



**MINUTES**  
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday, August 11, 2008  
10: 00 AM  
CITY HALL  
200 N. Spring St., Room 1070  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

---

Commissioners: Glenn Brown, President  
Kathleen Riordan, Vice-President  
Tariq Khero  
Irene Ponce  
Archie J. Quincey, Jr.

**ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL HEARING**

Meeting called to order at 10:02 AM. Present were Commissioners Brown, Riordan, Quincey, and Ponce. Commissioner Khero arrived at 10:18.

**1. Appeal of the General Manager's Decision in Barking Dog Case - BD 08325 WL**

Appellant: John D. Ellison  
Complaining Witness: Greg Steinberg  
District Manager, South Los Angeles Shelter, Louis Dedeoux, Captain  
Hearing Coordinator, Department of Animal Services, Ross Pool, Management Analyst

Commissioner Quincy made a motion to dismiss the allegations in Barking Dog Case – BD 08325 WL. Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

**Determination: General Manager's Decision overturned and charges dismissed.**

**COMMISSION MEETING**

**1. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER**

**Morale and Public Service Level Crisis**

Deep cuts in the Department's 2008-2009 budget are forcing the layoff of about 28 animal care workers, a reduction in public operating hours from 55 hours a week to 40, and the continued public closure of the beautiful new Mission Animal Care Center. Animal Services is the only City Department slated for such deep cuts and the negative effect on employee morale is palpable. Further, this unfortunate action that hurts employee performance and public service come as we face significant increases in animal impounds and the upcoming pressure of enforcing the new spay/neuter ordinance.

At this time we anticipate laying off about 28 animal care technicians. In total, the Department was cut 56 positions in this year's budget, but through attrition and vacancies we held from last spring, we reduced the number of positions that must be laid off by 50%. Because the class of animal care technicians is the biggest classification of employees in the Department, it took the hardest hit. We are meeting with the SEIU, the union for the affected employees, about the layoffs.

We received three months' funding to hold off cutting operating hours, but we will need to cut back in September. We notified the employees and Unions last week. This is a meet-and-confer issue with the unions. Hours will be 11-6, Tuesday-Saturday, 12-5 on Sunday.

Mission Animal Care Center in the Northeast Valley remains closed to the public.

### **Pet Adoptions**

The Department reports a 20.20% increase in 2008 YTD pet adoptions (15,178) compared to YTD 2007 (12,627). The increase in July 2008 adoptions was 27.42% (2,774) compared to July 2007 (2,177). The Department has over 140 contractual partnerships with animal rescue organizations. The mission of these organizations is to help place animals that the Department may have difficulty placing. New Hope placements represent 25% of total pet adoptions.

### **Record Breaking Adoptathon**

The Department conducted a two day Pet Adoptathon on July 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, in response to a 21% YTD increase in the number of animals surrendered to City shelters for reasons associated to the housing foreclosure crisis. The Adoptathon placed 539 pets, making it the most successful adoption event in the memory of any staff. The Department is planning additional adoption events in August and September to help alleviate the overcrowding. The Department is working on a program with local realtors that will address pets surrendered due to the foreclosure crisis, to be announced next month.

### **Animal Impounds**

Animals continue to come into the City's Animal Care Centers in larger than usual numbers in 2008, with an 18.38% increase YTD (30,635) compared to the same period of time in 2007 (25,878). Pets relinquished for reasons related to the housing crisis increased 28% YTD (2,202).

### **Euthanasia**

The increase in Animal Impounds has led to an increase in the number of animals euthanized. This is the first increase in pet euthanasia in the past six years. The Department successfully reduced pet euthanasia over 50% in the past six years, and 22% in 2007. YTD 2008 has seen a 37.38% increase in euthanasia (10,217) compared to 2007 YTD (7,437). However, when the numbers are normalized to account for the increase in impounds, the euthanasia rate is up 3.49%.

