

**THE GOVERNING BOARD
OF THE JOINT POWERS AGENCY OF THE
STANISLAUS ANIMAL SERVICES AGENCY (SASA)**
Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting

Thursday

December 21, 2023

Members Present:

Michael Pitcock, City of Waterford-Chair – Present
Allison Van Guilder, City of Modesto – Present
Jewel Warr, Alternate for Stanislaus County – Present
Kim Weimer, Alternate for City of Hughson – Present
Mike Willett, Alternate for City of Patterson – Present
Doug Dunford, City of Ceres – Present

Staff Present:

Jesus Mendoza, Deputy County Counsel
Vaughn Maurice, Executive Director
Sara Miller, Business Manager
Karla Legorreta, Account Clerk III

Guests and Dignitaries: None

The meeting was called to order at 9:01am by Chair, Mike Pitcock.

1. **Welcome:** Mike Pitcock-Chair.
2. **Roll Call (Silent):** See above.
3. **Presentations:**
 - A. Reviewed staffing charts and comparisons of other similar type shelters with a 7,000-animal intake as requested by the Civil Grand Jury. We identified three municipal shelters with similar dog and cat intake numbers (about 7,000 animals annually):
 - i. Ventura County-79 Full time equivalent staff
 - ii. Sacramento County-70 Full time equivalent staff
 - iii. Contra Costa County-87 Full time equivalent staff
 - iv. SASA-42 Full time and 6 part time=45 Full time equivalent staff.
(This includes the 4 new positions added 12/12/23)
 - B. Reviewed the Maddy's Fund study done in 01/2020 which reviewed staffing levels at that time, operationally-what's working/what's not working.

- C. We are eventually going to need a staffing increase based upon these comparisons and the Maddy's Fund report findings. We are not asking for those positions today but wanted to give the Board members the information.

- D. What we really liked about looking at these comparisons was the Adoption Counselors that other shelters have. We currently do not have any Adoption Counselors here at SASA. This results in dog returns when someone adopts a dog that is not the right fit for their family or home environment. We would like to add Adoption Counselors to our staff in the future. The other position we would like to add in the future is a full time Operator/Receptionist. Citizens get frustrated that they cannot reach anyone at the shelter as our current staffing only allows for citizens to leave a message and get a return phone call in 2-3 days by one part time/extra help staff person. This is not ideal, and we would like to change that. We are looking into maybe getting some Workforce development workers to assist us with phone calls in the future. The other item we looked at comparison wise was our Vet medicine. We are on track to match these other shelters when our SASA Love clinic gets established in May 2024. Then we can provide more spays/neuters and vaccinations. We are also projecting that the copays and vaccinations costs will fund another 2 Vet Tech positions in the SASA Love clinic without cost to the JPA members.

4. **Public Comment Period (Limit of 5 minutes per person):** None

5. **Minutes of Previous Meetings:**

- A. Motion to approve the Agency Board Meeting Minutes from October 19, 2023 (City of Ceres/City of Modesto; 6-0)

6. **Correspondence:** None

7. **New Business:**

- A. Motion to approve the acceptance of a \$50,000 donation for the stated purpose of renovating the shelter's clinic. (County of Stanislaus/City of Patterson; 6-0)
- B. Motion to proceed with a payment of \$332.29 to Iron Mountain for FY 22/23. (City of Modesto/City of Ceres; 6-0)
- C. Motion to accept a \$200,000 grant from California for All Animals to support the impoverished community. (County of Stanislaus/City of Patterson; 6-0)

