

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Mike Reagan (Dist. 5), Chair
(707) 784-6130
John F. Silva (Dist. 2), Vice-Chair
(707) 553-5364
Barbara R. Kondylis (Dist. 1)
(707) 553-5363
James P. Spering (Dist. 3)
(707) 784-6136
John M. Vasquez (Dist. 4)
(707) 784-6129



County Administrator
MICHAEL D. JOHNSON
(707) 784-6100
Fax (707) 784-6665

675 Texas Street, Suite 6500
Fairfield, California 94533-6342
<http://www.co.solano.ca.us>

July 24, 2007

The Honorable David E. Power, Presiding Judge
Superior Court, State of California, County of Solano
Hall of Justice
530 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Dear Judge Power:

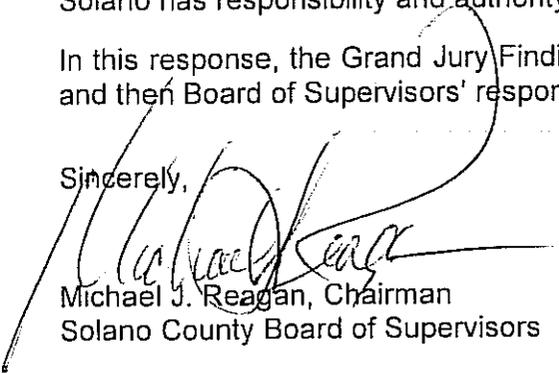
Under Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Board of Supervisors is responding to the findings and recommendations in the following 2006/2007 Grand Jury Reports as they pertain to matters under the control of the Board of Supervisors:

- Part I – Solano County Justice Center Detention Facility Inspection;
- Part II – Solano Justice Building Court Holding Facility – Vallejo;
- Part III – Claybank Detention Facility;
- Part IV – Solano County Veterans' Buildings;
- Part V – Solano County Health & Social Services Department In-Home Supportive Services;
- Part VI – Fouts Springs Youth Facilities;
- Part VII – Solano County Food Establishment Inspection;
- Part VIII – Permission to Carry a Concealed Weapon;
- Part IX – Juvenile Detention and New Foundations Facilities; and
- Part X – Solano County Animal Care Services.

The Board's responses are limited to those areas of the respective reports where the County of Solano has responsibility and authority.

In this response, the Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations are listed followed by departmental and then Board of Supervisors' responses.

Sincerely,


Michael J. Reagan, Chairman
Solano County Board of Supervisors

Enclosures

Cc: Grand Jury

Part X

Solano County Animal Care Services

Issued June 7, 2007

Acting Director of General Services, Solano County Sheriff, the County Administrator's Office and Board of Supervisors responses to findings and recommendations:

Finding 1 – The present policy of contracting for veterinarian services approximately 20 hours a week does not seem to meet the requirements of the "Hayden Bill" (Stats. 1998, ch. 752), which requires prompt veterinary care of animals housed at shelters.

General Services Department Response to Finding 1 – General Services Department partially agrees with the finding. Currently, we are meeting the requirements of the "Hayden Bill" by using a local offsite Veterinary Clinic or Veterinary Hospital to promptly treat injured or sick animals when our half time veterinarian is not available. Even with a full time staff veterinarian, we would still need to use an offsite veterinary clinic for x-ray, ultrasound, specialized treatment and emergency services after normal working hours.

Recommendation 1 – Animal Care Services should hire a full time staff veterinarian.

General Services Department Response to Recommendation 1 – General Services Department agrees with the recommendation. It would be optimal to have a full time staff veterinarian for the shelter; however, we are able to service the needs of the animals by contracting out for a half-time veterinarian and using animal clinics when necessary.

County Administrator's Office Response to Finding and Recommendation 1 – County Administrator's Office Department disagrees with the recommendation as the County is currently meeting all requirements of the Hayden Bill.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Finding and Recommendation 1 – The recommendation requires further analysis. Staff has been directed to submit a report to the Board that provides a comprehensive evaluation of the appropriate level of veterinary services on or before December 4, 2007.

