Minutes
Board of Animal Services Commissioners
City of Los Angeles
Regular Commission Meeting
Monday, March 22, 2004
10:00 AM

Board of Animal Services
Commission Room
12th Floor
419 S. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Commissioners: Paul Jolly, President
Ken Metz
Kathleen Riordan, Vice-President
Alex Rubalcava

Members of the public are invited to address the Board of Animal Services Commissioners on any item on the agenda prior to action by the Board on that specific item. Members of the public may also address the Board on any matter within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. The Board will entertain such comments during the Public Comment Period. Public comment will be limited to (1) minute per individual for each item addressed and (3) three minutes on any item during the public comment portion of the meeting, unless the limitation is waived by the President of the Board.

Members of the public who wish to address the Board must complete a Speaker card and submit it to the Board Secretary prior to final consideration of the matter.

It is requested that individuals who require the services of a translator contact the Board Secretary no later than the day preceding the meeting. Whenever possible, a translator will be provided. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities.

Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend.

Si require servicios de traducción, favor de notificar la oficina con 24 horas por anticipado.

Regular Commission Meeting, 10:00 A.M.
Commissioner Jolly convened the meeting at 10:06 AM. Members present were Commissioners P. Jolly, K. Riordan, and A. Rubalcava.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
   A. Horse Rescue: General Manager, Jerry Greenwalt reported that D.A.R.T. Team Officers were involved in a horse rescue. The animal was rescued from a septic tank in the Valley.
   B. FY 2003 Complaints & Commendations: Greenwalt presented a report of the various kinds of written customer complaints and commendations received by the Department for the 2003 calendar year. Commissioner Riordan requested that the Department begin to track trends in both areas and to focus attention on customer service. Commissioner Rubalcava requested that the
Department track resolutions/outcomes for complaints and commendations received during fiscal year 2003-04. Greenwalt agreed to have a tracking report of each written customer comment for the next report.

C. **Best Friends Mobile Adoption**: Greenwalt reported that an excess of 400 animals were adopted overall during this event. All 400 animals scheduled were adopted.

**Public Comment:**
1. **Zsuzsa Blakely**: Reported that she attended the Best Friends event. Feels that not all of the available animals were sent to the event to be adopted. Stated that the South Central Shelter had over 100 available dogs, but claims that only 13 dogs were sent.
2. **Jo Ann Wagner**: Feels there is no way to get 15 dogs on one truck. Feels it is a misconception to believe that all available animals were sent.
3. **Mary Catalano**: Feels that not all the available animals were sent to the adoption event. Ms. Catalano was told that all dogs brought to the adoption event would be held until Friday. Urged the Board to look further into the matter and make sure that the animals are held until Friday.

2. **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. **Approval of Minutes from the meeting of March 8, 2004** – Commissioner Riordan moved to have Section 3B of the Minutes from the meeting of March 8, 2004 amended to also reflect her query for the number of rescue groups bidding against the public during auctions. Commissioner Rubalcava requested a correction of Ron Lederkramer’s name to “Liedercramer”. Commissioner Rubalcava then moved to have the minutes approved as amended. Riordan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a 3:0 vote.

B. **Meetings/Events Attended**
1. Commissioner Rubalcava reported that he has attended the Genesis Awards and the Best Friend’s Animal Adoption Event.
2. Commissioner Riordan reported that she also attended the Genesis Awards.
3. Commissioner Jolly reported that he attended the Minnesota Animal Welfare Conference, the Humane Society of the United States Animal Care Expo, as well as a meeting arranged down in San Diego.

**Public Comment:**
1. **Zsuzsa Blakely**: Furthered her explanation of how not all dogs housed at the South LA shelter were available for adoption at the Best Friends event. Stated that the Department took one truckload when they should have taken three truckloads to accommodate all of the non-aggressive, non-sick, and available dogs in the shelter.

C. **Consideration of Future Agenda Items** – The Board agreed to calendar the following:
1. 4/12/2004 – Status Report on the Trust Funds Accounts
2. 4/12/2004 – Fold the Animal Checkout Procedure discussion into our Customer Service Training discussion.
3. 5/24/2004 – Feral Cat Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) Policy

**Public Comment:**
a. **Zsuzsa Blakely**: Request that the limitations of the computer system be placed as an agenda item. Feels that the Department database is limited. Feels the disposition and status of the dogs

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should be viewed online. Feels personal property and evidence dogs should also be viewed online.

b. Mary Catalano: Would like to confirm that the Rescuer Licensing Deposit Exemption Program will be discussed as planned on 4/26/2004. Requested an agenda topic to discuss the legal limit for holding an Evidence Animal before the animal can be redeemed, adopted, or euthanized.

3. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Board Report: Microchip Contract Renewal: Aram Salmasi, Adoption Coordinator requested Board authority to the Department to execute an extension of the current personal services contract with AVID.

Commissioner Riordan expressed concerned about the AVID scrambler that does not allow scanners from other microchip manufacturers to detect an AVID microchip. Concerned that if the Department is not using an AVID scanner, it won’t detect an AVID microchip. Asked do we only have AVID scanners? Does the AVID scanner pick-up other manufacturing firm microchips? Asked if the Department has acquired a “walk-through” scanner?

Commissioner Jolly expressed his desire to see AVID work more for the Department to help promote the benefit of microchipping animals. Would like to see AVID compete more for the City’s business.

Commissioner Rubalcava confirmed that there is interoperability with the systems used by neighboring jurisdictions.

Public Comment:
1. Zsuzsa Blakely: Mentioned that the batteries in the scanners typically go out and the scanners do not always work properly. Stated that the microchips travel in the animal’s body and staff must be aware of this and know to scan the animal thoroughly.
2. Pamelyn Ferdin, Private Citizen: Asked how often are kennel-workers properly trained on scanning animals for microchips? Asked what is the Department policy for testing staff?
3. Mary Catalano: Asked if animals are scanned before they are euthanized?
4. Sue Freeman: Suggested that the Department should provide the microchipping service to the public for a fee. Asked how many members of the general public are aware that the Department provides this service?

Commissioner Riordan offered to purchase a couple of scanners for the Department of Sanitation employees who pick-up dead animals. Jolly and Greenwalt suggested that AVID be approached with the opportunity to make the investment.

Commissioner Rubalcava requested that a notice be placed on the Department website indicating that private citizens can have their animals microchipped at City shelters.

Commissioner Rubalcava moved to approve the contract extension for one year. Riordan seconded the motion. The motion to extend the contract was approved by a 3:0 vote.

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B. **Board Report: Revised Auction Procedures II:** Assistant General Manager, Regina Adams, recommended that the Board authorize the Department to request City Council approval to instruct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending the Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 53.11 (a). This would change from an animal auction process to a new lottery system to be used by the public, animal rescue organizations and off-duty Department employees.

Commissioner Riordan asked if State law prohibits the lottery system? Asked if there are safeguards to prevent adopting out potentially dangerous animals? Commissioner Rubalcava asked if shelter operators could begin tracking feedback in the call center about complaints relative to the auction process.

**Public Comment:**

1. **Phyllis Daugherty, Animal Issues Movement** Stated that the Department has no way of screening for potentially dangerous animals because it has no Behavior Assessment Program. Believes that the move to the lottery system violates CA Civil Code Section 2080 and federal law. Stated that the lottery system works well. Stated that the auction process is State and federal law.

2. **Jo Ann Wagner** If the Department is going to move toward the auction system, then the money earned should go back directly to the Department.

3. **Mary Catalano** Feels that the money earned at the auctions should go back to the Department to purchase such items as pain medications and X-ray machines.

4. **Zsuzsa Blakely** Feels that neither the auction nor lottery systems are fair for the animal. Feels the application, home-check, and “hold” options should be explored.

5. **Pamelyn Ferdin** Feels that the auction process sends the wrong message to the public that not all animals and breeds are worthy of adoption. Feels the lottery procedure is fair, doesn’t discriminate, and proves that a person wants the animal.

6. **Daniel Guss** Feels that we should not apply different values on animals.

Commissioner Jolly feels the lottery system is a suitable alternative to the auction system. Commissioner Rubalcava requested additional information relative to customer complaints about the auction process.

Commissioner Riordan moved to table the matter for 30 days to understand more about the character of the public’s anecdotal complaints; and to find out the number of rescuers present at auctions bidding against the public. Commissioner Rubalcava seconded the motion. The motion to table the matter was approved by a 2:1 vote.

