

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

Regular Meeting

Thursday

February 19, 2026

Members Present:

Scotty Douglass, Alternate for City of Modesto-Chair
Mike Pitcock, City of Waterford
Dominique Romo, City of Hughson
Johanna Ferreira, Alternate for City of Patterson
Doug Dunford, City of Ceres
Jewel Warr, Alternate for Stanislaus County

Staff Present:

Jesus Mendoza, Deputy County Counsel
Lily Yap, Executive Director
Megan Morriss, Confidential Assistant IV
Stephanie Loomis, Business Manager

Guests and Dignitaries: None

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 am by Chair, Scotty Douglass.

1. **Welcome:** Scotty Douglass-Chair.
2. **Roll Call:** All members present.
3. **Presentations:**
4. **Public Comment Period (Limit of 5 minutes per person):**

Samantha Lopez:

- Lives in San Francisco.
- Expressed concerns about certain shelter areas being closed to the public.
- Noted long lines at the front counter.
- Worried about unused kennels and limited time extensions for at-risk dogs.

Kelly Giglio:

- Lives in Pleasanton.
- Believes the Stanislaus community values transparency and compassion regarding animal care.
- Is a foster, adopter, and advocate for Stanislaus animals.

- Reported that partners helped move about 100 dogs out of the shelter recently.
- Mentioned sending an email but not receiving a reply.
- Feels the public expects more flexibility in processes, including additional time for animals.
- Asked why volunteer participation is not higher.

Tina von Stade:

- Noted confusion about the recent change in SASA Board meeting locations and went to the wrong site.
- After listening to the strategic planning report, was surprised some Board members were unsure about SASA's strengths and encouraged clearer understanding.
- Highlighted ongoing efforts to support foster programs.
- Shared concerns that some employees feel dissatisfied about their future at SASA.
- Mentioned the recent loss of a valued foster-program employee and feels the reasons for departure may pose risk to the organization.
- Had a 1:30 p.m. appointment and waited about 40 minutes in cold, rainy weather.
- Suggested that providing pop-up cover would improve customer service during inclement weather.

Nancy Klein:

- Thanked the Board for holding meetings at this location.
- Reiterated prior requests to post full meeting packets online before meetings.
- Requested that meetings be recorded or offered via Zoom and noted no changes yet.
- Raised concerns about errors in the 2024–2025 annual data and discrepancies in year-to-year numbers, including animals unaccounted for.
- Shared concerns about organizational culture after a well-regarded employee left and others expressing uncertainty about their future.
- Noted that over half the kennels are closed to the public despite no illness concerns and would like improved visibility into animals housed there.
- Expressed that immediate support is needed rather than waiting for long-term strategic planning outcomes.

Chris Ricci-city council member from Modesto.

- Stated that SASA's purpose is to address community needs and feels the agency is currently limited in its ability to do so.
- Believes intake limitations tied to external guidance affect the reality/transparency of organization stats.
- Emphasized the need for spay/neuter access and low-cost options to better manage animal population.
- Stated that the agency is underfunded and that current fee structures may not fully support operations.
- Asked for clarification on why certain kennels are locked.

- Noted that the primary challenge appears to be inadequate revenue.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

- A. Approved the Agency Board Meeting Minutes from 12/18/25. (City of Waterford/City of Ceres; 6-0)
- B. Approved the Agency Special Board Meeting Minutes from 01/15/26. (County of Stanislaus/City of Hughson; 6-0)

6. Correspondence: None

7. New Business:

- A. Motion to accept \$35,000 Petco Love AWO grant. (City of Patterson/County of Stanislaus; 6-0)

Public Comment:

Nancy Klein-

- Asked about diverting funds and sought clarification on how funding for transport initiatives would be used, noting that SASA's transport team already provides services at no cost.
- Questioned the need to "reduce barriers" for adopters, stating the shelter already offers free adoption events.
- Recommended allocating the full \$35,000 to community spay/neuter efforts, such as the SNIP bus or Animal Balance.
- Asked about the current status and use of the LOVE Clinic, which previously generated rental income.

