



Administrative Report

N.1., File # 21-2814

Meeting Date: 9/7/2021

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
From: KEITH KAUFFMAN, CHIEF OF POLICE

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO MODIFY AN EXISTING AGREEMENT WITH LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL AND APPROVE AN AGREEMENT WITH SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS LOS ANGELES FOR ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES IN THE CITY OF REDONDO BEACH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control is the current vendor of the City of Redondo Beach for sheltering (housing) of animals and after-hour animal control services. In May of this year, the Department notified the City of a significant increase in their fees and change to their billing structure associated with our existing agreement (referred to herein as our current agreement) with them for their services, effective July 1, 2021. In response to this notice, alternatives to the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (LAC-DACC) were explored by the Police Department to lessen the financial impact to the City of Redondo Beach while still providing the highest standard of animal sheltering and control for the City. The Police Department recommends a hybrid approach utilizing two vendors. Continuing use of LAC-DACC in a capacity tailored to provide transfer and limited field services to supplement our in-house animal control Municipal Service Officers. As well as entering into an agreement with SPCALA, for a more cost-effective alternative as the City's primary animal shelter provider.

BACKGROUND

The City of Redondo Beach entered into an agreement with the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (LAC-DACC) in July of 2019 for the housing (sheltering) of animals and after-hour supplementary field service. This agreement is valid until June 30th, 2024 unless cancelled by either party. The contract between the City and LAC-DACC notes in section 8.2 that Los Angeles County will "readjust" their billing rates each July of the contract and that Los Angeles County alone will establish these rates.

On May 28th, 2021, Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control sent a letter to the City of Redondo Beach detailing a change to their fee structure for cities under contract with them for animal sheltering and supplemental field services. In summary, the increases and restructuring of the new fee agreement include the addition of a \$1.00 per capita (based on human population of city) charge for "full-Service" contract cities like the City of Redondo Beach. "Full-service" designates that City uses LAC-DACC as our primary animal shelter location. This \$1.00 fee is described as a

measure to offset costs to the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control for their alternatives to impoundment education program and services related to impoundment alternatives. This new fee alone would have an immediate impact of approximately \$68,000 per fiscal year in additional charges.

In addition to the new \$1.00 per capita fee, LAC-DACC changed the pricing structure for animal impoundment (sheltering) to a flat rate of \$244.11 per impoundment, regardless of the number of days the animal (cat or dog) is held. Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control considers the new rate of \$244.11 to be the equivalent of five days of impoundment (at \$48.82 per day) and is a part of their plan to increase fees annually over the next six years, by adding one day each year annually. By the end of this six-year plan, the fees will increase so cities pay for the equivalent of ten days (at \$48.82 per day) regardless of the number of days the animal is actually held. The new FY21-22 \$244.11 fee includes the disposal of dead animals and the housing costs for other animals. Our current agreement with Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control uses an a la carte fee structure for the impoundment of dogs and cats at a rate of \$50.16 per day, other animals at a rate of \$12.07 per day, and a fee of \$20.06 for the disposal of dead animals. From July 2020 to June 2021 the City of Redondo Beach utilized 198 days for sheltering 38 dogs and or cats (Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control itemizes sheltering of either dogs/cats or "other animals"). For the prior two years the average annual cost of LAC-DACC service to the City for housing (sheltering) live animals, dead animal disposal and supplementary field services was approximately \$27,000 per year.

Our current agreement with Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control also provides for "limited field services" for priority calls billed at an hourly rate of \$119.40 with no hourly minimum for instances when our Municipal Service Officers are not on duty. The new pricing rate for the 2021-2022 services, scheduled with at least two weeks' notice, will be billed at a rate of \$209.75 per hour, with overtime costs factored in. For services provided with less than two weeks' notice, the same rate will apply with a minimum callout charge of four hours for each incident. From July 2020 to July 2021 the City of Redondo Beach utilized 5.25 hours of supplementary field services for one incident. Continued use of this LAC-DACC service component will allow the Police Department to implement the hybrid model recommendation.

On June 28, 2021 Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control sent a follow-up email to their May 28, 2021 letter regarding the changing of their fee structure due to concern expressed by cities across the County. Per the June 28, 2021 email Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control will hold meetings with contract cities affected by the new fee structure beginning on August 25, 2021 and through the end of the 2021 calendar year. The Police Department has participated in those meetings but felt that it was necessary to explore other options due to the steep cost increase outlined.

The described unilateral changes to the fee schedule and methodology will result in a significant cost increase for the City of Redondo Beach to maintain the current level of service with LAC-DACC. In their letter and follow up email, LAC-DACC included documentation showing the costs incurred by the City of Redondo Beach for their services during FY18-19 totaled \$26,889. The estimated costs for FY21-22 for service with Los Angeles County Department of Animal Control and Care is \$80,877.