### **Achieving No-Kill**

Phase I of No-Kill is achieved when no healthy animal is killed due to a lack of space or resources. Phase II is achieved when we end the killing of animals in need of medical treatment. YTD 118 cats and 384 dogs were killed due to insufficient holding space and/or resources. These healthy pets represent the challenge to achieving Phase I of the City's "No-Kill" Goal. YTD, the Department is over 95% on its way to achieving Phase I of No-Kill.

### **Preparing for Spay/Neuter Ordinance**

The Department is working internally and meeting with the City Attorney's Office and the Finance Department to develop plans to enforce the new spay/neuter ordinance. The Department's enforcement capacity relating to this ordinance, which was not augmented in this year's budget, was audited by the City Controller whose report should be released shortly.

### **The Big Fix Spay/Neuter Program**

The City partially or totally subsidized 39,910 spay/neuter surgeries in FY08 compared to 37,886 in FY07 for a 5.34% increase. This is a 15.75% increase over FY06.

### **Ad Hoc Marketing Team**

The Department is working with an ad hoc committee of volunteers to develop a comprehensive, multi-media, multi-language marketing campaign to educate the community on the new spay/neuter ordinance

**Please join us at our website: [www.LAAnimalServices.com](http://www.LAAnimalServices.com)**

which becomes enforceable October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Creating a Humane LA**

The Department is partnering with the Human Relations Commission and ten City Council Members on a series of eleven public workshops focusing on ten topics instrumental to significantly reducing pet euthanasia in a community. It is hoped that the Mayor will attend the eleventh workshop to help unveil a new program called, "My LA is a Humane LA."

### **Puppy Mill Task Force**

The Department, in partnership with Jim Bickhart in the Mayor's Office, has established a task force whose mission is addressing the illegal trafficking of animals from overseas and Mexico. The Department is also working with all the animal control agencies in the LA region.

### **Regional Animal Control Conference**

The Department initiated and hosted the first LA Regional Animal Control Conference in July. The agencies are developing cooperative working strategies for dealing with animal cruelty, illegal trafficking, dangerous dogs, licensing, etc. The next Conference is scheduled August 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Chief Veterinarian**

After extensive recruitment efforts, a new Chief Veterinarian has accepted the Department's offer and will start in September. Dr. Steven Feldman has served as acting Chief Veterinarian for over a year and has done an outstanding job helping the Department recruit nearly a full team of veterinarians. There is only one veterinary vacancy remaining. Dr. Feldman will continue with the program.

### **Dog License Canvassing Program**

The Department's Canvassing Program increased Dog License sales 46.35% (824) in July 2008 generating \$43,510. A comprehensive study of the Department's dog licensing program containing a number of programmatic recommendations will soon be released.

### **Spay/Neuter Mobile Van**

The plan to continue mobile spay/neuter services is to negotiate a new multi-year agreement directly with the Amanda Foundation. We believe that the City can support a finding that the need to competitively bid this contract is not practicable or advantageous. According to Charter Section 371 - Requirement for Competitive Bidding there is an exemption for contracts, determined by the contracting authority, for professional or expert services for which the contracting authority finds that competitive bidding is not practicable or advantageous.

We have initially discussed this approach with the Mayor's office and others and met with Amanda Foundation on Friday, August 8, 2008, to discuss terms. The meeting went well. We are preparing a first draft agreement while the Amanda Foundation supplies some financial information and proposals to the Department.

## **2. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes for July 28, 2008**

Commission President Brown requested the minutes for July 28 be held over until the next meeting.

### **B. Oral Report by the Commission on Meetings and Events attended.**

Commissioner Quincey had nothing to report.

**Please join us at our website: [www.LAAnimalServices.com](http://www.LAAnimalServices.com)**

Commissioner Ponce spoke with a Captain Figueroa regarding Shelter Budget. Commissioner Brown met with the South Los Angeles Clinic. Commissioner Riordan met with individual rescuers and community groups dealing with coyotes.

### **3. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION**

Three-Year Agreement for the Operation of the West Los Angeles Spay/Neuter Clinic; New Request for Proposals for the Operation of the Harbor, East Valley, North Central, West Valley, and Northeast Valley Spay/Neuter Clinics.

