will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for review and will consider contractual obligations for animal adoptions.

6. The Committee recommends the Shelter budget to be increased to allocate additional money for an ongoing Spay/Neuter Voucher program.

The Board of Supervisors approved the budget addition of an ongoing Spay/Neuter Voucher Program effective Fiscal Year 05/06. The new program is to be launched in the fall of 2005.

7. The Committee recommends the Shelter be open on all Sundays to increase adoptions.

DAS agrees that there is merit to expanding hours of service to include Sundays. As an alternative to remaining open 7 days a week, DAS is developing a pilot program to shift days of operation to include Sunday and close on a weekday. This program will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for review and will consider contractual obligations for days of service.

8. The Committee recommends hiring more staff for the Animal Shelter.

The Board of Supervisors approved the addition of 37 new employees effective Fiscal Year 05/06 to enhance all of the animal services throughout Riverside County.

9. The Committee recommends the Advertising Budget for Shelter to be increased to accommodate weekly advertising in the Press Enterprise and in all neighborhood newspapers, including Spanish and Vietnamese neighborhood newspapers.

The advertising budget for DAS has increased from \$6,300 in Fiscal Year 04/05 to \$33,000 in FY 05/06 to allow for a variety of advertising mediums to be used. It is likely that the Department will request a further increase in that budget for Fiscal Year 06/07.

10. The public needs to be better informed of the animal control laws, services offered at the shelter; the County's low cost spay/neuter clinic, pet overpopulation and all the animals available for adoption.

DAS agrees, and with the Board of Supervisor's support in the Fiscal Year 05/06 Budget, DAS has been enabled to meet and exceed the Blue Ribbon Committee's recommendation by establishing two new divisions; a Community Outreach and Education Division and Veterinary Services Division. The Community Outreach and Education Division is tasked to increase community awareness of adoptable animals, departmental activities, programs and philosophy, animal care and educational initiatives. DAS is partnering with community members to bring awareness to the pet overpopulation plight through education and adoption opportunities. Expanded web-based shelter animal viewing and shelter events supplement these efforts. The Veterinary Services division will offer expanded spay/neuter efforts to underserved areas of the county through the new mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic and Spay/Neuter Voucher Program.

11. We recommend the educational program be expanded. Community Leaders: Churches, Elk Club, Lion Club & PTA, etc. should all be contacted to arrange meetings to educate their members on the pet overpopulation crisis and to encourage all their members to spay/neuter their pets.

The Board of Supervisors has approved positions that have allowed for the creation of a Community Outreach and Education (COE) Division. The positions that have been approved and are currently in recruitment will focus on internal education of staff and volunteers, and external education through a media outreach program. DAS would like to expand the education outreach by adding additional positions later this fiscal year and will bring these recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration. Additionally, it is the plan of the COE Division to recruit and train volunteers to supplement educational outreach such as that proposed by the Blue Ribbon Committee.

12. "Welcome Packet" handouts to be given to new residents, giving them information on the services provided by animal control. Distributed by Chamber of Commerce, Water Companies, Pet Stores, Schools (for new students), etc.

DAS agrees that these are excellent methods for promoting the services provided. Once the approved positions have been hired a variety of materials will be developed and distributed.

13. The Blue Ribbon Committee recommends an increase in the Shelter budget to accommodate all the above.

The Board of Supervisors approved the Fiscal Year 05/06 base budget of \$12.5 million, which is \$5.6 million above Fiscal Year 04/05. These increased funds are being used to accommodate the Blue Ribbon Committee recommendations along with additional recommendations from the Director to enhance the shelter medicine programs, expand shelter staff, build and operate a mobile spay/neuter clinic and appropriately staff the reorganized department to best suit the growing communities needs.

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