

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



ITEM
3.60
(ID # 10682)

MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, August 27, 2019

FROM : EXECUTIVE OFFICE:

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE OFFICE: Response to the 2018-2019 Grand Jury Report: Riverside County Department of Animal Services (RCDAS) Improved Efficiency for County Animal Control Officers, All Districts [Total Cost \$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:


1. Approve, with or without modification, the attached response to the 2018-2019 Grand Jury Report: Riverside County Department of Animal Services (RCDAS) – Improved Efficiency for County Animal Control Officers; and,
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to immediately forward the Board's finalized responses to the Grand Jury, the Presiding Judge and to the County Clerk-Recorder (for mandatory filing with the state).

ACTION: Policy

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Washington, seconded by Supervisor Spiegel and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Hewitt
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: August 27, 2019
xc: EO, Grand Jury, Presiding Judge, ACR

Kecia R. Harper
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
NET COUNTY COST	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A			Budget Adjustment: No	
			For Fiscal Year: 2018/19	

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve.

BACKGROUND:

Summary

Penal Code Section 933(c) requires Board of Supervisors comment on the Grand Jury's recommendations pertaining to matters under the Board's control. In addition, responses must be provided to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within 90 days of receipt of the report.



 Rehini Dasika, Principal Management Analyst 8/12/2019 Lisa D Brandl 8/22/2019


 Gregory V. Priamos, Director County Counsel 8/12/2019

RESPONSE TO 2018/19 GRAND JURY REPORT

Riverside County Department of Animal Services (RCDAS)

Improved Efficiency for County Animal Control Officers

Following is the response of the County of Riverside to the above referenced Grant Jury Report.

FINDING NO. 1:

Lack of Policy for Handling Payment of Fees in the Field

The County's 37 Animal Control Officers (ACO's) are dispatched daily to handle a variety of animal related activities. Section 11 of Riverside County Ordinance No. 630, indicates and ACO *may or shall* collect fees for the following services: pet surrender (cats \$145, dogs \$153), return to owner (\$40), and in the field euthanasia (\$60). The Riverside County Department of Animal Services currently does not have a written policy regarding how ACO's should handle payments for these services, as the previous policy regarding payment was rescinded in October 2017.

Response to Finding 1: Respondent RCDAS partially agrees with this finding.

RCDAS is partially in agreement with the finding regarding a lack of policy for handling payments of fees in the field. While we do not have a specific policy for handling payments in the field, we do have Cash Handling Policy 000-22 (Policy 000-22), that was written to include all RCDAS employees. Cash handling has the same requirements regardless of the location and circumstances of receiving the funds. The primary aspects of cash handling are covered in Policy 000-22.

Section III of Policy 000-22 covers how to secure funds by placing them in a location that is kept locked and out of direct sight of the public. The Animal Control Officers (ACO) meet this requirement by keeping cash in a locked box that is bolted to a seat in the ACO's truck. When the ACO is out of the vehicle, it is kept locked.

Section IV of Policy 000-22 covers general cash handling instructions and instructs departmental staff members to not commingle funds or use funds collected from the public for personal reasons.

Section V of Policy 000-22 covers the process of how cash is to be received and treated by DAS staff personnel. This policy is primarily for staff that have access to a change box.

Section VI of Policy 000-22 covers the requirements of accepting checks in the field. This becomes a risk to the County and RCDAS as the incidents of passing bad checks may increase.

Section VII of Policy 000-22 covers our credit card acceptance policy. We can eliminate or greatly reduce the need for ACO staff to collect cash payments in the field by training ACO staff to use the WEB based converge credit card payment system.

Policy 000-22 was written for staff members that have a credit card machine at their desks. We do have a written procedure for acceptance of WEB based Converge credit card payments. Once the officers have been properly trained, we can, for the most part, eliminate cash acceptance in the

field and still ensure constituents can make a payment in the field. It is our intention to initiate the process of having field staff trained and able to take credit card payments by December 31, 2019.