8. Committee Reports:

A. Executive Director report: Director included 2 months of statistics for the Board members to review. Our numbers are still very high. About two weeks ago the numbers came down a little due to the Christmas/Holiday specials. We are probably going to be at 600-700 Animals coming in for December. Two weeks ago, we were at 245 dogs. As of yesterday, we were at 195 dogs. Our calls for Field Services have really spiked. Lots and lots of calls from individuals needing our assistance. We started at 600 Field calls in October, and it increased in November and December. Year over year, intakes are up 15% which is close to the National average and the state of California average. Our adoptions are up 25%. State of California adoptions are currently down 7% so we are doing quite well in adoptions. Our free adoption specials have really helped to raise our numbers. It is not likely that we will continue to see that type of an increase on an ongoing basis. Rescue/transfers are up 17% year over year which is a really cool thing to see. Our transport territory has now spread up to Canada where 16 dogs went up to Canada for Rescue. We currently have a transport in the works to go to Montana. The Director had wanted to do the transport hand off on Fox 40 but the timing did not quite work out. The Director will be up at Fox 40 showing off our new transport trailer though. Month over Month you can see a huge spike, and this is something everyone is dealing with across the board. The speculation in the animal welfare world is that two things are causing this. One, many people are returning to the office for work and two, the cost of inflation. Unfortunately, inflation is hitting people in the pocketbooks and can no longer afford to have a pet. We try to mitigate that at our front counter, offering food. Year to date numbers, total animals at 6269, close to the 7000 number. Our dog trend is marked for 4700 dogs which is a huge increase. Same staff taking care of 20% more animals which is quite impressive.

Animal Welfare conference had some good points/suggestions. Charlotte, North Carolina and Atlanta, Georgia have been trying out a 100% satisfaction guarantee for their adopted animals. In the animal welfare world, we drill into people that owning an animal is a 10-15 year commitment which can be scary for certain people to commit. This is a softer approach to adopting our animals. If it doesn't work out, we want to make sure that we are doing what's right for the person and the animal. In the participating cities, their adoptions increased with this technique. They did experience a small increase in returns, but it was small compared to the increase in adoptions. Most people wanted to exchange the pet for a better suited dog or cat. Very few people wanted their money back.

Our last vaccine clinic was in Mid-November and generated \$2200 in revenue. We are not doing any clinics in December thru February. It's too challenging with the weather. Our clinics have been returning a good profit for SASA. Vaccines and microchips are very low cost for us to purchase so our revenue has been very good for the clinics we have done. Once our Spay/Neuter clinic has opened and we have an inside space, we plan to do vaccine clinics several times per week. The need in our community is significant for low-cost vaccination clinics. We do hardly any advertising. We post on our website and on social media and we book up within 24 hours. Demand is high.

We added a new special to try this year-a Black Friday special. It worked out very well. 13 adoptions in the 4 hours we were open. We didn't do a lot of advertising.

Paulette McDonald, a generous donor, donated last year in memory of her son. We asked her if she would consider doing it again this year and she said yes and made another donation in memory of her son. She also made a commitment to do so again next year. There is a plaque up in her son's honor in our main shelter hallway.

Please note our new 8 foot by 4-foot sign as you enter in hopes people will see it and see our specials. We will be using it to promote different things throughout the year.

Cuddle shuttle is now complete. This was a result of a \$60,000 grant from Petco Love Foundation. We retrofitted our van and purchased and retrofitted a new utility trailer with this grant. The utility trailer can accommodate 16 large dogs and then about add some small dogs in crates and do 23-24 dogs a transport. Then our van can pull the trailer and the van can accommodate another 10 dogs. This would be a pretty significant transport. We recently did a transport to Idaho that required 4 people to go. A dog got loose in the van. Our new retrofitted van and utility trailer is much safer, more efficient, and much more comfortable for the animals.

9. Informational: None

10. Member Referrals: None

11. Closed Session:

A. Conference with Legal Counsel-Anticipated litigation: One case. Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4).

No public comment.

12. Adjournment: Adjourned meeting at 10:16am. (City of Ceres/City of Hughson; 6-0)

Adjourned: 10:16am

ATTESTED: Megan Morriss, Confidential Assistant
of the Governing Board
of the Joint Powers Agency
of the Stanislaus Animal Services Agency
State of California