



Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter

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Amber Rowland - General Manager

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA SEPTEMBER 18, 2023 AT 10:30 AM

**Meeting Location: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean Street, Rm. 525, Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter will convene a Special Meeting

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

- 1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call**
- 2.0 Introductions**
- 3.0 Consideration of Late Additions or Changes to the Agenda**
- 4.0 Oral Communications - Oral Communications – Any person may address the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter Board of Directors during the Oral Communications period. All Oral Communications should be directed to items or issues that would be within the jurisdiction of the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter but not on today’s Agenda. Board members will not take actions or respond immediately to Oral Communications presented, but may choose to follow-up at a later time, either individually or on a subsequent Agenda**
- 5.0 Regular Agenda**
 - p.1 5.1 Approve a change to the 2023 Board of Directors meeting schedule for October**
 - p.2 5.2 Accept and file a compensation survey for the Veterinarian classification and approve a 20% salary increase for the position**
- 6.0 Adjourn Special Meeting**

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Santa Cruz County Animal Services Authority does not discriminate on the basis of disability and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. The Board holds all public meetings in accessible facilities. If you wish to attend the meeting and you require special assistance, please contact Joe Phares at 831/454-7206 (TDD 831/454-2123) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting in order to make arrangements. As a courtesy, please attend the meeting smoke and scent free.

Regular Agenda Item 5.1

TO Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter Board of Directors
FROM: Amber Rowland, General Manager
DATE: September 18, 2023
SUBJECT: Approve a Change to the 2023 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule for October

Discussion:

Each December, the Board of Directors approves the meeting schedule for the following calendar year. As part of the schedule, the October meeting date was originally calendared for October 16. The Shelter General Manager has requested that this meeting date be re-scheduled, as she will be unavailable on October 16 due to a family reunion trip that was planned two years ago. The Board was queried to determine the best alternative date to hold the meeting and it was determined that October 23 would work best for most Board members.

Recommendation:

Approve a change to the 2023 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule, rescheduling the October meeting from October 16 to October 23. The revised schedule is delineated below.

February 13 (Watsonville)
April 10
June 12
August 14
~~October 16~~ October 23
December 11

Regular Agenda Item 5.2

TO: Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter Board of Directors
FROM: Amber Rowland, General Manager, Animal Services Authority
DATE: September 18, 2023
SUBJECT: Accept and File the Results of a Veterinarian Compensation Survey and Approve an Increase in the Salary for the Veterinarian Job Classification

Recommendation:

- 1) Accept and file the results of Veterinarian compensation survey;
- 2) Approve a 20% salary increase for the Veterinarian classification and set the hourly salary range of \$69.54 to \$93.18 per hour; and
- 3) Direct the General Manager to work with the County Personnel Department to take all administrative actions necessary to implement the salary increase.

Discussion:

On February 10, 2023, the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter (SCCAS) Board of Directors directed Shelter administration to work with the County Personnel Department to complete a salary comparison study for shelter positions. Due to previous difficulties in retaining and recruiting qualified candidates, and well-publicized staffing challenges across the veterinary industry in recent years, the Board also asked the General Manager to work with Personnel to prioritize a salary study for the Veterinarian position.

Background:

SCCAS Veterinarian Dr. Dana Gleason retired in December 2020 after serving as the Shelter Veterinarian for over eight years. The former General Manager made the decision to un-fund the Veterinarian position for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23 and utilize several contracted veterinarians to meet Shelter needs. The shelter relied on contracted veterinarians from January 2021 through December 2022. In January 2023, Dr. Gleason returned as an Extra Help Veterinarian on a temporary basis to help stabilize vet services at the Shelter. Dr. Gleason subsequently helped recruit a new contracted veterinarian, who joined the Shelter in February 2023. A recruitment for the full-time position was launched in June 2023 using the current pay rate and it resulted in one applicant, with that applicant being the new contracted veterinarian. However, this contractor is only interested in the position if a salary increase can be implemented. At this time, the contracted veterinarian continues at her contracted rate until either the salary for the permanent position is increased substantially or she obtains a higher paying position with another public or private sector employer.

As has been previously described with the General Manager position, the organizational structure for animal shelters varies widely throughout California and across the country, so direct comparisons across agencies can be difficult. The most progressive shelters offer at least some veterinary care in-house, including spay/neuter surgery, but shelters still vary widely in how many animals they take in (the volume of vet care needed) and

the extent of veterinary care provided. The percentage of sheltered animals that must be euthanized annually can be tied fairly directly to the veterinary capacity and capability in a shelter. At SCCAS, the Veterinarian position will be the manager of clinical operations and the Registered Veterinarian Technician (RVT) staff in addition to providing veterinary care, including spay/neuter and other routine surgeries, to the animals.

A compensation survey was completed in May 2023 (Attachment 2) that showed that the package currently offered by SCCAS was comparable to other cities and counties in the region. However, staff are aware that those same agencies are facing significant struggles in recruiting and/or retaining qualified staff, and a few of the figures originally cited in the survey were found not to be current. Staff worked to collect current and additional data, including whether comparable public entities had been able to hire recently, whether the position at other agencies included clinic management & oversight or narrower duties, and numbers of animals served by each shelter annually.

