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

Regular Meeting **Thursday** **September 17, 2026**

Members Present:
Jewel Warr, Alternate for Stanislaus County-Chair
Scotty Douglass, Alternate for City of Modesto-Vice-Chair
Mike Pitcock, City of Waterford
Steve Williams, City of Ceres
Dominique Romo, City of Hughson
Johanna Ferriera, Alternate for City of Patterson

Staff Present:
Craig Gundlach, Interim Executive Director
Jesus Mendoza, Deputy County Counsel
Connie Hooker, Operations Manager
Megan Morriss, Confidential Assistant IV

Guests and Dignitaries: None

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 am by Chair, Jewel Warr.

1. **Welcome:** Jewel Warr-Chair

2. **Roll Call:** Silent. All members present.

3. **Presentations:** None

4. **Public Comment Period (Limit of 3 minutes per person):**

   - Kelly Ceglio-6/18/26 rescue suspensions still happening even with a change in leadership. Discussed the dog, Ivy and her bite history. Would like a thorough review of this dog's history. We can save dogs and protect the public's safety. Congratulations on partnering with the SNIP bus. Appointments filled in less than 3 hours. Evidence of a huge demand for affordable spay/neuter. Also need to restore adoption hours.

   - Claudia Henley-thanks Craig and the Board for the extension on the euthanasia list the prior week with kennel space available. Disconnect with shelter management on Wednesday morning regarding the euthanasia of dogs. Rescue volunteers are working Tuesday night to early Wednesday morning on trying to find homes for these dogs. Gave an example of Bamm Rescue trying to tag a dog. Concerned with management not answering calls or texts Tuesday night to

Wednesday morning. Rescues need more time to facilitate rescues or adoptions.

- Christina Wilson-thank you to the Board and for the SNIP bus. Need to add vaccine clinics. Vet supervision is not needed for vaccine clinics. Thank you to animal control for conducting a homeless encampment sweep due to the heat. However, taking in all those puppies impacts the euthanasia list for the following week. Also, the shelter needs better stray dog management. Appreciates the new leadership and the creative solutions to the shelter's problems. Mentioned the dog Ivy and that better precautions should have been taken.

- Nancy Klein-expressed concerns about the start time of the 3 minutes allotted for public comment at the last meeting and the meeting minutes have shrunk. Shelter hours need to change. Close on Monday and open on Sunday. Is the Board approving policies yet? Red/Green/Yellow policy not taken to the Board.

- Tina von Stade-awesome people here for dogs, but what about cats? Does our public comment matter to you? Do you think about the shelter when you are not here at the Board meetings? Last month 59 cats were euthanized. Cats matter. Very little marketing for cats. Very little community events for SASA. Won't foster for SASA anymore. I will foster for Stockton again after seeing all the support they have given me. Why don't we have adoption events for cats? Fresno charges $30 per cat for TNR. We need to do better for the cats.

- Linda Ford-Animal Advisory Committee member for City of Hughson. One big issue we need to discuss is education. In the 1990's we went to grade schools. Get the information out to young people. Make our animal control 180 degrees different. Incorporate public education and prevention. Use volunteers and one team member from the shelter.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

   A. Motion to approve 8/20/26 minutes. (City of Modesto/City of Ceres; 6-0)

      Public comment: None

6. **Correspondence:** Written public comments were distributed to each Board member. Written public comments are part of the official record and are available for inspection/can be requested.

7. **New Business:**

   A. Motion to approve and adopt the Stanislaus Animal Services Agency five-year Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2027-2032. (City of Modesto/City of Patterson; 6-0)

Board comments:

- Stanislaus County thanked the Board members on the Ad Hoc committee, staff and the community for helping to achieve a final Strategic Plan. Recognized former director, Lily Yap, for initiating this process.

- City of Waterford advised a lot of work went into this plan, but he really wants to hear from the public about this. We do hear your comments and take them seriously. Thank you to Jewel and William Shirley for helping create this plan.

- City of Hughson advised this plan will strengthen SASA and empower the staff to get things done.

Public comment:

- Nancy Klein-thank you for working on this plan. Priority #1-I agree that we need surgical catch up. Will be sending Craig a list of vets and contacts for spay/neuter outreach opportunities. Priority #2-Volunteer and foster program is in need of heavy oversight. Have questions on staffing needs. We need public education desperately. Priority #3-Animal behavior and adoption conversations are needed and key for staff. Need staffing needs now, not in year 3 or 4. Priority #4-Need a robust volunteer program to help the shelter. Requesting we have quarterly updates on the Strategic Plan, not yearly.

- Tina von Stade-thank you for this Strategic Plan. My thoughts are how important this plan will be with recruiting a new Director. It should be handed out to applicants and have interview questions regarding the plan. It's important for the Board to agree on this plan and that the cities agree with this plan as costs will rise in the future if you follow this plan. Share this plan with the community. Have concerns with the "Stay" interviews versus the "Exit" interviews. Staff must trust you to get that idea to work. Have some concerns with the wording in Priority #1 and #2. Need specific dates or numbers in your goals.

  Board comments:

- City of Patterson advised that communication is key. Need to evaluate staffing soon. Addressing the surgical backlog will be very important.