Tina von Stade-

- Raised concerns about reducing barriers for adopters, sharing an example of an elderly couple returning a dog due to mismatched expectations.
- Suggested that adoption counseling should better assess factors such as yard size, desired energy level, and lifestyle fit to ensure appropriate placements.

Board comments:

- City of Patterson requested clarification on the proposal to expand access to spay/neuter services. Lily explained the intention to keep options flexible, including using funds to assist families unable to pay even low-cost fees.
- City of Waterford asked whether spay/neuter could be classified as a life-saving measure. Lily confirmed that it qualifies as part of life-saving efforts.
- City of Patterson asked whether SASA currently pays for animal transport. Lily explained that staff and volunteers provide transport. Stephanie Loomis added that volunteers are reimbursed for fuel, meals, and occasionally hotel stays, though funding is limited.

- B.** Motion to approve the 2026/2027 Budget Ad Hoc Committee with members: Jewel Warr-County of Stanislaus, Scotty Douglass-City of Modesto and Doug Dunford-City of Ceres. (City of Modesto/County of Stanislaus; 6-0)

Public Comment:

Nancy Klein:

- Asked how communication will occur between the Budget Ad Hoc Committee and the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee since their work is closely connected.

Board comments: Ad Hoc committees are not covered by the Brown Act.

Tina von Stade:

- Appreciated the Brown Act reference and suggested holding some committee meetings in the evening to increase public accessibility, noting many community members are unavailable during daytime hours.

Chris Ricci:

- Agreed with offering evening meetings to improve public access and asked whether this requirement begins in July under new legislation.
 - Emphasized that the Budget and Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committees must work together to address funding challenges.
 - Stated that appropriate fee structures, a clear budget process, and strategic planning are all necessary to ensure adequate funding.

County Counsel: Advised that Chris Ricci can discuss with counsel during a break or after the meeting.

- C.** Motion denied to make amendments to the existing Agency fees. (City of Modesto/City of Waterford; 6-0 denied)

Board Comments:

- City of Waterford asked how fee changes would be implemented. Lily explained that licensing fees would be phased in, while all other fees would take effect immediately.
- City of Waterford expressed interest in hearing community feedback about fee changes.
- City of Patterson asked about the cost of providing services and whether comparable counties/cities were used when setting the proposed fees. Lily noted that services are significantly

subsidized and that animal care is often considered a public service.

- City of Ceres asked for the approximate cost of spaying a large dog. Lily shared that costs vary based on breed and could not give a single estimate. Stephanie added that the shelter's veterinarian is highly skilled in high-volume surgery, larger dogs require more medication, and pricing aligns with local low-cost providers. The current fee of \$50 was intended to be subsidized by a funding source that is no longer specifically allocated for this purpose.
- City of Ceres asked how the new fees were determined without exact cost data. Stephanie explained the fees were based on comparisons to low-cost providers such as Valley Pet and Turlock low-cost clinics. Lily added the fee structure reflects community needs and comparative pricing, not exact per-animal costs.
- City of Waterford asked how many entities were surveyed to develop the fee schedule. Stephanie said comparisons included eight counties and two local low-cost providers.
- City of Waterford stated that all costs associated with spay/neuter should be reviewed before approving new fees, emphasizing the need to cover costs without generating profit.
- City of Modesto asked about the methodology for setting fees and whether private-practice pricing was considered. They noted that private clinics charge more for large dogs and asked for clearer cost justification. Lily explained comparables and community needs were taken into account and that revenue discussions would continue in strategic planning and Ad Hoc committees.
- City of Modesto requested the list of comparable counties/cities and private practices used in the fee analysis.

Public Comment:

Chris Ricci-

- Expressed concern about the current approach to fee changes.
- Felt that comparing fees to other counties is not an effective strategy.
- Encouraged exploring innovative revenue solutions instead of relying solely on comparables.
- Suggested developing a low-income assistance model for spay/neuter, possibly aligned with PG&E or MID assistance programs.
- Believes the proposal does not fully analyze program costs.
- Emphasized the need to focus on long-term revenue generation to sustain the agency.
- Recommended restarting canvassing efforts as a revenue tool.
- Noted that partner organizations are also experiencing financial challenges.

- Stressed the importance of balancing affordability for low-income residents with the agency's financial sustainability.
- Encouraged maintaining flexibility and taking a comprehensive approach to decision-making.