Finding 2 – The County plans on transferring animal control officers from Animal Care Services to the Sheriff's Department.

General Services Department Response to Finding 2 – General Services Department disagrees with the finding. General Services Department and the Sheriff's Department were exploring the possibility of transferring the Animal Control Officers to the Sheriff's Department. At this time, there are no concrete plans to do so.

County Administrator's Office Response to Finding 2 – The County Administrator's Office disagrees with the finding. Discussions were held as to the feasibility of transferring animal control officers from Animal Care Services to the Sheriff's Department. It was concluded that the staff should remain under the direction of Animal Care Services.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Finding 2 – The Board of Supervisors disagrees with the Grand Jury's finding. No formal agreement was made to transfer animal control officers to the Sheriff's Office.

Recommendation 2 – The County should not transfer animal control officers to the Sheriff's Department without first soliciting public input and input from the Solano County Animal Care Commission.

General Services Department Response to Recommendation 2 – General Services Department agrees with the recommendation.

Sheriff's Response to Finding and Recommendation 2 – The Sheriff's Office does not concur with the finding of the Grand Jury. Information provided the Grand Jury relative to this matter was inaccurate. There is no "plan" to transfer animal control officers to the Sheriff's Office. There is no proposal to move animal control services to the Sheriff's Office and the final FY 07/08 budget request submitted by the Sheriff makes no provision for the transition of animal control officers.

The Sheriff's Office concurs with the recommendation of the Grand Jury.

County Administrator's Office Response to Recommendation 2 – County Administrator's Office agrees with the recommendation.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Recommendation 2 – The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Grand Jury's recommendation. No further action is warranted.

Finding 3 – The County has been slow to fill vacant positions in Animal Care Services.

General Services Department Response to Finding 3 – General Services Department disagrees with the finding. The County has moved swiftly in the recruitment process for filling vacant positions. The inability to find qualified candidates has resulted in positions being left vacant longer than anticipated.

County Administrator's Office Response to Finding 3 – County Administrator's Office agrees that several vacant positions have not been filled as quickly as we would have liked.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Finding 3 – The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Grand Jury's finding.

Recommendation 3 – The County should fill vacancies as expeditiously as possible.

General Services Department Response to Recommendation 3 – General Services Department agrees with the recommendation.

County Administrator's Office Response to Recommendation 3 – County Administrator's Office agrees with the recommendation.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Recommendation 3 – The recommendation has been implemented. The Board of Supervisors has tasked departments and Human Resources to work to promptly fill staff vacancies.

Finding 4 – The Animal Shelter uses a checklist for evaluating the temperament of dogs and cats. However, the policy regarding how a determination is made as to whether an animal is adoptable or should be destroyed is not well defined. It appears to be subjective depending on the evaluator.

General Services Department Response to Finding 4 – General Services Department partially agrees with the finding. The Animal Shelter currently uses a checklist as part of the temperament evaluation of cats and dogs. Policy regarding the determination of an animal's adoptability is well defined.

County Administrator's Office Response to Finding 4 – County Administrator's Office agrees with the finding that the determination as to whether an animal is adoptable should be well defined.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Finding 4 – The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees. The actions, policies and procedures concerning animal adoptability are defined and provide tools for a suitable, balanced evaluation.

Recommendation 4 – Shelter policies and procedures should be reinforced and performed in a consistent manner. The determination of when an animal is not adoptable should be better defined. Shelter management should modify its procedures to include an evaluation by a second person in those cases when the initial evaluator determines an animal is not adoptable.

General Services Department Response to Recommendation 4 – General Services partially agrees with the recommendation. Shelter staff strives to perform all policies and procedures in a consistent manner. The determination of when an animal is adoptable is well defined. Animal Services' current policy requires observation of animals brought into the shelter through the Hayden Period, evaluation by two trained staff members and the completion of a final checklist to fully evaluate each animal for adoptability.

County Administrator's Office Response to Recommendation 4 – County Administrator's Office agrees with the recommendation. Careful and thorough assessments are important in these types of decisions.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Recommendation 4 – The recommendation will not be implemented because it is unwarranted. The actions, policies and procedures concerning adoptability are defined and provide tools for a suitable, balanced evaluation.