- Stanislaus County said we are striving for a 30-day backlog would be a huge improvement. We have foster-to-adopt and that leads to additional challenges.

- City of Waterford said ideally, we would send dogs out already altered. That would result in an adoption instead of foster-to-adopt. Get them in and out of surgery as quickly as possible.

- Interim Director advised when he adopted his dog Missy, she had surgery in 2-3 days. They did not have to return for surgery. We hope to implement that. It's a big challenge but it's important.
  City of Modesto-thanks the members of the community who spoke. He appreciates the priority placed on items in the Strategic plan. If everything is a priority, then nothing is. We need to right size and evolve so we have consistent operations and are more efficient. People come excited to adopt and then are told it will be months of waiting to get a spay/neuter done.

- City of Ceres-thank you to the community feedback and to the Board members who participated on this committee. Glad to see the Strategic Plan for today's meeting. It is well organized, easy to read, and specific, measurable goals. Likes the idea of "stay" interviews and "exit" interviews-doing both. Would like consistent updates on the Strategic Plan throughout the year. Implementation will be the Executive Directors and staff responsibility. There are some expectations of financial contributions increasing from the partners and that will need to be evaluated and discussed.

- Stanislaus County advised it will be similar to a Capital Improvement Plan where you have a plan but evaluate annually what you can afford to complete. The Strategic Plan will be available on the website and will need to be rolled out to staff. If staff bring items to the Board meetings, it should be called out if it relates to a Strategic Plan priority. The goal is to keep the Strategic Plan alive.

B. Motion to approve the amended Conflict of Interest Code for Stanislaus Animal Services Agency. (City of Ceres/City of Hughson; 6-0)

Board comments: None

Public comment: None

8. <u>Informational reports:</u>

A. Executive Director's report
   a. MJC partnership
   b. TNR reimbursement program
   c. On-boarding training
   d. HR Management/Leadership refreshers
   e. SNIP Bus partnerships
   f. Vaccination Clinic-10/5/26
   g. Updated final call list policy

h. Dog handling policy-requested by OSHA
i. Recruitment for Animal Care Specialist in process
j. Artificial Turf Project with Leadership Modesto. Grand opening on 9/25/26 at 12:00pm
k. UC Davis partnership
l. 9/27/26-additional surgery day
m. Kennel cough/outbreaks training given at All-Staff meeting
n. Secured two paid contract vets
o. MJC assisting with medical procedures

Public comment:

- Tina von Stade-what a difference in Executive Director reports! Good job Craig. HR Management/Leadership training is very important. Use LinkedIn Learning as a resource. SNIP Bus-so good to partner with them. Full in less than one day. Maybe SASA can extend their stay here. Updated Final Call list policy. SASA staff aren't really trained in dog behavior. That needs to change.

- Kelly Ceglio-please duplicate Craig! Suspended rescues-email goes to archive and is never read. If you are copied on an email with a suspended rescue then your email gets archived. Don't silence communications.

- Nancy Klein-thanked Craig for robust report. Maybe present Strategic plan at city council meetings. Excited about SNIP bus partnership. 2019 did a presentation about SNIP bus. Mentioned the dog handling policy in conjunction with training for staff is very important. Vaccine clinics on 10/5/26-is a Monday. Please make them on weekends when people aren't working. Also, we want to know the quantity of the vaccine clinics. How many people are we serving and what is the cost? Turf-will evaluate a dog on the turf today and is excited by that. Is Animal Balance coming back on 9/27/26? Where is the money coming from? Contract vets-what is their compensation we will give them. Modesto PD stats are not included on our statistics. Need that data as it means outcomes for SASA.

- Claudia Henley-thank you for the robust Directors report. Please consider the suspended rescues reinstatement. They need access to help. Thank you for the Strategic Plan. I can now see the mission and vision of the agency.

Board comments:

- Stanislaus County advised that, in conjunction with City of Modesto, they have a report out on the Director's recruitment. Met with CEO HR and reviewed our different approaches to this recruitment process and the entire history of the past Directors.

Identified what has been successful in the past. Currently looking for a candidate from the leadership ranks of the County and the Cities.

- City of Modesto advised it is very important to look at the past until now. This is a first step in the process. Solicitating interest in the position, seeing what we have and then moving forward. Thankful for having an Interim Director in meantime.

Public comment:

- Tina von Stade-if I understand correctly-candidates can express interest. This is how we got Annette Patton-former Director who was from Child Support services. Lily Yap did have shelter experience. Annette did not but was successful. We will see how the Board can combine those two things this time around.

- Nancy Klein-Are we looking for a person of convenience or are we looking at actual skills and experience? They are two different things.

Board comments:

- City of Modesto-department has really shifted in the last 30 days. We are seeing progress. Keep going in this direction. We have some extra time to do this recruitment because we have an Interim Director.

- Stanislaus County-seeing big and small changes now. Staff didn't skip a beat and continued to work toward changes at SASA. There is work happening behind the scenes everyday.

- Interim Director-staff truly saw the need and worked toward these new things. Exactly right-work is happening behind the scenes every day. Thank you to staff for that.

9. **Adjournment:** 10:48am

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