

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

Regular Meeting

Thursday

October 16, 2025

Members Present:

Scotty Douglass, Alternate for City of Modesto-Chair
Jody Hayes, Stanislaus County
Mike Pitcock, City of Waterford
Dominique Romo, City of Hughson
Mike Willet, Alternate for City of Patterson

Members Absent:

Doug Dunford, City of Ceres

Staff Present:

Jesus Mendoza, Deputy County Counsel
Lily Yap, Executive Director
Megan Morriss, Confidential Assistant IV

Guests and Dignitaries: None

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chair, Scotty Douglass.

1. **Welcome:** Scotty Douglass-Chair.
2. **Roll Call (Silent):**
3. **Presentations:** None
4. **Public Comment Period (Limit of 5 minutes per person):**
 - A. Chris Ricci-City of Modesto-Has figured out what direction the shelter is taking-Capacity for Care. He's not in favor of this. Allows government to do the minimum. Expressed his concern with the lack of services at the shelter. Supports the Strategic Plan development but it shouldn't limit the services of the agency.
 - B. Unidentified speaker-expressed concerns with the new room set up. Hard to hear the public comment. Previously expressed concerns about FoxGrove. Do we get to hear the responses to our concerns?
 - a. Chair advised concerned citizen to connect with Lily Yap, Executive Director.

5. Minutes of Previous Meetings:

A. Approved the Agency Board Special Meeting Minutes from September 18, 2025. (City of Patterson/City of Hughson - 5/0).

6. Correspondence: None

7. New Business:

A. Amended motion approved for approval for the Stanislaus Animal Services Agency to implement capacity driven special with quarterly updates to the JPA Board. (City of Waterford/City of Modesto; 5/0)

B. Amended motion to approved for approval for the Stanislaus Animal Services Agency to implement the Rescue Incentive Program with quarterly updates. (City of Modesto/City of Hughson; 5/0)

a. Public comment:

• **Nancy Klein**

- Expressed concerns about the Rescue Incentive Program, particularly regarding the return-for-surgery component.
- Questioned how many rescues would be eligible to return animals for surgery, especially given the high number of out-of-state rescue groups.
- Worried the program may disproportionately benefit cats over dogs and potentially disadvantage R.E.D. dogs.
- Requested clarification on whether rescues would be charged for medical costs under the new structure.
- Described the program as confusing and in need of clearer communication.

• **Staff Response**

- Emphasized current inconsistencies in medical care access for rescues.
- Clarified that the proposed fee structure reflects existing medical fees, which are often waived for urgent animals in line with adoption specials.
- Emphasized the goal of offering consistent, low-cost veterinary options for rescue partners.
- Noted that participation in the program is optional for rescues.
- Provided an example of potential programming for return for disposition: mother dogs and puppies returning if not adopted post-weaning, allowing rescues to take in new animals in more urgent need.

- Reaffirmed that R.E.D. animals will continue to be prioritized for surgery.
- **April Tagger**
 - Asked whether the program is more focused on dogs or cats.
- **Staff Response**
 - Confirmed that kittens would be eligible for the program.

8. Committee Reports: None

9. Informational Reports:

A. Executive Director's Report: Lily Yap

a. Previously, animals on stray hold were viewable, but not available. All interested families were instructed to return on the same day the animal became available, potentially resulting in multiple families for one pet. This often led to frustration—some families arrived only to find the animal already adopted, while in other cases, no one returned despite high initial interest.

A new pre-adoption process was introduced, allowing interested adopters to enter into an agreement to return and finalize the adoption once the animal becomes available. If a previous owner reclaims the animal, the adopter is notified and offered assistance in selecting another pet.