General Manager Ed Boks excused himself from the discussion due to a long term friendship with one of the applicants. Mr. Boks deferred to Assist General Manager Linda Barth.

Commissioner Riordan excused herself from the discussion due to a possible conflict of interest, pending City Ethics and/or City Attorney feedback which should occur before the next meeting.

A discussion ensued between the Commissioners regarding the procedural actions that should be taken in as much as there are questions regarding the conflict of interest issue. It was decided to take public comment at this time.

#### **Public Comment**

Sue Taylor: The difference between Value Vet and Clinico. Does not consider Value Vet to be a low cost veterinary clinic. Does the RFP preclude the Department from giving it to Clinico because they are not fitting into the requirements? If they can't meet the number of surgeries per week, does that eliminate them from consideration?

Phyllis Daugherty: Council wants the public to have a place to go to. The public the Department is trying to reach are not people who have a lot of resources. We need to have the shelters open so the public have a place to take their animals to. If a company exercise its 30 day clause the Department will be left without any company doing the surgeries. Urge the Department to outsource the procedures.

Teri Austin: Important the Department is careful of any contract they enter into. Experience of the Department in the past has not been great. Our contract is the only vendor to meet the criteria.

Laura Beth Heisen: Rejection of Clinico is that they will only do 10 shelter adoption animals per day. Report ignores the fact they will do 35 public animals per day. Only affordable vet the Amanda Foundation van. There will not be another one for a while. Clinico is a clean and well oiled machine. The clinics have been sitting vacant for far too long. A new RFP will take far too long.

Cheri Shankar: Privileged to be a volunteer for PetSmart Charities who is working to bring seven high volume high qualities to the city and county of L.A. A wonderful service for the shelters. We need as many clinics as possible to support the ordinance that will go into effect soon.

Commissioner Khero moved to continue the item to the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Quincey and passed by a vote of 5-0.

**Please join us at our website: [www.LAAnimalServices.com](http://www.LAAnimalServices.com)**

#### 4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

None

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (Taken out of Order)** - (Comments from the public on items of public interest within the Board's subject matter jurisdiction and on items not on the Agenda.)

Julie Butcher: SEIU is opposed to the layoffs. The Department offered up the cuts. Workers pointed out to management the animals do not go home so the need for workers to care for animals 24/7. Since layoffs were announced the Department hired a second Assistant General Manager. In addition 4 district supervisor were approved. Urged you to ask you to end the layoffs.

Gilbert Greenbaum: Private citizen and volunteer. Can tell you firsthand that a cut of the ACT will be bad for the City and Department. Thanked Commission for new shelter. Without ACT to operate the facility and keep it clean, all the money spent on the facility will go out the window.

Veronica Perry: ACT at East Valley Animal Shelter that is one of the busiest in the City. In the last two months took in 2,855 animals that the Act's had to process. Also completed 927 adoptions. Without ACT's the animals would not have been adopted. The shelter has 28 ACT's on three shifts. Day shift has 36 animals per ACT, swing shift 84 per ACT and nights has 100 animals per ACT. People losing their homes and people not knowing about not spay or neutering their pets will increase the numbers.

Gabriel Romero: ACT at East Valley. Work graveyard shift Midnight to 8:00 AM. We care for and clean up after animals. More are getting sick because of the overpopulation. Less time to spend on more animals. Cutting ACT's is will have negative effect on the shelters. Citizens will not be happy that their money was wasted on a new shelter that is not open. Cutting 28 ACT's will double problems.

James Scott (With daughter): Department is a team. We need all the team working together. We are already working at bare minimum. Resident of Los Angeles. ACT's reunite animals with owners. Need ACTs.

Donald Lambelet: ACT at the new Northeast Shelter. The shelter is not open to public. Currently have large number of kittens and puppies. These young ones will not get care they need because of the cuts. Larger litters make bigger messes. We do this because we love it. Many of us have left other positions to work with animals. These cuts will affect us but will affect animals more.

Lucy Gregonian: Endorse animal rescues. Veterinary care, recommends care to church members.

