

County of Santa Clara
Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency



24-5612

DATE: May 7, 2024 (Item No. {{item.number}})

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Edgar Nolasco, Director, CEPA

SUBJECT: Appropriation Modification Relating to the Use of Animal Care and Control Trust Donation Funds

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve Request for Appropriation Modification No. 186 - \$250,000 increasing revenue and expenditures in the Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency budget, relating to Animal Services. (4/5 Vote)

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund as a result of the Recommended Action. Expenditures in the Animal Services Center budget are being increased by \$250,000 to support emergency veterinary services, medical supplies, and food for animals in the care of the Animal Services Center. Revenues from the Animal Care and Control Trust Fund fully offset the increased expenditures.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

The Animal Services Division is part of the Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency (CEPA), which provides shelter to stray and abandoned domestic animals from the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County as well as the cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill. Additionally, the Animal Services Division provides animal control services to the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County, including the Stanford Campus. The Animal Services Division is providing shelter to an increasing number of animals. Compared to pre-pandemic levels, intake has increased by 48%, and length of stay has increased by 61%.

In order to provide food and medical care to the unprecedentedly increased number of animals, the department recommends the use of \$250,000 from the Animal Care and Control Trust fund. Animal Services maintains a Donation Trust Fund to augment funding allocated from the General Fund. Funding is periodically used to provide specialty and emergency animal care and to purchase veterinary equipment. The Trust Fund has a healthy balance of \$915,664 as of March 31, 2024. Donations to the Trust Fund have averaged around \$225,000 per year. The last time the Trust Fund was utilized was in FY 2022-2023 for an amount of

\$200,000 to offset emergency medical care expenses.

In an effort to increase the funding sustainability for Animal Services programs and reduce the burden on the General Fund, CEPA plans to create an operational endowment to generate more revenues for the Animal Care and Control Trust fund. The objective would be to consistently raise enough donations that, coupled with other Animal Services revenues, will allow the division to cover expenses while maintaining pet lifesaving goals and excellence in service. The anticipated hiring of a Communications Officer in partnership with senior CEPA staff will play a vital role in the development and implementation of a fundraising plan for the Animal Care and Control Trust fund. Once the position is filled, donor cultivation and the creation of the operational endowment will be a top priority.

Reduction in Services if Use of Donated Funds is Not Approved

If CEPA is unable to close the gap through the requested use of donations, Animal Services will be forced to consider the following reductions to program services to account for the additional expenses and number of animals in care:

Reduce Length of Stay: Currently, Animal Services houses pets as long as it takes for them to be reunited or adopted as space allows. Both state and County codes require only a four-day holding period for most animals, but the average length of stay for animals at the Animal Services Center in CY23 was 12.33 days. This means the majority of pets stayed longer than the required period. Animal Services could put a cap on the number of days an animal has in care before facing euthanasia.

Reduce Range of Acceptable Conditions: Animal Services strives to find a place for every pet who does not exhibit unsafe behavior and can be rehabilitated to have a good quality of life. Animal Services could narrow the range of acceptable behavioral and medical conditions to those that can be rehabilitated to healthy conditions. This would mean euthanizing pets with manageable but incurable chronic health issues, such as thyroid issues, diabetes, hip dysplasia, or behavioral issues, such as separation anxiety, fear, and barrier aggression.

Reduce Emergency Veterinary Care Spending: When found in the community and picked up by Animal Control Officers with emergency medical issues, Animal Services relies on contracted veterinary clinics to provide lifesaving care. Animal Services could cap the spending amount per animal and elect euthanasia if the amount to stabilize the pet is greater than the prescribed amount. This would affect 200-300 animals annually.

Animal Services would likely need to use all of the above strategies in conjunction rather than choosing anyone in order to meet the existing budget without the requested increase.

Taking these measures will result in increased euthanasia and is likely to compromise Animal Services' nearly 10-year "no-kill" status, which will affect public perception and trust and is likely to affect donations and grants. These approaches are also expected to impact staff retention, including our difficulty in filling veterinarian positions.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children and youth.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The Animal Services Division would not be authorized to use the donated funds, and would need to make service level adjustments as described in the body of this report.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Clerk of the Board of Supervisors will send notification to Adriana Lopez in the Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency for next steps.

ATTACHMENTS:

- F85 186 Authorize Use of Donated Funds