

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



ITEM: 3.5
(ID # 25657)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, July 30, 2024

FROM : BOS DISTRICT 5

SUBJECT: SUPERVISOR V. MANUEL PEREZ AND SUPERVISOR YXSTIAN GUTIERREZ:
Creation of an Ad Hoc Committee for the Continuous Improvement of Animal Services in
Riverside County.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Create an Ad Hoc Committee to oversee the continuous improvement of animal services in Riverside County;
2. Appoint Supervisor V. Manuel Perez and Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez to serve on the committee; and
1. Direct the Executive Office and the Department of Animal Services to support the Ad Hoc Committee

ACTION: Policy


Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez 7/24/2024

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Gutierrez
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: July 30, 2024
xc: BOS- District 5, BOS-Dist. 4, E.O., RCAS, COBLW

Kimberly A. Rector
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	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A			Budget Adjustment:	No
			For Fiscal Year:	24/25

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

Summary

In recent years, the Riverside County Department of Animal Services (DAS) has implemented a series of strategic improvements aimed at enhancing animal welfare, increasing the live release rate, and fostering stronger community and partner relationships. Under the leadership of Director Erin Gettis, DAS has achieved notable milestones, including:

- **Improved Facilities:** Reopening the San Jacinto Animal Campus, adding a new spay and neuter surgery suite to the Coachella Valley Animal Campus, and equipping all facilities with emergency generators.
- **Increased Community Access to Veterinary Care:** Ordering mobile spay and neuter buses, holding wellness clinics, and supporting community cat programs.
- **Reduced Animals Entering the Shelters:** Launching the Pet Support Program and the 5,000 Cat Challenge, and utilizing facial recognition software to reunite lost pets with owners.
- **Strengthening Relationships with Partners:** Securing grants and building coalitions with shelter providers, rescue groups, and organizations like UC Davis Shelter Medicine Program, Petsmart Charities, and Petco Love.
- **Added Staffing:** Increasing veterinarian staff, creating Animal Services Counselor positions, and filling new shelter operation roles.

As a result, the foundation has been developed for DAS to make significant advancement towards improving live release rates with instrumental programs and processes in place.

Despite making real progress, achieving and maintaining a 90% release rate (commonly referred to as "No Kill") has been difficult to attain. Additionally, DAS continues to face criticism from animal advocacy groups and community members. In light of these concerns, there is a need to establish an ad hoc committee to oversee the development of an action plan addressing these challenges.

To address the ongoing challenges and criticisms faced by DAS, it is proposed that the Riverside County Board of Supervisors establish an ad hoc committee. This committee will be tasked with working with the DAS to improve operations and respond to community expectations. The primary objectives of the committee will be to:

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- Assess Current DAS Operations: Conduct a thorough review of existing DAS facilities, programs, and policies to identify areas of improvement.
- Develop an Action Plan: Work with DAS to develop a comprehensive and actionable plan that includes measurable goals, timelines, and resource allocations to enhance DAS performance and community satisfaction.
- Monitor Progress: Establish a framework for ongoing monitoring and reporting of DAS initiatives to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Engage with Stakeholders: Facilitate open dialogues with community members, animal advocacy groups, city partners and elected officials to gather input and address concerns.
- Ensure Data Accuracy and Transparency: Utilize data-driven decision making to track and evaluate the effectiveness of DAS programs and initiatives, and ensure that all data is accurate, transparent, and readily available for public scrutiny.

The work of the committee will focus on following key areas:

1. **Prevention, Education and Diversion**: Minimizing the number of animals coming into the shelter system by focusing on pre-impound strategies for pets, increasing lifesaving options, creating strong foundational resources that keep families and pets together, return more pets to their homes, and adding opportunities and programs to increase responsible pet ownership in the community.
2. **Protect the Safety and Humane Treatment of Pets**: Protect and respect pets by nurturing community compassion, reducing potential dangers from humans and animals, and supporting an enforceable standard of care in and out of the shelter.
3. **Foster Positive Connections with Our Communities**: Extend the shelter's positive impact through proactive and engaging strategies. Build trust, encourage community involvement, and create a supportive environment for both animals and people. Develop initiatives to harness the community's desire to help, including more robust philanthropy and volunteer programs.
4. **Maintain a Healthy and Capable Workforce**: Recruit and retain passionate, competent staff by providing the tools and resources to further the mission and create an environment where people experience a positive work environment and feel a sense of belonging.

