

**Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter
Board of Directors Meeting
MINUTES
October 23, 2023 11:00am
In-Person Meeting – Santa Cruz County BOS Chambers**

VOTING KEY: Ainsworth=A, B=Bush, Ch=Chung, Co=Coburn, , D=Dally, F=Figueroa, Rutherford=R S=Schmidt, V=Vides

First initial indicates maker of motion, second initial indicates the “second”; upper case letter=“yes” vote; lower case letter=“no” ()=abstain; ||=absent

Abbreviations: Board Member (BM), General Manager (GM), Field Services Manager (FSM)

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- 1.0 Called to Order and Roll Call: ASA Chairperson Jon Bush called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. BM Figueroa was absent. BM Rutherford substituted for BM Walpole.
 - 2.0 Introductions: Captain Jayson Rutherford, Scotts Valley Police Department, was introduced.
 - 3.0 Consideration of Late Additions or Changes to the Agenda: GM Rowland stated that she has handed out copies of the PowerPoint slides to both the Board members and members of the public in attendance. Those slides were not in the posted agenda packet.
 - 4.0 Oral Communications: None.
 - 5.0 Consent Agenda
 - 5.1 Approved minutes of the August 14, 2023 regular Board meeting
 - 5.2 Approved minutes of the September 18, 2023 special Board meeting
 - 5.3 Accepted reports of the General Manager and Management Team for August and September 2023
 - 5.4 Accepted and filed statistics for August and September 2023
 - 5.5 Accepted and approved quarterly report for all claims under \$10,000
 - 5.6 Accepted and approved journal entry payments with the County of Santa Cruz
 - 5.7 Accepted gifts totaling \$23,511.17 from the SCCAS Foundation
 - 5.8 Accepted a gift of \$5,000 from Adobe Inc.
 - 5.9 Accepted and filed SDRMA Claims Report for Fiscal Year 2022-23

Public Comment:

Meredith Dyer, Shelter Volunteer: Stated that in her nine years as a volunteer, the Shelter has never been adequately staffed. Staff don't have time to do laundry and dishes. Community services workers are great but not always

available. It is clear more staff are needed and they need to be paid a higher wage due to the difficulty of the work. This results in higher turnover. UCSC had a similar issue with low pay/high turnover that was resolved with a large pay adjustment.

Megan Carroll, Shelter employee: Spay-Neuter Program is really important to the community and we need to increase our ability to provide Spay-Neuter services through the Planned Pethood Program, however, more staff- both line staff and supervisors- are needed to run these programs. Shelter animal intake has increased substantially in the past six months. Volunteers are great, but they are not a substitute for paid staff.

Bonnie McDonald, Shelter Volunteer: In 10 years of volunteering, stated she has never seen this many cats at the Shelter, that all rooms are in use, and that resources for spay-neuter should be increased.

Joan DeNeffe, Shelter Volunteer: Asked for a show of hands of Board members who had read an article about the state of animal shelters that she had shared with the Board members via e-mail.

Board Comment: None

Vote: Co Ch A B D /F/ R S V

Item approved unanimously.

6.0 Regular Agenda

6.1 General Manager's Report – GM Rowland's summarized comments:

- Fiscally we are in good shape, but awaiting Q1 member contributions from the County. We are over budget on extra help staff and supplies.

PowerPoint Slide Presentation

- The Shelter is on track for a record intake of animals in 2023.
- Shelter euthanasia rates are up slightly.
- Staff and volunteers are working hard.
- To some extent intakes are out of Shelter control, as more residents are deciding to surrender animals due to economics and housing.
- A renewed focus on spay-neuter programming will help prevent more record-breaking intake numbers in the future
- The Planned Pethood Program (PPH) was very successful in providing low cost spay-neuter to the community. However, running both a Shelter and a high-volume, low-cost spay-neuter clinic put a massive strain on staff and burned through budget funds. The management team will be further evaluating bringing back PPH in the future. Ideally, we can bring it back as it helps reduce intake numbers due to less reproduction in the community.

- The Shelter needs to develop partnerships with community vets as it has limited space and staff to support a high-volume PPH.
- 18 cats came from one property recently. This is a good example of what can happen without readily available spay-neuter services. Cats reproduce very quickly. They can have up to three litters per year.
- The Shelter altered over 1400 cats last year.
- Project Purr altered over 1100 cats in their Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program last year.
- We may experience a big intake explosion if Project Purr services end.
- We are working to identify funding and a mechanism to create a sustainable long-term solution for community spay-neuter services.

Board Comment:

BM Coburn: How was Project Purr funded in the past?

GM Rowland: They had a thrift store downtown Santa Cruz that closed last year. The store earned about \$100,000 per year that was used for TNR services.

BM Coburn: Are there other available funding sources for spay-neuter programs?

GM Rowland: We applied for a sizeable grant to provide bridge funding for spay-neuter services.

BM Coburn: What other PPH models are you considering?

GM Rowland: It is quite uncommon for Shelter's to also run a high-volume spay-neuter clinic. It is financially quite costly. This also takes away business from local vets when it is not a needs-based (low-income only) model. Utilizing non-profit partners including private vets is an attractive alternative. A voucher program is a good option where we subsidize spay-neuter through private vets.

BM Chung: Are there any actions the Board can take to help?

GM Rowland: We may need to bring in reserve funds to provide appropriations for a PPH program fund.

Clerk Phares: We currently already use a full-time contracted vet, two part-time contracted vets, two full-time RVT's, and an extra help RVT already in place working on spay-neuters surgeries. Increasing the number of surgeries over what is already being performed would be a challenge. Logistically, there is a lot of staff time involved with the spay-neuter program. Setting up, scheduling, handling intake and discharge, and the surgeries themselves take a lot of resources. Alternatively, using other vet hospitals and potentially a voucher program, possibly with support from the SCCAS Foundation, could be a good option.

GM Rowland: Any investment in spay-neuter services would be worthwhile and cut down on intakes where are really resource-intensive.

Public Comment:

Joanie DeNeff: The Planned Pethood Program started 10 years ago, the focus was on pit bulls and chihuahuas. It later evolved into shepherds and huskies. The program has to be needs-based. Every problem is an opportunity, it is all about resources. The shelter has an incredible reputation, and has lots of supports who would be willing to give money for the program. Please also take the time to read the article I sent you all as it will help the Board’s decision-making process moving forward. FOWAS in Watsonville is losing its lease so that will be a big hit. This is tsunami and we are getting overrun by the problem.

Nancie Newbie, Shelter Volunteer: please follow the Shelter on social media. It can sometimes take two months for an adopted animal to get scheduled in for spay-neuter surgery due to the backlog. It is hard for clinics staff to catch up on spay-neuter as we have a year around kitten season. The SCCAS Foundation is a big supporter of spay-neuter. We will be worse a year from now without solutions. We should knock down the Annex building to make way for a modular clinic to focus on low-income spay-neuter services.

Joan Deneffe: Spay-neuter services for a dog are \$800-1200. The public can’t afford that so they aren’t altering or licensing their animals as an unaltered dog license is \$100 vs. \$29 for a regular license.

6.2 Considered and approved financial report for August and September 2023.
GM Rowland read the written financial report.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

Co Ch A B D /F/ R S V

Item Approved Unanimously.

7.0 Adjourned to Closed Session – Public Employee Performance Evaluation [Cal. Govt. Code §54957(b)] Joint Powers Authority Performance Evaluation of General Manager at 11:42 a.m..

ATTEST:  1/3/2024
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Chairperson Bush

 1/3/2024
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Clerk Phares