Meeting called to order at 10:01 a.m. Commissioners present were Zaft, Gross, Wolfson and Yañez (arrived during public comment). Commissioner Brent was absent. Also present Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS) Board Secretary, Rita Moreno; General Manager, Brenda Barnette; Assistant General Manager (AGM), Dana Brown; Director of Field Administration (DFO) Jan Selder; and Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Dov Lesel.

Commissioner Zaft opened the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

1. PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKERS: Daniel Guss: Questioned flyers at back table relating to pets and tenant’s rights workshops hosted by the Coalition for Economic Survival, of which Commissioner Gross is Executive Director; discussed ethics concerns with Commissioner Yañez. (Secretary Moreno informed Mr. Guss that she had brought and placed the flyers on the back table, and requested Mr. Guss to take only one copy of each and leave the rest).

Phyllis Daugherty: Asserted that CES pursues laws to mandate landlords accept animals and suggested Commissioners be mandated to place spay/neuter bumper stickers on their vehicles.

2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes for July 28, 2015.

Public Comment
None

Commissioner Gross moved to approve the minutes of July 28, 2015, and Commissioner Wolfson seconded. Commissioner Zaft abstained. The motion carried 3 – 0 – 1.

3. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER (taken out of order after item 4)

GM Barnette reported on the following:

- On July 30 Mayor Garcetti hosted an impromptu animal adoption at the City Hall Farmer’s Market; we sent five dogs and three cats and all participated in photo op with the Mayor; video place on utube with Mayor promoting shelter animals - “adopt don’t shop.”
On July 31, Field services responded to a call for 15 dogs abandoned in an apartment; they seized 15 dogs and one chicken in very bad condition; the owner is not in town and the department is working to resolve the situation.

On August 3rd there was a rotation of Field Supervisors and staff was assigned to the Harbor District; the ACE program is being moved to Chesterfield Square and the Harbor; staff will be doing work on the coyote issue in South L.A.

Netflix and Legendary TV are working with the department to obtain a film agreement for a series called “Love” involving a woman looking for her lost cat at animal shelters; filming took place on the 31st and a donation of $3,000 was given to the department; also looking for another film location for a short film on spay/neuter with Danny Trejo.

ACE totals for June: North Central issued 109 citations, 42 forwarded to the City Attorney for processing (not fixable); canvassing issued 223, 18 forwarded to City Attorney for fines; total of 332 citations and 60 forwarded to the City Attorney. The ones that were not forwarded were given time to correct, but can be forwarded to the City Attorney.

RD Systems has installed the surveillance cameras at Harbor and West L.A.; all shelters have surveillance cameras except North Central where they will not be installed until after the construction.

Attended meet-and-greet with Senator Ricardo Lara, a very big animal advocate; legislation will be coming up on kangaroo meat in California and the fact that kangaroos in Australia are endangered; the department gets notification of relevant legislation but it is not timely to act; Commissioners should bring up legislative matters.

Bill Crowe from Pets 90210 donated perla beds for dogs at West L.A. shelter.

Interviews for Sr. Clerk were held last week, three candidates scored high, background checks are being made and offers will be made.

General Services continues to work on water leaks at North Central; they may not be able to fix it before construction.

On the 27th of July the Mayor’s Office requested an investigation of a possible animal cruelty matter on Avion between 45th and Vernon; Instagram video of chained animal trying to get food; investigation did not find the violation.

Officers responded to another animal cruelty call about four dogs chained in a junkyard, but found the dogs free roaming and without chains, and none needed medical attention; Officer posted notice of violation for too many dogs (only 3 allowed) and for not having guard dog license or spay/neuter.

On August 15, we have “Clear the Shelters Day” with reduced adoption fee of $20; received grant to underwrite the adoption fee; all Southern California is participating.

Cat brought in to West L.A. shelter badly injured and not walking and road rash from being hit by car; he was assessed and while waiting to be transferred to North Central to be x-rayed (not all shelters have x-ray machines), staff worked to find a good Samaritan; New Hope partner took cat to vet to treat his injuries (fractured pelvis), and while being treated, staff located the owner and they were reunited.

Commissioner Zaft asked about the status of the ACO positions. GM Barnette responded that testing will take place on August 22 and a list of eligible applicants will be released for interviews, then background checks will be conducted; new recruits will be on board in early January. Commissioner Zaft asked if applications were received from experienced officers from other jurisdictions. GM Barnette responded that applicant information is not disclosed to the department.

Public Comment
Daniel Guss: Stated that kangaroo meat is used for animals with skin and stomach sensitivities; discussed use of low income voucher for stray dog of GM Barnette’s domestic partner. Phyllis Daugherty: Stated that junkyard / guard dog licensing needs to be reviewed – no requirement for breeding permit which should be a minimum of $250; mentioned “Project Perfect” and $50,000 grant to an individual taking a month off work and given two rooms at North Central shelter to take intake animals before going to impound.

4. COMMISSIONERS’ ORAL REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (taken out of order after item 2)

Commissioner Gross: No report.