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5. **Creating Meaningful Relationships with Partners:** Collaboration is crucial in addressing shelter overcrowding, as it brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to tackle issues comprehensively. By working together, shelters, city stakeholders, animal rescue organizations, and the community can pool resources, share expertise, and develop innovative solutions. Collaborative efforts can lead to increased funding, more effective spay and neuter programs, enhanced adoption campaigns, and better education on responsible pet ownership. This unified approach not only alleviates the immediate strain on overcrowded shelters but also promotes long-term strategies to prevent future crises, ultimately improving the welfare of animals and the community.

The establishment of an ad hoc committee dedicated to overseeing the continuous improvement of animal services will provide a structured approach to addressing the challenges raised by community advocates. By engaging with stakeholders, leveraging expertise, and prioritizing transparency, Riverside County can continue to improve its animal services and work towards the shared goal of a 90% live release rate.

We recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the creation of this committee and support its efforts to continuously improve animal services in Riverside County. The ad-hoc committee would periodically provide updates on its work to the entire Board of Supervisors.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

The proposed ad hoc committee represents a proactive step towards ensuring that County remains responsive to community needs and committed to the welfare of all animals in its care.

Additional Fiscal Information

The fiscal impact of this proposal will primarily involve staff time and potential consultant fees for expert input to assist the ad-hoc committee.

July 29, 2024

Riverside County Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
78015 Main Street #205
La Quinta, CA 92253

Riverside County Department of Animal Services
Director Erin Gettis
6851 Van Buren Blvd.
Jurupa Valley, CA 92509

Re: Animal Welfare – Coachella Valley Animal Campus (CVAC)

Dear Supervisor Perez and Director Gettis,

The City of La Quinta has contracted with the County of Riverside for animal services for over twenty-five years. The facilities and services of the County have expanded over time, as has the demand for animal field and shelter services with the valley's growth. La Quinta wants to ensure and safeguard the health and safety of both our resident population and our domestic animals. Our agreement with the County states our desire to promote the humane treatment of animals and that County staff have the experience and resources to provide such safeguards and treatment. Over the past several months, however, we have seen changes in the operations at CVAC and we feel it necessary to express our concerns and seek your response for solutions. Residents of La Quinta have also expressed concerns during our public City Council meetings about CVAC and the excessive number of animals being needlessly euthanized. In addition to coming to our City Council meetings to express their frustrations, they have also shared their concerns with both of you, as well as with CVAC staff and the media – in an effort to be heard. Not only do they feel that their questions and concerns have been ignored, they also feel there's a lack of transparency and action being taken to address their concerns. Even our appointed Council Member, Steve Sanchez, who represents La Quinta on the Animal Campus Commission has voiced his concerns with little response or noticeable action.

The concerns must be addressed, with a go-forward plan for correction and process, for the benefit of the animals. Our valley is fortunate to have a number of volunteers who are engaged, passionate, and caring. We need to channel their energy and their willingness to foster and help rescue "red-listed" dogs and puppies. They want to make a positive impact and help minimize the number of animals being euthanized at CVAC. We know we all want that.

We appreciate the upcoming effort by the Board of Supervisors to create an ad hoc committee to oversee the "continuous improvement of animal services in Riverside County" – and become a No -Kill facility. Upon development of a structural approach, we would commit to remaining involved, like our residents,

to ensure progress and action by the County to expeditiously meet the intended objectives set forth in your staff report for 7.30.24. The County must include the community in its plan to improve services, and communicate progress regularly in order to regain community trust. We will continue to advocate for our residents and our animals to ensure all concerns are addressed and a positive impact is made in the operations and treatment of animals at CVAC. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Linda Evans, Mayor



John Pena, Mayor Pro Tem



Steve Sanchez, Councilmember



Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Councilmember



Deborah McGarrey, Councilmember

Cc:

Jon McMillen, City Manager

Martha Mendez, Public Safety Deputy Director



Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Request to Speak

Online

Submit request to Clerk of Board (right of podium). Speakers are entitled to three (3) minutes, subject to Board Rules listed on the reverse side of this form. The Board may limit the public input on any item, based on the number of people requesting to speak and the business of the Board.