Finding 5 – Animal Services staff attempts to place animals not deemed adoptable with rescue groups; however, there is no structured program.

General Services Department Response to Finding 5 – General Services Department disagrees with the finding. Animal Services works off a list of rescue groups that actively accept shelter animals. This list consists of breed specific and other rescue groups that accept all breeds. As their services are needed, Animal Services contacts the rescue groups who currently have space available. If a rescue group can't accept or doesn't have space available at the time, another rescue group on the list is contacted until availability for placement is located.

County Administrator's Office Response to Finding 5 – County Administrator's Office disagrees with the finding as a structured practice currently exists in the animal shelter.

Recommendation 5 – Animal Services management should develop a more formalized program for the placement of animals with rescue groups.

General Services Department Response to Recommendation 5 – General Services Department disagrees with the recommendation. Animal Services has a program and procedure for placing animals with rescue groups. The system that is currently in place is set up to provide the most expedient placement of animals possible.

County Administrator's Office Response to Recommendation 5 – County Administrator's Office agrees with the recommendation as there is always room for improvements in how the County works with rescue groups.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Finding and Recommendation 5 – The Board of Supervisors agrees with the General Services Department's response to the Grand Jury's finding and recommendation. The Animal Care Division of General Services has adequate programming in place to work with animal rescue groups.

Finding 6 – The Shelter, located next to the Claybank Detention Facility, is inadequate in size and design. Staff from Animal Services and the Sheriff's Department are in discussions regarding the location of a new shelter and have been looking at sites in close proximity to the jail.

General Services' Response to Finding 6 – General Services Department partially agrees with the finding. General Services agrees that the Animal Shelter is inadequate in size and design; however, Animal Care Services and the Sheriff's Department are not in discussions on the placement of the new Animal Shelter. All discussions relating to a new Animal Shelter, including site location will be part of the Animal Care Master Planning process. The Master Plan is scheduled for completion in FY 2007/08 and managed by the Division of Architectural Services.

County Administrator's Office Response to Findings 6 – County Administrator's Office partially agrees with the finding. The adequacy of size, design and location will be studied in the upcoming Animal Care Master Planning process.

Recommendation 6a – Building a new shelter should become a high priority for the County and its cities. As stated in the Memorandum of Understanding the parties, should begin meeting and come up with a viable location, design and funding for a new shelter.

General Services' Response to Recommendation 6a – General Services Department agrees with the recommendation. The Animal Care Master Plan will follow the guidelines as indicated in the Memorandum of Understanding between the cities and County.

Recommendation 6b – The location of a new shelter should be in the best interest of the animals and the residents of Solano County. It is not necessary to assume close proximity to the Claybank Detention Center.

General Services' Response to Recommendation 6a – General Services Department agrees with the recommendation.

Sheriff's Response to Finding 6 and Recommendations 6a and 6b – The Sheriff's Office concurs with the finding and recommendation of the Grand Jury. Although support services

provided by the Sheriff should be a consideration, the best interest of the animals and the community should be priority in the decision making process.

County Administrator's Office Response to Recommendations 6a and 6b – County Administrator's Office agrees with the recommendation.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Finding 6 and Recommendations 6a and 6b – The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Departments' response to the Grand Jury's finding and recommendations. The best interest of the animals and the community should be weighted when considering placement of the Animal Care facility.

Finding 7 – The Inmate Cleaning Program has resulted in: 1) reported abuse of animals; 2) negative inmate interactions, which limits expansion of the Volunteer Program and other outreach programs; and 3) deterring residents interested in adopting animals from considering animals housed at the Shelter.

General Services' Response to Finding 7 – General Services Department partially agrees with findings number 1), 2) and 3). Overall, the inmate cleaning program has been a valuable resource to Animal Care over the years; however, due to the changing needs of the Shelter, Animal Care Services agrees that the cleaning of the shelter should be performed by shelter staff rather than using inmate labor.

