

**Animal Services Advisory Committee Special Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2014**

In attendance

Members Counting Towards a Quorum

Stephen Holmes, County of Galveston
James Osteen, **Committee Chair**, City of La Marque
Jerry Finch, **Committee Vice Chair**, Habitat for Horses
Gwen Schulte, Tiki Island
Julie Robinson, City of Dickinson
Joe Dickson, City of Santa Fe
Mark Johnstone, City of Bayou Vista
Pege Wright, City of Clear Lake Shores

Absent

Dee Ann Haney, City of Texas City
Fard Abdullah, City of Hitchcock
Sherilyn Linton, **Committee Secretary**
Lori Honeycutt, Veterinarian
Caroline Dorsett-Pate, Galveston Humane Society
Rhonda Trevino, City of Kemah

Present but Not Counting Towards a Quorum

Mike Franklin, City of Dickinson

GCHD Staff:

Dr. Dana Beckham
Kathy Barroso, Chief Financial Officer
Amber Adams, Animal Services Manager
Holly Copeland, Accounting Manager
Hill Olson, JD, Compliance Auditor

There were no public in attendance.

Item # 1 Certification of Quorum

Mr. Osteen welcomed all and a quorum was certified.

Item #2 Agenda

Mr. Osteen made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Holmes seconded the motion and unanimously approved by the Committee.

Item #3 Discussions on Proposed FY2015 Animal Services Budget

Kathy Barroso presented document outlining the proposed budget for the upcoming year. Additional funding is being requested for converting 2 part-time positions (Volunteer Coordinator and Crematory Specialist) to full-time positions, salary adjustments, supplies, travel/training, veterinarian contract services and leases. This will result in a 8% increase for contracted cities, which both George Jones (Clear Lake Shores, Julie Robinson, City of Dickinson and Joe Dickson, City of Santa Fe noted was very high and would probably not be approved by their City Counsels.

Mr. Osteen asked the committee to ask questions for each page of the FY2015 Proposed Animal Services Budget.

Ms. Robinson asked how many hours part-time employees work. Kathy stated 20 hours per week with no benefits.

Mr. Dickson, City of Santa Fe stated the 5-8% salary increase will be tough to sell to the Cities and 5% salary increase is higher than the cities. Maybe a 3% salary increase could be considered.

Ms. Robinson asked Ms. Barroso; in terms of the salary adjustment is it actually a market adjustment increase? If so, each employee should be rated individually. Or is it a 5% across the board or a cost of living increase? Ms. Barroso stated we did an analysis of comparative salaries for animal services personnel in this area and were trying to bring ARC salaries in line with the salaries in this area.

Mr. Holmes asked what the history of salary increases is. Kathy stated a 3% cost of living increase was given last year and prior to that the last cost of living increase had been given in 2010.

Ms. Robinson, City of Dickinson and Mr. Dickson, City of Santa Fe, both agreed that Ms. Barroso needs to re-evaluate the 5% salaries increases. The Cities will not approve that amount. Ms. Robinson asked if we were looking for any additional funds or grants. Kathy stated that we had received an ASPCA grant and when made aware of grant opportunities, we look in to them.

Ms. Barroso and Amber Adams, Manager of ARC stated the new program (Sponsor our Heart) developed to assist with adoptions, is going well. Mr. Osteen asked when we get a donation where is it budgeted and how is it used? Kathy stated donation revenue is not included in the budget. These funds may be donated for specific purposes or are brought back to the Committee to see how they will be utilized.

Mr. Dickson asked why there was nothing budgeted for utilities. Kathy stated utilities are picked up by the county.

Mr. Holmes stated the Crematorium Revenue is the same for FY2014 and FY2015. Kathy stated that the crematory process is very involved. We had anticipated offering the crematory services to the general public, but cannot do so with a part time crematory specialist. If the crematory specialist remains at part-time, then the crematory revenue will need to be removed from the budget.

Mr. Holmes asked what benefit would be provided if the Volunteer Coordinator position went to full time. Ms. Barroso stated that the Volunteer Coordinator has been participating in community events in an effort to increase adoption rates and adoption revenue. Mr. Holmes asked how we would measure this if the Volunteer Coordinator position would be changed to full-time. Ms. Barroso stated that we are currently tracking this data daily.

Ms. Robinson asked what the number of adoptions year to date is. Ms. Barroso stated 324 animals were adopted from 1-1-2014 thru 3-31-2014 which is 25% of what was taken in.

Mr. Finch asked what the 2013 numbers were. Ms. Barroso stated that in 2013 1350 animals were adopted, which was 20% of incoming animals; 970 animals were rescued which was 14% of incoming animals, and 3,852 euthanized which was 56% of incoming animals. These numbers were an improvement from 2012. Ms. Barroso stated that in 2012, 5,121 animals was euthanized which was 63% of incoming animals.

Mr. Finch asked about the status on collection of licensing fees. Ms. Barroso stated that a proposal will be brought to the next Animal Advisory Committee meeting for discussion. Ms. Robinson asked if there has been any discussion with the Veterinarians. Ms. Barroso stated that due to issues that staff had been dealing with over the past several months, there had not been an opportunity to develop a proposal, but this item is a priority and will be discussed at the next meeting on May 8, 2014.

Mr. Osteen asked if on page 3 it was a typo and should be 18K. Ms. Barroso stated yes it was a typo; the veterinarian contract cost should be \$18k instead of \$15K.

Mr. Dickson suggested we look at increasing the fees as a way to increase funds.

Ms. Robinson stated fees could be increased, but an 8% increase will not fly with City of Dickinson.

Mr. Osteen stated that raising the fees could be a problem, since they are high now and we need to consider how to bring in more revenue. The City of La Marque had previously explored how much it would cost to provide the service on their own and found that the cost would be much higher than what is currently being paid based on this agreement, even with the proposed increase this year.

Ms. Barroso stated what she was hearing is that we need to go back and rework the budget.

Mr. Holmes asked the Committee to give direction as to where changes in the budget are needed. Mr. Dickson and Ms. Robinson stated that the salaries need to be reviewed and does the Animal Resource Center really need an Assistant Manager. Ms. Barroso stated that the Assistant Manager is the backup person to the Shelter Manager in her absence and was a needed position.

Mr. Osteen asked if there was a percentage that the budget could be decreased that all could agree on.

Ms. Barroso stated we have a deadline on 4/21/2014 to submit the budget to the County.

Mr. Holmes suggested that Ms. Barroso submit the budget as is and changes could be made after the cities have had time to review the FY 15 budget.

Kathy stated the proposal will be submitted to the Animal Advisory Committee on May 8th, 2014.

Ms. Robinson suggested the additional items listed as needed on page 9 should be placed on a web page to see if items can be donated to the Animal Resource Center.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am

Next Meeting: May 8th, 2014 @ Noon.