Shelly Mack: Volunteer at SLA animal shelter. Volunteered over summer. Lot of respect for ACT's because not many people could do it. With the economy people are dropping off 50 pets per day. Need to hire more people to help. The ACT's serve the basic needs of the dogs and cats.

Stacey Dancy: ACT at East Valley Shelter. They are valuable employees. The Department is as important as the police and fire departments. City is large and diverse. Most people live paycheck to paycheck. The economy has cause people to walk away from their homes. Presently the shelters are overcrowded. Cutting staff is not understandable. Does not make sense to cut people who feed animals and keep large salaried employees in administrative positions. Department not prepared for emergency.

**Please join us at our website: [www.LAAnimalservices.com](http://www.LAAnimalservices.com)**

Miribel Martinez: ACT at East Valley Shelter. Emotional today. Cuts will greatly impact the facility at East Valley which is the busiest. The shelters service the Latino community. Many only speak Spanish. Two-thirds of the ACT's scheduled for layoffs are Latino and bilingual. It is important that we are there to answer the questions on how to care for the animals, inform them about spay and neuter vouchers and other care of the animals. We are an important part of the Department.

Terese McClure: Private citizen. Each animal shelter has up to a thousand animals. Each cage must be cleaned six times per day. They must check animals every day. The shelters are under staffed and do not have sufficient ACT's.

Brita Gorman: ACT at East Valley Shelter. Began career late in life. Went back to school to gain knowledge to work at shelter. She presented an average work day for ACT workers, including scanning for microchips, caring for animals that have been injured. She has held animals during their last moments.

Jacob Miller: ACT for seven years. Proud to serve at the shelters. Loss of ACT's will have negative impact on shelters. Because of the layoffs, customer service will take a dive on day one, unable to convince owners to keep animals, less time to clean due to number of animals impounded and morale will suffer. City will be overrun with stray animals. There will be no one to answer the phone. We will not be the best animal shelter in the nation.

Phyllis Daugherty: Can not afford to lose the employees. Not one person has said they would lose a paycheck. They have only said they only wanted to take care of the animals. We have come so far to have employees who care. The mayor won election because of the animals.

Laura Beth Heisen: Wrong to lay off the ACT's. Spends a lot of time at shelter. Sees ACT's running from one emergency to another. In 2006 we had 84 ACT's and an average of 1,200 animals per day. Now with this plan we will have twice the number of animals and only 92 ACT's for twice the animals. Prop F. website says the dog kennel numbers are 235 to 743 cages at the new shelters. If you do not keep the ACT's the public will see only the dirty shelters and not the new shelters recently opened.

Lisa Janes: Outrageous that LAAS wants to lay off ACT staff and hire additional administrative staff. With less staff service to the public will suffer. Please don't lay off the ACT's

Pnina Gersten: If anyone knows what these kids do it is me. I talk to them and they are amazing. Take unweaned. They are the lifeline of the Department. Without them the shelters will fall apart.

Larry Sullivan: I have pictures of my dogs on my phone. Adopted pets from shelter. On behalf of animals do not layoff ACT's.

Eldad Hagar: Volunteer for rescue group. Working with these people. Can not imagine what these people go through. County conditions are horrible. Working with shelter staff every day and sees how much they love the animals.

Sophia Chevhashina: How many have animals and how many have kids? 2,800 pets were admitted and to have less people to take care of them is wrong. The pets are family. Please keep these people.

Joyce Forest: Volunteer for 14 years. Proposed to keep the ACT's and increase them.

**Please join us at our website: [www.LAAnimalServices.com](http://www.LAAnimalServices.com)**

Roger Mortimer: Fosters cats from facilities. Knows that L.A. is trying to become no-kill city. If you cut ACT's, euthanasia and the Department is responsible.

## **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Commissioner Ponce recommended all speakers attend the Budget and Finance Committee today.

Commissioner Riordan requested a report from the Department on their need and purpose for the additional unfilled middle management positions and whether that money can be reallocated to keep the ACT positions. Include in this report, she would like an organization chart and cost of positions

## **7. ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Quincey motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Riordan and the motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

**Next Commission Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 P.M., August 25, 2008,** at the new Northeast Valley Shelter.