Commissioner Yañez: No report.

Commissioner Wolfson: Provided update on the proposal to place kiosks run by pet stores, in shelters to provide revenue for the shelters; reported on conversations with GM Barnette about changing shelter operation hours.

Commissioner Zaft: Expressed appreciation for being reelected President and for the adjournment of the last meeting.

Public Comment
Daniel Guss: Discussed ethics concerns. Sue Taylor: Requested information on cases involving the hoarding of animals.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Follow-Up Discussion re Proposal for a Pilot Program to Allow Select Volunteers Access to a Shelter on Mondays

Commissioner Wolfson clarified that his proposal is to allow access to select volunteers not only on Mondays, but evenings and in emergency situations. GM Barnette responded that staff does not recommend that, only Mondays. DFO Selder stated that volunteers are not restricted on Mondays; come in for special projects. AGM Brown confirmed that all six (6) shelters have volunteers on Mondays; the number depends on needs and volunteer experience. GM Barnette stated that there are only two ACTs on duty after hours and they can’t protect staff and volunteers; provided example of staff person locked in cage. DFO Selder added that shelters are now open on two holidays – the day after Thanksgiving and the 4th of July, and volunteers are welcomed. Commissioner Wolfson stated that discussion and request was for more than just Mondays; more volunteers are needed to help staff and need to make it easier for volunteers; staff can select volunteers and set the parameters. Commissioner Gross stated that the Commission had requested a report back that discussed the impact on union contracts and liabilities, and feels that the staff report shows that volunteers are engaged on Mondays, but not on days and times that raise liability issues. Commissioner Yañez stated that having more volunteers would have helped staff member locked in cage; supports Commissioner Wolfson’s proposal to allow very reliable volunteers from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.; discussed her experience as an ACT. Commissioner Zaft clarified that he had suggested a pilot program that allows experienced volunteers on Mondays and that only select experienced volunteers be
picked by staff; stated that the Board/Department is here to service animals not volunteers; encouraged staff to think creatively about using volunteers. **GM Barnette** responded that DFO Selder can take this issue to the Joint Labor Management Committee meeting and bring back what they think; there are no supervisors at night. **DFO Selder** added that the problem is that staff who are not supervisors are being asked to supervise and that volunteers do the work of staff. **Commissioner Zaft** recommended item be tabled until more information is obtained from JLMC; if permissible, should be rolled out like a pilot. **Commissioner Gross** agreed and noted that the Commissioners had requested, at the previous meeting, getting input from the JLMC before taking any action. **Commissioner Wolfson** stated that there is miscommunication; feels we are here to serve volunteers, animals and public; other agencies allow volunteers on off hours. **Commissioner Yañez** asked whether the County has volunteers during hours shelters are closed to the public.

**Public Comment**
**Daniel Guss:** Supports Commissioner Wolfson’s proposal. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that it is dangerous for volunteers when there is not enough supervision – discussed incident of staff member locked in cage.

**Commissioner Zaft** suggested discussion be tabled until there is more information from JLMC and County practice.

6. **Board Reports**

A. **Board Report re Increase in Monetary Value of Spay/Neuter Vouchers (taken out of order after item 6.B.)**

**AGM Brown** provided a summary of the board report and indicated that rabbits are included, there is a recommendation to also increase the discount vouchers, and that the supplemental voucher of $50 is for animals pre-diagnosed by department vets only in order to satisfy the Controller’s concerns. Therefore, it would not cover additional expenses for non-shelter animals.

**Commissioner Zaft** requested that Sue Taylor provide input. **Sue Taylor** stated that the MOU with Actors and Others to distribute the reduced cost vouchers had been approved in May, but is still waiting; A&O will be able to provide additional funds for those who need financial assistance if going to vets organization works with; contacted all the participating vets on the list, but not all provided their pricing, complained about contract and process; LAAS website does not have information on how to get the vouchers; public counter should provide and canvassers will have to carry the list of participating vets with them out on the field; stated that recommendation #4 should not be included because shelter animals are under a different contract and the vouchers are for the public (**GM Barnette** stated that the department does use the vouchers for the contract vets to sterilize shelter animals; vets enter data in portal, but have to submit hard copy voucher for payment; **AGM Brown** clarified that “shelter animal” includes animals adopted and sent to contract vets for sterilization); indicated it is difficult to know if there is a pre-existing condition; supports the increased amounts; need to look at the pricing of independent vets; for the free vouchers – it will be difficult to know ahead of time what extra things will be required. **Commissioner Zaft** agreed that the department needs to look at the contracts and the reporting from vets.