With updated and corrected information, staff found that the current SCCAS package was 10.15% lower than comparable Cities and .70% lower than other counties in the region. Critically, all the positions in the survey that were vacant in May were still vacant as of the end of August, and because of the difficulties they have had recruiting, one comparable organization (which has a new, state-of-the-art clinic facility) is working on board approval to increase the salary offered by 24%. Staff also researched current, local veterinary job listings in the private sector, who are in direct competition with government shelters, and found that private sector employers pay on average \$227,500 in salary plus benefits, which is \$33,700 above the top step recommended in this report.

Also of note, per an [article¹](#) in the Journal of Veterinary Medicine, since 2021, veterinarian salaries are seeing “a market correction 12 years overdue” that is finally starting to make a difference in veterinarians’ high debt-to-income ratios.

To make the full-time position at SCCAS reasonably competitive with public and private sector positions readily available in the region as well as with the rates provided to SCCAS contracted veterinarians who provide services to the ASA at hourly rates ranging from \$115 to \$135 per hour, SCCAS recommends a 20% wage increase for a new maximum hourly rate of \$93.18 per hour, which SCCAS believes provides an appropriate adjustment for the existing Joint Powers Authority (JPA) structure (see Attachment 1 for details). The budget impact of this proposed salary and benefits costs is expected to be approximately \$30,000 annually due to increased salary and benefit costs somewhat offset by a reduction in contracted veterinarian services costs. No FY 2023-24 budget actions are necessary as sufficient salary savings have accrued due to the current vacancy in the position.

Any adjustment approved by this Board will need to be presented to and approved by the County Board of Supervisors at a future meeting and notice will need to be provided to the Santa Cruz Middle Management Association to comply with Article 7.3 of that MOU.

**Animal Services - Veterinarian
Increase Estimates
Effective: (Pending JPA Board Approval)**

Job Description	Effective Date	Class Code	Rng	Supv	B/S	Step 1 Hourly	Step 2 Hourly	Step 3 Hourly	Step 4 Hourly	Step 5 Hourly	Step 6 Hourly	Step 7 Hourly	Monthly 1st Step	Monthly Last Step
VETERINARIAN	9/16/2023	AD8	BC	Yes	11	57.95	60.85	63.88	67.08	70.43	73.94	77.56	10,044.67	13,459.33
15% increase						66.39	69.71	73.18	76.85	74.79	84.71	89.29	11,507.38	15,476.64
20% increase						69.54	72.67	76.28	80.11	84.11	88.30	93.18	12,053.37	16,150.89

¹ [Increase in veterinarians' starting salaries long overdue, economist says | American Veterinary Medical Association \(avma.org\)](https://www.avma.org/press-releases/2023/09/increase-veterinarians-starting-salaries-long-overdue-economist-says)

Veterinarian

May 2023

Attachment 2

Agency	Matching Classification	Salary Eff Date	Max Mo Salary	FICA	Cash Compensation	Agency for EE + 2>Health	Dental	Life	Vision	LTD	TOTAL DIRECT COST	WORK UNIT
Concord	Provided by Contra Costa County											
Oakland	Veterinarian	07/08/23	\$15,806	\$229	\$16,035	\$2,376	\$116	\$27	\$20	\$16	\$18,590	Department
San Francisco	Shelter Veterinarian	07/01/23	\$14,489	\$1,038	\$15,527	\$2,194	\$156	\$4	\$0	\$15	\$17,895	Division of City Administrator GSA
San Jose	Animal Shelter Veterinarian	08/04/23	\$14,843	\$1,043	\$15,885	\$2,358	\$158	\$55	\$21	\$0	\$18,477	In PW department
Santa Clara	N/A		na									Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority
Santa Rosa	Provided by Sonoma County											
Sunnyvale	N/A		\$14,166									Humane Society Silicon Valley
Vallejo	N/A											

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AVERAGE:	\$14,826	\$770	\$15,816	\$2,309	\$143	\$29	\$14	\$10	\$18,321
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SANTA CRUZ	Veterinarian	09/16/23	\$13,460	\$1,030	\$14,490	\$2,183	\$82	\$9	\$6	\$74	\$16,844
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% DIFFERENCE:	-10.15%	25%	-9%	-6%	-74%	-220%	-112%	86%	-8.77%
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Agency	Next Salary Increase	MOU expiration	EE Retirement Contr. Rate	EE Retirement Contr. Rate (PEPRA)	% EE picks up for ER Rate	% EE picks up for ER Rate (PEPRA)	ER Retirement Contr. Rate not including COLA	ER Retirement Contr. Rate not including COLA (PEPRA)	Max Retiree Health Contrib	Retirement Formula (Classic)	Retirement Formula (PEPRA)
Concord											
Oakland	7/1/2023 - 2.5%	6/30/25	8.00%	7.25%	0.00%	0.00%	46.67%	8.17%	\$576	2.7% @ 55	2% @ 62
San Francisco	7/1/2023 - 2.50%	6/30/24	7.50%	7.50%	3.00%	3.00%	21.35%	21.35%	\$2,568	2.3% @ 65	2.3% @ 65
San Jose	TBD	6/30/23	7.41%	8.13%	0.00%	0.00%	64.42%	8.13%	\$1,627	2.5% @ 55	2% @ 62
Santa Clara											
Santa Cruz County	9/16/2023 - 3%	9/16/25	7.00%	7.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.69%	7.49%	\$151	2% @ 55	2% @ 62
Santa Rosa											
Sunnyvale											
Vallejo											

