

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

VOTING KEY: Ainsworth=A, B=Bush, Ch=Chung, Co=Coburn , D=Dally, F=Figuroa, S=Schmidt, V=Vides, Walpole=W

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: Vice Chairperson Emily Chung called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. BM Ainsworth, Chairperson Bush and BM Figuroa were absent.
  - 2.0 Introductions: None.
  - 3.0 Consideration of Late Additions or Changes to the Agenda: None.
  - 4.0 Oral Communications:

Jill Ganley, SCCAS Employee: Advocated for more full-time staffing.

Sarah Goldberg, SCCAS Employee: Advocated for more staffing to support increase shelter intake, increased staff pay, restarting a publicly accessible low-cost spay/neuter program, better leadership, advocacy for better safeguards for third party TNR programs, and a budget augmentation for public outreach and programs.

Megan Carroll, SCCAS Employee: Advocated for more staffing, better pay, reinstatement of spay/neuter services for the public.

Kaye McKenzie, SCCAS Volunteer: Advocated for more staffing and limitations on volunteer duties. Example: volunteers are asked to take on tasks such as transporting animals long distances. Kaye felt that should be done by employees.

Meredith Dyer, SCCAS Volunteer: Stated although the shelter it is fully-staffed it is not adequately staff to handle increased animal intake; a salary study is needed to evaluate staff pay, being sure to compare it with locales with similar cost of living; and was dismayed by recent articles that are damaging to Shelter reputation and discouraging volunteerism.

5.0 Consent Agenda

- 5.1 Approved minutes of the October 23, 2023 regular Board meeting

- 5.2 Accepted reports of the General Manager and Management Team for October and November 2023
- 5.3 Accepted and file statistics for October and November 2023
- 5.4 Accepted gifts totaling \$26,648.08 from the SCCAS Foundation
- 5.5 Accepted gifts totaling \$24,581 from two donors
- 5.6 Approved the donation of fixed asset animal cages to area rescue partners

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

BM Coburn: thanked Amber and staff for the detailed reports.

Vice Chairperson Chung: thanked staff for reports, acknowledged donation of animal cages, and acknowledged donor contributions from the business community.

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

Item approved unanimously.

## 6.0 Regular Agenda

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

- Intake in October/November decreased about 30% from the previous period (about 400 fewer animals), but this was 15% higher than during the same period last year
- High percentages of the intakes were young and adolescent pets, indicating that delayed access to spay/neuter – or “accidental litters”- are a significant driver of intakes
- The shelter has experienced an upward bump in intake just in the last 2 weeks, some of which seems related to the removal of a large encampment and the new oversized vehicle ordinance going into effect
- Paid and volunteer personnel continue to accomplish remarkable feats to care for and manage the animals, and to serve and assist their humans
- Adoption specials through the month of October and another around Thanksgiving resulted in 422 adoptions during this period
- We partnered with County Parks for a Doggy Date Night for Howl-o-ween and passed out treats to hundreds of kids at the Sheriff's Trunk or Treat event
- Our Shelter Manager teamed up with volunteers and an Animal Control Officer to conduct another Healthy Pets for all outreach event, serving about 120 families in south County
- I really enjoyed spending Veterans Day at Veterans Hall for their Community Health Fair

- The Shelter Management team has identified priorities for facilities upgrades at the Watsonville shelter and we'll be moving forward with some interior and exterior improvements early in the new year
- I want to thank the several Board members who have visited one shelter or the other recently to see our team at work and to check out the facilities
- Animal Control unit has proposed a "brand refresh" for field services. This will include switching to forest green (or possibly deep teal) golf shirts with charcoal pants as well as replacing the law enforcement stars on the vehicle doors with our logo
- With the additions of Officer Brad Gooding and Dr. Brenn-White at the start of December, we have 30 of our 31 full-time positions filled. This is more staff than the shelter has ever had. Our selected candidate for the one vacancy- an Animal Health Specialist- will start right around the new year
- We are concerned that animal services compensation lags behind other departments
- We continue to monitor and evaluate staffing and capacity for care in order to better cover emergent needs related to animal care, clinical care, and client services
- Our incredible volunteers continue to provide TLC and other invaluable support to the shelter and animals. Some analysis has shown that just a 25% of the volunteers served more than one hour per week last year, and just 20% of volunteers provided 75% of the total hours donated. We'll be doing some work to recruit more volunteers in 2024 and to incentivize more volunteers to give just a bit more time, if they can, to help spread the TLC load a little more widely

Public Comment:

Kaye McKenzie, SCCAS Volunteer: Volunteer hours are understated due to foster volunteers potentially not logging enough hours.

Megan Carroll, SCCAS Employee: Stated she was not involved in tabulating volunteers hours. She offered to put together a report for the next JPA Board meeting if desired. She stated volunteers can get over-whelmed and not last long and she continually brings on more volunteers to offset attrition

Dr. Dana Gleason, Extra Help Veterinarian: Advocated for increased spay/neuter services at the shelter and the return of the Planned Pethood Spay/Neuter Program.

Board Comment:

BM Coburn: Congratulated Shelter management for attaining full staffing, as this is the first time the shelter has had all positions filled in her 10-year involvement with the shelter. More improvements may be needed. The shelter intake data has been impacted by fires, COVID, floods, etc. Determining intake standards/baseline will help the board determine what full-time or extra help staff are needed.

BM Walpole: Stated that attaining full staffing is amazing but it sounds like we may need more staffing if existing staffing levels aren't sufficient.

BM Dally: He expressed interest in seeing the results from the salary study and also seeing more data on shelter activities to help inform future funding and programming.

BM Schmidt: Asked for clarification on an internal alignment study.

GM Rowland: Internal alignment refers to comparing shelter positions with other comparable county positions and is something we want to work on with Personnel.

BM Schmidt: Shelter management should consider potential recommendations for Board action in February with regard to a potential internal alignment study.

BM Coburn: Comparing classification will require a deep dive to really understand the similarities/differences.

BM Chung: Acknowledged shelter staff and volunteers and the challenging nature of their work. The upcoming budget cycle is our opportunity to address concerns, while also being aware of upcoming financial challenges faced by the County.

GM Rowland: The addition of Dr. Brenn-White represents an opportunity to evaluate options for increasing spay/neuter in the community. This is a community-wide challenge.

6.2 JPA General Counsel oral report relating to the SEIU petition. Cara Townsend, general counsel, relayed that the SEIU petition served to the JPA was retracted/withdrawn and recirculated their original petition from late May/early June. An SEIU press release is included as page 29 in the Board agenda packet.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment:

BM Coburn: Thanked Ms. Townsend for the report and expressed a hope that shelter staff and management can work together moving forward.

6.3 Considered and approved the financial reports for October and November 2023.

GM Rowland: GM Rowland read the written financial report.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

Vote: S Co Ch /A/ /B/ D /F/ S W

Item approved unanimously.

6.4 Considered and approved recommendation of General Manager to set the 2024 Board of Directors meeting dates

GM Rowland: Reviewed 2024 proposed JPA Board of Directors meeting calendar

Public Comment: None

Board Comment: None

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

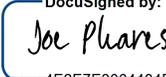
Item approved unanimously.

7.0 Adjourned to Closed Session at 11:31 a.m.

[Cal. Govt. Code §54957(b)]

Litigation discussion of Leet v. Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter, 22-cv-08957-RFL and Huemer v. Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter Foundation et al, 21-cv-07372-SVK.

ATTEST:  DocuSigned by:  
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Chairperson Bush

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