County Administrator's Office Response to Finding 7 – County Administrator's Office agrees that use of County staff is a more appropriate method.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Finding 7 – The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Departments' responses to the Grand Jury finding. The Inmate Cleaning Program provided a cost effective resource for cleaning cages and exercising animals

Recommendation 7 – The County should consider discontinuing the program and hire additional Animal Services staff to provide these services.

General Services' Response to Recommendation 7 – General Services Department agrees with the recommendation. Additional staffing was approved by the Board of Supervisors with the FY 07/08 Budget. The inmate cleaning program will end by September 30, 2007.

Sheriff's Response to Finding and Recommendation 7 – The Sheriff's Office concurs with the finding and recommendation of the Grand Jury. The Sheriff will notice Animal Care Services that the Inmate Cleaning Program will be terminated according to the terms of our agreement.

County Administrator's Office Response to Recommendation 7 – County Administrator's Office agrees with the recommendation.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Recommendation 7 – The recommendation has been implemented and the Board of Supervisors has approved staffing and funding for the transition of a cleaning program to Animal Care Division staff.

Finding 8 – The Kitten Foster Care Program utilizing female inmates of the County Detention Facility, has proven to be successful for both the animals and the inmates.

General Services' Response to Finding 8 – General Services Department agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 8 – Animal Care services and the Sheriff's Department should be commended on this successful and creative program and are encouraged to promote and continue this program.

General Services' Response to Recommendation 8 – General Services Department agrees with the recommendation.

Sheriff's Response to Finding and Recommendation 8 – The Sheriff's Office concurs with the finding and recommendation of the Grand Jury.

County Administrator's Office Response to Finding and Recommendation 8 – County Administrator's Office agrees with the finding and recommendation.

Board of Supervisor's Response to Finding and Recommendation 8 – The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Grand Jury's finding and recommendation.

Finding 9 – Animal Care Services is under funded. Earlier budget increases have been minimal and in Fiscal Year 2006-2007 the budget was decreased 5 percent from the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 budget.

General Services' Response to Finding 9 – General Services Department disagrees with the finding. Since FY 1999-2000 when Animal Care was transferred to General Services, the expenditure budget has increased by 140%. In FY 06/07 the expenditure budget increased slightly over FY 05/06.

County Administrator's Office Response to Finding 9 – County Administrator's Office disagrees with the finding. The County Administrator's Office works closely with departments and their divisions, including Animal Care Services, to adequately fund their programs.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Finding 9 – The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Departments' responses to the Grand Jury finding. The County budget process allows sufficient opportunity to request appropriations based on their service requirements.

Recommendation 9 – The County should evaluate the Animal Care Services budget to provide for, at minimum: 1) a full time veterinarian; 2) replacement of the Inmate Cleaning program with additional animal services staff that can perform multiple functions; 3) expansion and promotion of programs that benefit the well-being of the animals at the Shelter; and 4) education and promotion of population control of animals within the County.

General Services' Response to Recommendation 9 – General Services agrees with the recommendation.

- 9-1) A half-time veterinarian and a part-time spay/neuter veterinarian are funded in the FY 07/08 budget.
- 9-2) Additional staffing was approved by the Board of Supervisors with the FY 07/08 Budget. The inmate cleaning program will end by September 30, 2007.
- 9-3) Animal Care continually evaluates the programs it provides. An example of some of the programs we have currently expanded and/or added are: feral cat Trap, Neuter and Release program; a new microchip ordinance; inmate kitten foster program; low-cost spay/neuter clinic; volunteer run offsite adoptions; low-cost dog and cat vaccination

clinic; and educational outreach to schools and organizations such as 4-H and Girl/Boy Scouts.

9-4) See 9-3) above.

County Administrator's Office Response to Recommendation 9 – County Administrator's Office partially agrees with the recommendation. As detailed earlier in this letter, the Animal Care center is funded to provide for all mandated services.

Board of Supervisors' Response to Recommendation 9 – The recommendation will not be implemented because it is unwarranted. The Department's programs are evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that all mandated and necessary services are funded.