Samantha Lopez-

- Expressed concern about limited access to veterinary care at the shelter, particularly for post-surgery complications.
- Asked how the new fee schedule would impact rescues that rely heavily on transfers, noting challenges when animals are not already spayed or neutered.

Kelly Giglio-

- Shared recent personal costs for spay/neuter services, noting higher private-clinic fees and wait times at nearby humane societies.
- Disappointed that the LOVE Clinic is not currently operating and feels it could be modeled after successful clinics in other communities.
- Stated that fee increases can have unintended impacts and suggested public messaging campaigns promoting spay/neuter.
- Shared that a recent private-sector spay/neuter and vaccination visit cost \$450.

Tina von Stade-

- Requested cost data behind the proposed fees, noting the importance of transparency in government decisions.
- Expressed concern about the magnitude of the proposed increases for dogs and cats.
- Shared that many community members struggle to find affordable spay/neuter and that even \$200 can be a significant financial burden for families.
- Stated that high fees may discourage spay/neuter, potentially worsening community issues, and emphasized the need for incentives.
- Requested that detailed data be brought back to the Board for review before fee increases are considered.

Nancy Klein-

- Noted that minor fee adjustments appear largely symbolic.
- Pointed to language suggesting higher licensing fees could increase owner surrenders and encouraged reconsidering underlying assumptions.
- Asked which counties were used in comparisons and whether their socioeconomic profiles align with Stanislaus County.
- Expressed concerns about raising adoption fees when fees are already waived or reduced through existing specials.

- Felt that raising owner surrender fees could lead to more unsafe abandonments.
- Suggested that discussing spay/neuter capacity is premature given that the shelter has an unfilled veterinarian position.
- Requested information on return-on-investment considerations for shelter programs.

Board comments:

- City of Patterson asked whether fee data from comparison counties was available. Lily said it was not on hand. Stephanie explained that comparing to peer counties follows standard county practice and the JPA's prior directive.
- City of Hughson recommended working with the shelter veterinarian to determine minimum and maximum costs for spay/neuter by animal size. Lily agreed this could be done.
- County of Stanislaus noted that some government services are subsidized while others follow a cost-recovery model. The eight comparison counties were selected based on similarity in population and cost of living. They emphasized balancing community benefit, operational sustainability, and the role spay/neuter plays in smooth shelter operations.

Break-10:36am

Reconvened-10:46am

- D.** Amended motion to approve the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc committee with members: Jewel Warr-County of Stanislaus, Mike Pitcock-City of Waterford, Dominique Romo-City of Hughson and 2 members of the public that will be appointed by the chair after a one-week application period in the future. (City of Waterford/City of Ceres; 6-0)

Board comments:

- Stanislaus County volunteered to serve on this committee.
- City of Ceres nominated City of Waterford to serve on this committee.
- City of Hughson volunteered to serve on this committee.

Public Comment:

Kelly Giglio-

- Reach out to get volunteers for this committee. Especially in the rescue world. It would help move this committee along. They have real, hands-on knowledge.

Nancy Klein-

- Need to consider a volunteer from the community for this committee. I was a part of the 2018 Strategic planning committee. We need regular updates and milestones from this committee.

Tina von Stade-

- Agrees that having community members on this committee is important.
- Samantha Lopez-
- Nominates Nancy Klein.

- E.** Motion to approve Piper McKnight to the Animal Advisory Committee for Stanislaus County. (County of Stanislaus/City of Hughson; 6-0)
No public comment.

8. Informational reports:

- A.** Received a presentation on mid-year budget review by Stephanie Loomis.

- a. Primary revenue
- b. Revenue: Budget to Actual
- c. Revenue to date
- d. Primary expenditures
- e. Expenditures: Budget to actual
- f. Remaining Balance to date
- g. Year end projections

- B.** Received an Executive Director report by Lily Yap.

- a. Monthly statistics
- b. Ad Hoc Budget committee items
 1. Cost of services fee study
 2. Fund balance and true-up analysis
 3. Capital improvement plan development
- c. Re-openings and population management
- d. Spay/Neuter support

- C.** Board comments and reports:

9. Adjournment: 11:36am

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