Any payment of funds requires a receipt be created in the Chameleon database. This is required to ensure Fiscal Accounting can identify each payment to the revenue account and is one of the checks and balances used to ensure funding is not lost or misappropriated.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1:

The Riverside County Department of Animal Services should have a policy and procedure regarding the acceptance of payments in the field for services performed by Animal Control Officers.

Response to Recommendation No. 1:

RCDAS is in partial agreement with the Grand Jury's recommendation. We agree that the current cash handling policy, Policy 000-22, needs to be updated with information that will be consistent with the recommendations in this response. It is the RCDAS's intent to have the policy updated and training initiated no later than December 31, 2019.

We agree that cash payments should not be accepted by ACOs. Instead, the ACO will be required to accept credit card payments in the field. These payments will be done with the WEB based Converge credit card payment system and it is the RCDAS's intent to have the policy updated and training initiated no later than December 31, 2019.

With the move to the WEB based Converge credit card payment system, RCDAS will also eliminate the need to accept checks in the field.

RCDAS is in the process of developing a training for its Field Officers. Once the training has been developed, all Field Officers will be instructed on the proper procedures for taking WEB based Converge payments. While the training is taking place, Policy 000-22, will be updated and routed for approvals. It is the RCDAS's intent to have the policy and training implemented no later than December 31, 2019.

FINDING NO. 2:

Cumbersome and Unsafe Procedures for Processing Fee Payments

According to the RCDAS Standard Operating Procedure Manual, Animal Control Officers must complete a cumbersome, multiple step process involving both supervisory personnel and a fiscal deposit designee in order to have their daily receipts posted.

The RCCGJ concluded from testimony and evidence that officers and management were uncomfortable and apprehensive handling cash in the field due to safety concerns. In addition, Standard Operating Procedure for inputting of Official County Receipts into their database, is time consuming and inefficient.

Response to Finding 2: Respondent RCDAS partially agrees with this finding.

RCDAS is in partial agreement with the finding of cumbersome and unsafe procedures for processing fee payments. All Animal Control Officer and Animal Licensing Offices are currently equipped with tablets.

RCDAS uses the Web based Converge credit card system. This has been in place several years but has not been widely used.

With the implementation of the credit card-based system, information will still have to be entered into the Chameleon database. RCDAS uses the database to record every activity, receipt, animal ID and owner ID. Without this information, no official record will exist of the transaction.

While it is time consuming to enter the information correctly, this method is used by most animal shelters in the United States. RCDAS has been using the system for approximately 20 years and has thousands of records in the system. These records are vital to know the status of animals, such as if they are licensed, have bitten anyone in the past, or have violations of law pending against them.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2:

County Animal Control Officers should be issued a tablet with a credit card reader to process payments made in the field. Supplying this tool would reduce the County's legal and safety liability exposure of its field staff. This will be an inexpensive solution that eliminates cash handling and improves the efficiency, convenience and safety of ACO staff.

Response to Recommendation No. 2:

RCDAS is in partial agreement with recommendation No. 2. All of our field staff have already been issued a tablet. RCDAS is in the process of developing a training for the use of the WEB based Converge credit card system. The WEB based Converge credit card system will allow the use of a credit card reader to process payments in the field. It is the RCDAS's intent to have the WEB based Converge credit card system and training initiated no later than December 31, 2019.

When the Animal Control Officer initiates a violation in the field, all information from the transaction needs to be recorded in the Chameleon Database. Therefore, we do not agree that we can eliminate entering receipts and other information as it is a necessary step in conducting our business. Without information about the violation, such as who owned the animal, where the violation took place, or what jurisdiction did the violation occur in – we may inadvertently give a constituent incorrect information. For example, if the animal was impounded and in route to the facility, no information would exist on the status of the animal and we may inadvertently misinform the constituent that the animal is not at our facility. Without the information in the Chameleon system, we have no way of making inquiries on any animal or owner.