Notes

ER Retirement Classic reflects the blended net normal cost and UAL

ER Retirement PEPRA reflects the net normal cost using the "Basis" Total Normal Cost for the PEPRA plan

Veteranarian
May 2023

Agency	Matching Classification	Salary Eff Date	Max Mo Salary	FICA	Cash Compensation	Agency for EE + 2>Health	Dental	Life	Vision	LTD	TOTAL DIRECT COUNTY COST	WORK UNIT
Contra Costa County	Animal Shelter Veterinarian	07/01/23	\$12,165	\$931	\$13,095	\$2,577	\$93	\$1	\$0	\$91	\$15,858	Animal Services Dent
Marin County	N/A											Marin Humane
Monterey County	Veterinarian	05/16/23	\$12,196	\$933	\$13,129	\$2,499	\$38	\$12	\$12	\$23	\$15,713	Health Dept Animal Services
Napa County	N/A											Napa County Animal Shelter
San Mateo County	Provided by nonprofit organization	07/18/23	\$12,500									Peninsula Humane Society
Santa Clara County	Veterinarian	TBD In Process	\$16,600	\$1,068	\$17,668	\$3,061	\$117	\$1	\$10	\$0	\$20,858	Animal Services Dent
Solano County	N/A											County Animal Shelter
Sonoma County	N/A											Animal Care and Control

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AVERAGE:			\$13,365	\$977	\$14,631	\$2,713	\$83	\$5	\$7	\$38	\$17,476

SANTA CRUZ	Veterinarian	09/16/23	\$13,460	\$1,030	\$14,490	\$2,183	\$82	\$9	\$6	\$74	\$16,844
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% DIFFERENCE:			0.70%	5%	-1%	-24%	-1%	49%	-13%	48%	-3.76%
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Agency	Next Salary Increase	MOU expiration	EE Retirement Contr. Rate	EE Retirement Contr. Rate (PEPRA)	% EE picks up for ER Rate	% EE picks up for ER Rate (PEPRA)	ER Retirement Contr. Rate not incl: COLA	ER Retirement Contr. Rate not incl: COLA (PEPRA)	Max Retiree Health Contrib	Retirement Formula (Classic)	Retirement Formula (PEPRA)
Contra Costa County	NA	NA	8.29%	8.21%	0.00%	0.00%	24.65%	8.21%	\$2,007	2% @ 55	2.5% @ 67
Marin County	N/A										
Monterey County	7/1/2023 - 2.5%	12/31/24	7.00%	7.00%	0.00%	0.00%	19.92%	6.54%	\$151	2% @ 55	2% @ 62
Napa County	N/A										
San Mateo County	Unavail.										
Santa Clara County	TBD	6/25/23	3.93%	6.75%	0.00%	0.00%	31.70%	7.51%	\$832	2.5% @ 55	2% @ 62
Santa Cruz County	9/16/2023 - 3%	9/16/25	7.00%	7.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.69%	7.49%	\$151	2% @ 55	2% @ 62
Solano County	N/A										
Sonoma County	N/A										

Notes
 ER Retirement Classic reflects the blended net normal cost and UAL
 ER Retirement PEPRA reflects the net normal cost using the "Basis" Total Normal Cost for the PEPRA plan

SCCAS	hourly	monthly	annual
Current Max	\$ 77.56	\$ 13,444	\$ 161,325
10.0%	\$ 85.40	\$ 14,803	\$ 177,632
15.0%	\$ 89.29	\$ 15,477	\$ 185,723
20.0%	\$ 93.18	\$ 16,151	\$ 193,814

	Monthly	Annual
San Fran	\$ 13,823	\$ 165,876
HSSV	\$ 14,166	\$ 169,992
San Jose	\$ 14,843	\$ 178,116
Oakland	\$ 15,420	\$ 185,040
Santa Clara	\$ 16,600	\$ 199,200

Local Private	plus benefits
PCVH Vet Radiologist	\$300,000
PCVH Vet Internist	\$250,000
PCVH Vet Oncologist	\$250,000
Eastlake Managing Vet	\$225,000
Adobe Animal Hosp	\$225,000
Soquel Assoc Vet	\$200,000
Desert Capitola	\$200,000
Banfield	\$170,000
Average	\$227,500

Current Contracted Rates (no benefits)		
\$115	\$	19,933
\$	\$	23,399
\$	\$	239,200
\$	\$	280,800