



City of Culver City

Staff Report

File #: 19-1364, Version: 1

Item #: A-4.

CC - (1) Approval of the Addition of One Full-Time or One Regular Part-Time Animal Services Officer; and (2) Approval of the Funding for the Purchase of One Animal Services Vehicle and Equipment in the Amount of \$90,000.

Meeting Date: June 10, 2019

Contact Person/Dept: Lt. Leon Lopez/Police Department

Phone Number: (310) 253-6251

Fiscal Impact: Yes No

General Fund: Yes No

Public Hearing: **Action Item:** **Attachments:**

Commission Action Required: Yes No

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (06/05/19);

Department Approval: Scott Bixby, Police Chief (05/28/19)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) approve the addition of one full-time or one regular part-time Animal Services Officer; and (2) approve the funding for the purchase of one Animal Services vehicle and equipment in the amount of \$90,000.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

In June 2008, at the request of the Animal Control Subcommittee, the City Council approved a Culver City Animal Services Pilot Program with the hiring of a full-time Animal Services Officer (ASO) and the purchase of a vehicle to handle animal related issues. The pilot program was well received by the public and is now approaching its tenth year anniversary. The City hired its first full-time ASO in mid-2009, providing Culver City with service Monday through Thursday from 9am to 8pm. Culver City continues to contract with Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care & Control (LACDACC) who responds to animal services related calls in the ASO's absence. Animals recovered by the ASO and LACDACC are transported and sheltered through spcaLA Hawthorne. In an effort to evaluate LACDACC's service levels and future increasing costs, Staff was directed to explore adding

a second ASO.

LACDACC Services

LACDACC is under contract with Culver City to furnish supplemental animal field and shelter services on a per-call basis as necessary during off hours when the City’s ASO is off duty (after hours, weekends, vacations, etc.), as well as handle animal facility licensing and inspections. While the majority of field services are provided by the Culver City’s ASO, from time to time the need for off-hour services arises. Additionally, every Culver City business that either boards or grooms animals within its facility is required to abide by a set of specific laws and regulations, to ensure that the facility is safe and sanitary. The County of Los Angeles requires that these types of facilities obtain a license to operate and that they undergo an annual inspection. LACDACC personnel possess both the requisite training and experience to handle the aforementioned licensing, inspections, and any subsequent investigations and enforcement action that may be necessary.

The County’s response times for field calls are extended compared to those of Culver City’s ASO, as a result of their location outside the City, call priority standards, as well as resources shared with additional areas within the County they service. Response times for LACDACC are within 72 hours; however, priority is expedited on emergency type incidents. All animals recovered by LACDACC are to be transported as soon as possible and sheltered at spcaLA. Although spcaLA is our primary housing shelter and drop-off location, there are instances in which the LACDACC temporarily houses animals at their Carson facility. These instances include the occasional inability to access the spcaLA shelter via remote access, the shelter being full, and safety concerns (homeless or suspicious people/activity at the drop off entrance). Because LACDACC responds independent of Culver City oversight, in addition to their antiquated tracking and billing system, it is difficult to track actual services provided against billed services. LACDACC does not currently have the ability to provide response times or dispositions on invoices. To mitigate these issues going forward, all invoices will be routed through the ASO for verification before payment is made.

Applicable billing rates for LACDACC services have continually increased since contract inception. In recent years, the County retained a consultant to perform a cost recovery analysis. The result of this analysis will drastically increase new contract rates in the future:

LACDACC Rates	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	Estimated 2018-19	Estimated 2019-20	Estimated 2020-21
Kennel Services - Dog	\$17.68	\$20.07	\$23.79	\$28.79	\$32.79	\$ 44.85	\$ 205.65	\$ 254.16
Kennel Services - Other	\$ 8.33	\$ 9.95	\$11.23	\$12.98	\$13.49	\$ 12.74	included	included
Special Care Housing/Ob	\$11.21	\$24.08	\$28.55	\$28.79	\$32.79	\$ 44.85	\$ 41.13	\$ 42.36
Dead Animal Disposal	\$12.48	\$12.84	\$13.74	\$14.69	\$15.69	\$ 16.56	included	included
Private Vet	VARIES	VARIES	VARIES	VARIES	VARIES	VARIES	VARIES	VARIES
Field Services	\$81.25	\$85.02	\$86.43	\$94.73	\$98.62	\$ 101.83	\$ 153.17	\$ 157.71
TOTAL	11.285	18.707	19.022	25.421	35.241	38.347	82.476	86.17

Staff has researched alternative services without finding viable options. Outside agencies vary in protocol for handling animal service related calls in the absence of an agency ASO. Non-emergency calls are generally held for the ASO upon his/her return to work, or are handled by police personnel,

or LACDACC. Emergency calls are typically handled by police personnel, ASO callout, or LACDACC. For a complete list of Los Angeles County municipalities' animal service providers, refer to "Attachment 1 - "Animal Control Services and Shelter Los Angeles County" for details.

