

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

Regular Meeting

Thursday

April 16, 2026

Members Present:

Scotty Douglass, Alternate for City of Modesto-Chair
Mike Pitcock, City of Waterford
Dominique Romo, City of Hughson
Mike Willett, Alternate for City of Patterson
Delilah Vasquez, Alternate for 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:** None
4. **Public Comment Period (Limit of 5 minutes per person):**
 - A. Kelly Ceglio
 - Presented two cases (SASA–Pumpkin and Tubbs) with concern that serious medical issues were not identified or addressed, resulting in additional burden on rescue organizations.
 - Raised concern that life-threatening medical conditions are not being detected.
 - Questioned the purpose of closed or restricted shelter areas and how they may limit access for staff and the public and affect medical care.
 - Inquired about frequent dog movements, given research indicating this practice can negatively impact outcomes, and requested evidence of measurable benefits.

B. Christina Wilson

- Inquired about virtual accessibility for board meetings (coming from Sunnyvale, CA) and spay/neuter options in area.
- Recommended Board members' emails added to SASA website and program for the homeless like City of Stockton has.

C. Tina von Stade

- Inquired about actions being taken in response to staff-morale concerns identified in the survey, noting that three months have passed since the strategic planning meeting and requesting updates on progress.
- Raised concern about lack of observable change regarding issues expressed, emphasizing that advocates care about the shelter and want to see positive improvements.

D. Claudia Henley

- Identified as a rescue/volunteer and expressed concern about the limited time frames to place longer R.E.D. list dogs, noting that a large portion have been at the shelter fewer than 12 days and requesting clarification on the criteria for placement.
- Questioned the urgency of moving these dogs when kennels were available and the shelter was not at capacity.
- Raised concern about locked kennel areas in the 500s, 600s, and 700s, noting this limits accessibility.
- Stated that dogs at risk should be placed on the open adoption floor rather than represented only by photos.
- Emphasized the need for more adopters and fosters and requested a reduction in the R.E.D. list to allow the community additional time to network dogs.

E. Nancy Klein

- Encouraged the creation of a coffee-table book featuring shelter animals, referencing the Pets for Life playbook and emphasizing that it is a long-term initiative the Board should understand will take time, noting prior attendance at Animal Care Expos.
- Raised concern that current statistical focus is on the number of animals in the system rather than the reasons they enter, emphasizing that root causes, particularly spay/neuter access, directly affect euthanasia rates, rescue burden, and shelter funding.
- Stated that diversion rates do not reflect system pressures or underlying causes and expressed concern that, without full intake and outcome data, long-term decision-making is limited; noted that the statistics presented are inaccurate and misleading.
- Requested reinstatement of the annual intake and outcome data previously available on the shelter's website, noting that this has been requested multiple times and that removing data reduces transparency.
- Expressed concern that placing select dogs on the adoption floor disadvantages dogs housed behind locked doors.

- Recommended adding a lobby greeter, improving kennel cards, increasing staff engagement about dogs in restricted areas, unlocking doors, and ensuring staff receive training on appropriate adoption matches.
- Questioned the urgency of moving dogs with current kennel availability and shelter capacity.
- Raised concern about locked kennel areas in the 500s, 600s, and 700s, noting this limits accessibility.
- Stated that at-risk dogs should be placed on the open adoption floor rather than represented only by photos.
- Emphasized the need for more adopters and fosters and requested reducing the R.E.D. list to allow the community additional time to network dogs.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Item pulled from meeting.

6. **Correspondence:** None

7. **New Business:**

A. Motion to approve the Stanislaus Animal Services Agency Five (5) Year Capital Improvement Plan. (City of Hughson/Stanislaus County; 6-0)

Board comments-Noted that the City of Patterson plans to ask, during budget discussions, for details on current maintenance spending for certain items before authorizing replacement.