In the first two weeks of implementation, fewer than five pre-adoptions were completed. The program is expected to improve adoption outcomes and reduce length of stay for animals. Staff noted that the shelter environment—particularly rows and rows of kennels—can be overwhelming for potential adopters. It is approximated that 30% of the population are consistently animal shelter adopters; the remaining 70% are hesitant, particularly due to emotional concerns. The new approach aims to make a small step towards a more welcoming atmosphere and engage this untapped group of potential adopters.

b. Budget/Administrative updates-

1. Megan did a staffing/recruitment update.
2. Lily-Ops manager is out. Appreciate the patience as we fill dual roles.
3. Lily-True up-several years need to be completed. We will get this finalized by December. Working with Auditor Controllers office to get this completed. Also, this true-up

is done in conjunction with an audit. The audit is in process.

4. Lily-Alarm contract-will be coming at a future meeting. Contract needs to be finalized.
5. Lily-HR support-working with CEO HR to get assistance with HR so that the Business Manager can focus on fiscal, grants, and direct donation opportunities.

c. Policy and Procedure Update-

Discussed update Green/Yellow/R.E.D. Programming.

Concerns were previously raised about the lack of objectivity in assigning Green/Yellow/Red status to animals at intake. Many animals were being coded as yellow or red upon arrival, often due to being overwhelmed by the shelter environment, including noise, smells, and vaccinations. This was particularly challenging for some dogs and more objective medical or behavioral considerations were not factored in consistently.

To address this, the intake process has been revised so that animals now default to green status unless otherwise indicated. This change is intended to improve transparency and reduce unnecessary barriers to adoption. Weekly all-staff meetings are now held to review the R.E.D. list, and a more proactive approach has been implemented, including phone calls and expectations surrounding staff evaluations.

One recent success involved a dog on the R.E.D. list being reclaimed the same day a call was made to the finder. This demonstrated that the community's potential for support when incorporated into the solution. The updated policy also supports the shelter's capacity challenges by supporting urgent communications when placement is needed most.

d. Capacity and Pets for Life-

The shelter has returned to a population of approximately 300 dogs, with a continuous and unrelenting intake of animals.

Rescue partners are also experiencing similar capacity challenges and are overwhelmed. Staff are exploring additional transfer options to help alleviate pressure. Small dogs and puppies could find placement more quickly in areas less inundated with these populations, which could allow our staff to focus on animals with longer stays or greater needs.

The Pets for Life program, in partnership with Humane World, is being explored as a way to support community members and reduce shelter intake. The program recognizes the deep bond between people and their pets and aims to preserve that connection by offering no-cost services to pet owners. Humane

World has donors specifically interested in supporting the Central Valley and is seeking a partner organization to implement this safety net model. While respecting individuals who choose not to spay or neuter, the program would provide support for families who want services but cannot afford them. Additional information will be shared as received for further consideration.

- e. Adoption special-\$13 cat adoptions, \$31 dog adoptions through the end of the month.

B. Comments from Jody Hayes, County of Stanislaus-

Shared reflections in response to earlier public comments. They noted that the current facility has been in operation for approximately 15 years and is a significant improvement over the previous one. At the time the new facility opened, the annual euthanasia numbers were approximately 13,500 animals; that number has since decreased to around 1,200 per year—a 90% reduction. The speaker emphasized the importance of remembering this progress when evaluating current operations.

They expressed appreciation for the current leadership and acknowledged the critical role of Rescue organizations, managers, and staff in driving positive outcomes for animals. The speaker also highlighted the strain caused by irresponsible pet ownership in the County, which continues to impact shelter capacity and resources.

Concerns were raised about comments from the City of Modesto regarding service levels, noting that past efforts to increase the agency's budget and staffing were not supported by this partner. The speaker emphasized that agency performance is directly tied to the resources allocated to it.

They concluded by thanking Rescue partners for their collaboration and expressed support for the agency's ongoing work on policies, procedures, and strategic planning. They encouraged the Board to support future efforts aimed at improving customer service and the overall experience for the community.

10. Closed Session: None

11. Adjournment at 10:07 am

Adjourned: 10:07 am

ATTESTED: Megan Morrise, Clerk
of the Governing Board

of the Joint Powers Agency
of the Stanislaus Animal Services Agency
State of California