The largest portion of this increase is due to the new \$1.00 per capita fee added to their pricing structure for full service contract cities. The City recognizes the value of animal awareness and education, but believes based on the historical usage data that our City and residents will not receive proportional benefits of this new program and the associated costs. Therefore, alternatives were researched.

With 180-day notice, the City may opt-out of full-service status and only use LAC-DACC for "Limited Transfer Services" and the supplementary field services as previously described. However, this limited transfer services option would require the City of Redondo Beach to enter into a new agreement with another provider as our primary animal shelter. Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control would then act as the City's backup provider, and accept the transfer of animals when the primary provider cannot accept them. Fees paid by utilizing LAC-DACC as a limited transfer provider are billed at the flat rate of \$244.11 per cat and dog. The Police Department believes this is a cost-effective option for this service component.

The Police Department identified The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (SPCALA) as a potential partner organization to shelter animals. SPCALA is an organization that is utilized by several neighboring cities for the sheltering of found/lost animals. SPCALA offers similar impoundment (housing) options as LAC-DACC. SPCALA also has a fee structure that is similar to the current fee structure with LAC-DACC. SPCALA charges a minimum three day hold for animals turned over to their animal shelter which is located in the City of Hawthorne. Based on our historical usage SPCALA quoted a rate for the sheltering of animals from the City of Redondo Beach at \$852 per month, with a \$50 per day charge for animals held in excess of three days. Currently the City of Redondo Beach holds animals for ten days before relinquishing them to the shelter. The \$852 per month fee includes the disposal of dead animals.

The SPCALA makes every effort possible to reunite animals with their owners or to rehome animals that are stray, surrendered or abandoned. SPCALA works with more than 35 organizations, shelters and adoption agencies to rehome animals to foster or forever homes. Despite the notion of "No Kill," while SPCALA does not euthanize animals due to space they will euthanize animals that are too sick or aggressive to be placed back into the community. Because they are a private organization they do not share euthanasia statistics. SPCALA advocates for sound animal policies, provides training for dog guardians in obedience, agility, behavior and a number of specialty areas including disaster preparedness.

The SPCALA does not offer after-hour or other supplementary field services like Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control. Therefore, to maintain the current ability to provide comprehensive animal services, the City should continue to utilize the existing contract with LAC-DACC for supplementary field services.

Other options were explored during this process including communication with the nonprofit LoveJoy Foundation, located in the City of Inglewood. Lovejoy also provides sheltering service to at least one other local municipality and is roughly the same distance from the City of Redondo Beach as the other organizations. While they do amazing work rescuing, rehabilitating and re-homing animals they are focused on the welfare of the animals and were not able to provide a proposal sufficient for our

purposes.

Per the current contract with Los Angeles County Department of Animal Control and Care, either party may terminate the contract upon a 180-day notice (see section 7.3 of contract), or when notice is given at least sixty days prior to July 1 of any year of the contract. During discussions between Police Department and LAC-DACC staff it was expressed by LAC-DACC staff that while the contract language requires a 180-day notice, a notice period of 30-45 days would be acceptable. The rationale explained is that a 30-45-day period would provide a reasonable amount of time for LAC-DACC staff to notify the public of the change in service level. An example of a notice would be to educate the public in Redondo Beach where they can take a lost or found animal.

Continuing service with Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control at the new proposed service level would result in a cost of approximately \$5,000 annually.

Entering into an agreement with Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles would result in an approximate cost of \$20,000 annually. The combined total of both contracts (\$25,000) will be funded from the existing FY2021-22 Police Department, Animal Control, Contract and Professional Services budget and no additional appropriation is requested at this time.

The agreement with SPCALA would also result in an approximate savings of \$55,000 annually compared to the cost increase proposed by the new LAC-DACC fee schedule.

COORDINATION

The Police Department coordinated with City Attorney's, office for review of and approval to form of the contracts with LA County Department of Animal Care and Control and SPCALA.

FISCAL IMPACT

Revenue

Police Department Animal Control
10021220-520040

Expenses

LA County ACC \$5,000
SPCALA \$20,000

APPROVED BY:

Joe Hoefgen, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. SPCA LA Animal Shelter Services Contract
2. SPCA LA Insurance
3. LA County Care and Control Agreement 2019-2024
4. LA County Animal Care and Control May 2021 Letter Change in Terms
5. LA County Attach C FY2021-22 New Billing Rates
6. LA County Care and Control Insurance
7. Presentation