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Commissioner Wolfson suggested that the public be allowed the opportunity to apply for the extra $50 voucher. Commissioner Gross stated that the website does not provide enough information on vouchers; noted disparity in prices of vets in information provided by Sue; asked how the department would handle additional costs after the fact administratively. GM Barnette responded that the contract states they will accept the $70 voucher as payment in full for the surgery, but sometimes some vets do up-sell and not sure how to address that; the intention is that shelter spay/neuters would be done at the end of the day; public told to call ahead of time to confirm cost; supplemental voucher needs to be pre-diagnosed to provide documentation for the Controller. Commissioner Zaft stated that the supplemental voucher is a different issue; does not address the additional costs discussed for public animals. Commissioner Gross stated that would like to move to increase the amounts and would like to require vets to post licensing requirement. Commissioner Wolfson suggested supporting all four recommendations.

AGM Brown clarified that there are 49 partner vets and 4 or 5 contract vets that accept the vouchers; recommendation #4 addresses all of those vets who sterilize animals that come from the department. Commissioner Zaft responded that he would like to see that in the context of the contracts, how much money they're getting and what is the process.

Public Comment

Daniel Guss: Stated that vouchers don’t go far enough; his charity stopped using vouchers because too onerous; suggested coming up with pre-designated maladies – get extra money automatically; suggested conducting a study to identify community barriers to getting the vouchers. Commissioner Zaft asked what makes them onerous and Daniel Guss responded that it is too much hassle to figure out – there were three different booklets, the differences and who takes them. Sue Taylor: Shared that the vouchers used to be provided in booklet format, but then became electronic; stated that there is a difference between shelter animals and public animals; said vouchers should be different – those that go to contract vets and those that go to the public. (Commissioner Zaft noted information in the ASF report on amount spent for redeemed vouchers). Phyllis Daugherty: Stated she spoke with Dr. Joey who thinks the vouchers should be increased; indicated there is no need for discounted vouchers and money should go toward free vouchers; suggested keeping track of discount vouchers to find out if $50 voucher increase spay/neuter.

Commissioner Wolfson moved to approve all four recommendations, but allow the public to apply for the supplemental voucher. Commissioner Gross stated that recommendation number four needs more work.

Commissioner Wolfson moved to approve the board report recommendations one, two and three, but not number four. Commissioner Gross seconded. The motion carried 3 – 0.

Commissioner Zaft requested that item come back for more discussion about how contract vets are being used, and possible requirement about signage on licensing.

B. Animal Welfare Trust and Animal Sterilization Fund Balances and Update on Approved Expenditures (taken out of order after item 5.A.)

GM Barnette asked for questions from the Commissioners. Commissioner Zaft suggested starting with the ASF and noted that about 1.8 million dollars was received.
and 1.1 million was spent, netting almost three-quarters of a million leaving a balance of 4.7 million dollars; of the various spay/neuter contractors, Amanda spent about half of their allocated contract which is more than the other contracts, and the participating vets about $400,000; requested a list of the vets next month and a year-to-year comparison. **GM Barnette** stated that staff is asking the City Attorney whether the amount allocated to a multi-year contract can be reduced reallocated elsewhere. **Commissioner Zaft** asked if the section listing “other participating vets” with $397,000 spent, whether that was for vouchers redeemed. **GM Barnette** responded that it’s the independent vets and that there are about 50. **Commissioner Zaft** stated that contract for pilot project with Actors and Others could help project out and spend the voucher funds; asked for a status report; asked that when pilot program is expanded that organizations that work in the community on a daily basis be used. **Commissioner Yañez** asked whether Canvassers can carry and distribute the vouchers. **GM Barnette** responded that the department will present the Commission with a proposal. **Commissioner Yañez** asked what will be considered a success with Actors and Others pilot project. **GM Barnette** responded that being able to account for the vouchers; the department will report on how many are distributed and the number redeemed. **Commissioner Gross** asked about the five grants awarded and what happens to unspent funds. **GM Barnette** responded that the funds roll over to the next year. In the discussion on the AWTF, **Commissioner Gross** asked why there are two line items for GPS navigator; about the $20,000 available under unrestricted donations; donations information does not balance; noted online donations are up. **GM Barnette** responded that she will find out whether they were bought at two different times or there is an error; it indicates money on hand perhaps from individual donations – will generate report; those funds are restricted to certain programs; information updated every 60-90 days because it needs to get processed by the City. **AGM Brown** responded she will start meeting with Lilia to understand the information. **Commissioner Yañez** asked if all expenditures are reflected; would like additional items approved purchased like baby formula; mentioned x-ray machine. **GM Barnette** responded that not all expenditures have been made; responded that baby formula and those items had been purchased; indicated that she will ask all DFOs to report back on approved expenditures and status of purchase and provide a balance sheet; does not know why not all shelters have an x-ray machine – perhaps not all constructed to be able to use it – will talk with Jeremy.

**Public Comment**

**Sue Taylor:** Clarified that some vets are sterilizing shelter animals and not using vouchers; participating vets use the vouchers.

**Commissioner Zaft** asked for a report on the use of vouchers and the sterilization of shelter animals.

**Commissioner Yañez** recused herself and left the meeting.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Wolfson** made a motion to adjourn the meeting and **Commissioner Gross** seconded. Motion carried 3 - 0.

Meeting ended at 11:54 a.m.

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