SPEAKER'S NAME: Brad Anderson

Address: _____
(Only if follow-up mail response requested)

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Date: _____ Agenda # 3.5

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

_____ Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

Note: If you are here for an agenda item that is filed for "Appeal", please state separately your position on the appeal below:

_____ Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

I give my 3 minutes to: _____

Parking validations available for speakers only – see Clerk of the Board.

Lopez, Daniel

From: Aquia Mail
Sent: Monday, July 29, 2024 11:43 PM
To: ba4612442@gmail.com
Cc: Clerk of the Board
Subject: Request to Speak Web Submission



Thank you for submitting your request to speak. The Clerk of the Board office has received your request and will be prepared to allow you to speak when your item is called. To attend the meeting, please call (669) 900-6833 and use **Meeting ID # 864 4411 6015 . Password is 20240730**. You will be muted until your item is pulled and your name is called. Please dial in at 9:00 am with the phone number you provided in the form so you can be identified during the meeting.

Submitted on July 29, 2024

Submitted values are:

First Name

B

Last Name

Anderson

Phone

760-324-9637

Email

ba4612442@gmail.com

Agenda Date

07/30/2024

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

3.5

State your position below

Oppose

Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Request to Speak

Online

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SPEAKER'S NAME: Lisa Blodgett

Address: _____
(Only if follow-up mail response requested)

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Date: _____ Agenda # 3.5

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

_____ Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

Note: If you are here for an agenda item that is filed for "Appeal", please state separately your position on the appeal below:

_____ Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

I give my 3 minutes to: _____

Parking validations available for speakers only – see Clerk of the Board.

(Revised: 06/13/2024)



Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Request to Speak

Online

Submit request to Clerk of Board (right of podium), Speakers are entitled to three (3) minutes, subject to Board Rules listed on the reverse side of this form. The Board may limit the public input on any item, based on the number of people requesting to speak and the business of the Board.

SPEAKER'S NAME: Tiffani LoBue

Address: _____
(Only if follow-up mail response requested)

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Date: _____ Agenda # 3.5

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

_____ Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

Note: If you are here for an agenda item that is filed for "Appeal", please state separately your position on the appeal below:

_____ Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

I give my 3 minutes to: _____

Parking validations available for speakers only – see Clerk of the Board.

(Revised: 06/13/2024)

Fernandez, Cindy

From: Aquia Mail
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2024 8:13 AM
To: bwtiffani@hotmail.com
Cc: Clerk of the Board
Subject: Request to Speak Web Submission



Thank you for submitting your request to speak. The Clerk of the Board office has received your request and will be prepared to allow you to speak when your item is called. To attend the meeting, please call (669) 900-6833 and use **Meeting ID # 864 4411 6015 . Password is 20240730**. You will be muted until your item is pulled and your name is called. Please dial in at 9:00 am with the phone number you provided in the form so you can be identified during the meeting.

Submitted on July 26, 2024

Submitted values are:

First Name

Tiffani

Last Name

LoBue

Address (Street, City and Zip)

4028 E Paseo Luisa

Phone

7608351066

Email

bwtiffani@hotmail.com

Agenda Date

07/30/2024

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

Ad Hoc committee

State your position below

Oppose

Fernandez, Cindy

From: Aquia Mail
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2024 3:51 PM
To: lisablodgett12@gmail.com
Cc: Clerk of the Board
Subject: Request to Speak Web Submission
Attachments: july-25,-2024-ltr-to-sup-perez.docx



Thank you for submitting your request to speak. The Clerk of the Board office has received your request and will be prepared to allow you to speak when your item is called. To attend the meeting, please call (669) 900-6833 and use **Meeting ID # 864 4411 6015 . Password is 20240730**. You will be muted until your item is pulled and your name is called. Please dial in at 9:00 am with the phone number you provided in the form so you can be identified during the meeting.

Submitted on July 26, 2024

Submitted values are:

First Name

Lisa

Last Name

Blodgett

Address (Street, City and Zip)

47970 Via Nice

Phone

7603990113

Email

lisablodgett12@gmail.com

Agenda Date

07/30/2024

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

Erin Gettis/Ad hoc committee proposal

State your position below

Neutral