Public comment:

- Nancy Klein- Expressed support for smart, long-term planning and noted that proactive strategies prevent crisis-driven decisions. Asked why the Strategic Plan is not being prioritized ahead of the CIP and requested clarity on funding for spay/neuter services, including how it appears in the budget and contributions from partner organizations.
- Kelly Ceglio- Inquired why yard improvements are not treated as a capital project, noting the need for a backup plan to fundraising efforts.

B. Motion to accept the Stanislaus Animal Services Agency FY 2023 and FY 2024 Audit Report and Management's Response. (Stanislaus County/City of Hughson; 6-0)

Board comments-City of Waterford inquired about 24/25 audit, noting the difficulty of addressing deficiencies when audits are delayed. Staff reported that the 24/25 audit process has already been initiated, the contract is being finalized, and the goal is to complete it by 6/30/26 and move directly into the next fiscal year

audit. The City of Modesto expressed support and looks forward to the workplan outlining needed corrections.

Public comment-

- Nancy Klein- Expressed appreciation for staff efforts and requested clarification on whether state law requires annual audits or allows audits as needed. Asked about the cost of audits, whether they are included as a budget line item, and raised concern that while the Board has budget authority, it does not have oversight of budget controls.
- Staff responded that annual audits are required by state law and noted that a more detailed audit was initiated upon assuming the role due to concerns about the adequacy of prior audits. Audits are included in the budget as a line item, and internal Auditor-Controller costs are covered through cap charges. Executive Director acknowledged the staff member's work in advancing the audit process, and noted that the Ad Hoc committee will help strengthen oversight.
- Linda Ford-Reiterate that repeated turnover in the Business Manager role made it difficult to complete audits in prior years and expressed appreciation for the significant progress made by current staff. Inquired about funds previously designated as restricted for spay/neuter and noted that the County's decision to consolidate all budgets into a single unit affected audit processes.
- Staff response: Reported that all budget units are now consolidated, which creates some challenges. Explained that some funding sources carry restrictions while others do not, and that staff worked with County Counsel and the Ad Hoc committee to determine which funds remained restricted. Noted that restricted funds now allow a broader range of eligible uses.
- Tina von Stade-Noted that the Auditor-Controller conducts credit-card audits and reviews travel-policy compliance, and that county policy governs out-of-county travel. Emphasized that new or newly promoted staff should receive training on the travel policy.

Board comments- County representative expressed appreciation for staff's work, and City of Hughson additionally thanked staff for efforts related to the CIP, inquiring about next auditor. Confirmed that Brown/Armstrong will be used for the upcoming audit.

8. Informational reports:

A. Received an Executive Director report from Lily Yap.

- **Monthly Statistics**
Highlighted rolling yearly live release rate of 91% for dogs and 78% for cats, comparing to average across California shelters at 84% for dogs and 80% for cats.
- **Adoption Conversion Rate**
Noted that this rate, comparing number of adoptions to average onsite population, is a better measure of effectiveness since it accounts for population fluctuations and helps identify intake spikes and bottlenecks; in February and March adoption rate maintained consistent compared to the last two years, if not illustrated slight improvement.
- **Intake Mitigation-Immediate/Moderate/Long Term**
Shared different strategics ranging from Dynamic Capacity Meter in Austin that limits intake in real time based on population to resource-oriented programs in Williamson County. Additionally noted that Pets for Life model results in 20-30% intake reductions in targeted neighborhoods over time.
- **Conference Takeaway**
SASA represented and participated on a nation level through “From conflict to connection” speaker engagement at Animal care expo as well as attendance to workshops on grant strategies and Return to Home Initiatives. Additionally connected with potential funders for our “Compassion Caravan” pilot, noted to be the first transport of its type in the nation.

9. Closed session: Public Employment: Performance Evaluation – SASA Executive Director. Government Code Section 54957(b).

- A.** 10:47am-11:32am-Closed session
- B.** 11:33am-reopened public meeting

10. Adjournment: 11:34am

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