Pet Licensing/Revenue

Prior to 2007, all Culver City animal licensing services were contracted through LACDACC. In an effort to reduce customer service issues encountered by Culver City residents, on February 26, 2007, City Council approved bringing animal licensing in-house. The process proved to be a time and labor intensive burden on City Staff, so City Council approved a three year contract with Pet Data. Since October 1, 2009, Pet Data has handled all Culver City animal licensing.

The highest number of Culver City licenses sold was 3,736 in FY 2002-2003 through the LACDACC. The numbers have declined over the years:

- FY 2005-06- 2,860 licenses (LADACC)
- FY 2010-11- 1,592 licenses (Pet Data)
- FY 2017-18- 1,288 licenses (Pet Data)

The Los Angeles Almanac estimates that Culver City has 5,218 dog-owning households. Culver City Animal Services believes this number is well below actual numbers. Pet ownership has continually increased; the American Veterinary Medical Association recently found that approximately 38% of all households own one or more dogs. Based on these sources, this means only 8% to 25% of all Culver City dogs are currently licensed as mandated by Culver City's Municipal Code 9.01.300.

Culver City Program

Currently, Culver City's Animal Services program consists of one ASO who is equipped with a designated animal services truck and supporting equipment. The Culver City's ASO provides forty hours per week coverage, where her time is divided between field services and office/administrative services. The ASO handles numerous phone calls each workday in addition to investigations, reports, and calls for service.

Calls for service handled by Culver City's ASO peaked between 2013 and 2016:

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CCPD Handled Calls for Service	2,341	2,547	2,177	2,302	1,355	908

Although total number of calls for service has decreased over the past two years, workload had been offset by increased administrative work, citations, research, procedural steps and investigations. The ASO has witnessed a surge in animal cruelty complaints. Reports of animal public nuisances and animal bites to humans have also shown an increase. For contrast and comparison, in 2010, Culver City Animal Services investigations:

- 9- dog bites to humans
- 7- cruelty investigations

- 9- nuisance complaints
- 3- administration citations
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The number of incidences increased sharply year by year. In 2018, Culver City's ASO investigated:

- 19 dog bites to humans (211% increase)
- 33 cruelty investigations (470% increase)
- 75 nuisance complaints (833% increase)
- 23 Administrative Citations (766% increase)
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In addition, the Culver City's ASO has responded to the fairly recent prevalence of coyotes, by designing and implementing a coyote management plan. This plan has entailed numerous community coyote hazing training sessions, PowerPoint presentations, creating coyote flyers, brochures and forms, to help neighborhoods within Culver City formulate their own community coyote wildlife watch programs. A dedicated hotline for the residents of Culver City has been established and is checked regularly.

Hiring an additional ASO would provide seven day coverage for Culver City residents with each officer working a 4/10 schedule, crossing over one day per week. Other benefits of adding a second ASO would include:

- Reduction in services from LACDACC, however, the County would still be utilized for ASO off hours and other absences (sick days, vacation, etc.)
- Distribution of the workload increasing the level of service while decreasing response time.
- Continual exchange of information and updates between the ASO's, which does not occur between Culver City's ASO and the County.
- Minimize the delay in transporting animals to spcaLA for sheltering
- Daily audits ensuring appropriate services are provided by LACDACC (i.e. response time, sheltering, billing, etc.)
- Increased public outreach and education strategies to increase licensing efforts (i.e. online/social medial, booths at community events, etc.), thereby increasing revenue.
- Forming partnerships with animal non-profits to outreach for licensing.
- Canvassing for pet licensing

Purchase of Vehicle and Equipment

If the City Council approves additional personnel, staff recommends the approval of funding in the amount of \$90,000 for the purchase of a new Animal Services vehicle and equipment. Staff will return to City Council for the approval of a purchase order for the vehicle/equipment after proceeding with all required purchasing procedures.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

A full-time Animal Services Officer salary and benefits cost is \$93,220.00. The regular part-time (70

hours per pay-period) Animal Services Officer salary and benefits cost is \$84,130.00. A new Animal Services vehicle and equipment cost is \$90,000.00. Funding for the selected position and the vehicle with equipment will range from a total of \$174,130 to \$183,220 and if approved will be included in the Police Department's FY2019/2020 Operating Bureaus budget for City Council adoption.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2019-06-10 - ATT Animal Services Program Analysis
2. 2019-06-10 - ATT Animal Control Services and Shelter list
3. 2019-06-10 - ATT License Canvassing
4. 2019-06-10 - ATT What Are the Benefits of Dog Licensing

That the City Council:

1. Approve the addition of one Animal Services Officer; and
2. Approve the funding for the purchase of one Animal Services vehicle and equipment in the amount of \$90,000.