C. **Board Report: S.N.A.P. Contract Renewal:** Greenwalt requested Board authority to move forward with renewing the S.N.A.P agreement for one year while the Department advertises a new Request for Proposal.

**Public Comment:**

1. **Pam Wilkerson** Urged the Board to renew the existing agreement with S.N.A.P. Feels the agency is making a strong impact on the areas in greatest need of their services.
Commissioner Riordan moved to approve the S.N.A.P. contract for another year. Rubalcava seconded the motion. The motion to extend the contract was approved by a 3:0 vote.

D. Board Report: Spaymobile Request for Proposal: Greenwalt requested Board authority to request proposals for a successor to the S.N.A.P agreement in March 2005.

Rubalcava asked what criteria is set for the proposals and who sets that standard? Greenwalt referred the Commissioner to pg. 2 of the RFP and stated that management experience in high volume surgeries, operations financing, and references are some of the criteria used to make the determination.

Public Comment:
1. Daniel Guss – Feels it would be great to allow Erika Brunson have a larger voice in the contract renewal process.
2. Jennifer Conrad – Expressed her willingness and interest in submitting her proposal for providing Spaymobile Services to the City.
3. Pam Wilkerson - Asked why wasn’t the RFP written with a minimum of 5,000 surgeries required per year?

Commissioner Rubalcava moved to approve the Department’s request for proposals for a successor to the S.N.A.P agreement. Commissioner Riordan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 3:0 vote.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
   A. Phyllis Daugherty – Challenged the Board to address public safety issues. Requested reports on public safety issues affecting the field officers. Stated that SB 1301, relative to the Vincent Bill, is in jeopardy. Stated that AB 2224 will require that previous Hayden Bill claims be recalculated.
   B. Jo Ann Wagner – Explained that one week ago Sunday, Wagner had to buy-out a rescue group. Stated that the front counter clerk was handed $20, but could not break the bill. Feels the Department needs credit card processing capability right away.
   C. Daniel Guss, STAND Foundation – Questioned why several top managers in the Department are no longer attending the Commission Meetings. Feels all managers in the Department should be present to address public concerns.
   D. Pamelyn Ferdin – Suggested that Department speaks with rescuers and employees to find out how the auction process affects the public. Feels it is important that management be present to hear what the community has to say.
   E. Christy Metropol, Feral Cat Alliance – Commented on the Best Friend’s Event. Stated that outreach about feral cats was done. Concerned that there is a contradictory memo from 1997 sent by Sharon Morris. Memo states that you must bring a trapped feral cat back to the shelter. Wants to clear up the misinformation. Asked if staff can be trained to deliver the “Trap/Neuter/Return” (TNR) message as an option to bringing the cat back to the shelter.
   F. Sue Freeman – Requested Department of Animal Services fiscal year 2002-03 statistics on dogs and cats in writing. Asked that the Department remove its claim that it is “the largest humane organization” from its Press Releases. Requested that the Department raise the level of redemption on its sterilization vouchers for dogs.
   G. Julie Chadwick - Reported that an animal not adopted at the March 7, 2004 Mobile Pet Adoption
was euthanized prematurely. Stated that the Department did not adhere to its policy of euthanizing an animal returned from a Mobile Pet Adoption until 5 PM on the Tuesday following the event. Urged the Board to hold someone accountable.

H. Zsuzsa Blakely – Doubts that the animals being auctioned are dogs that will be adopted to become fighting dogs. Feels three trucks or more should have been used to transport all of the animals from the South LA Shelter to the Best Friend’s Adoption Event.

I. Mary Catalano – Added that people were turned away from volunteering their services to drive the Department vehicles and help transport the animals to the Best Friends event. Feels there is a big need to improve customer service in the Department. Reported that there are still children of Department staff at the South LA shelter and behind the counters. Feels separate medical cards need to be provided for each of the animals with medical problems.

J. Jeff Fleis, United Animal Rescuers – Recommended that a City sign be posted on Crenshaw Blvd. to direct the public toward the South Los Angeles Animal Shelter. Visited the South LA shelter and observed that the Kiosk was not working properly. Attended the Best Friends event. Would like to see the Department’s relationship with the public mirror the relationship between Best Friends and the public.

5. ADJOURNMENT
Commissioner Jolly adjourned the meeting at 12:06 PM.