

County of Sutter

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Office of the County Administrator

ENDORSED FILED

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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SUTTER
CLERK OF THE COURT
By JACKIE LASWELL Deputy

August 24, 2011

The Honorable Christopher R. Chandler
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
County of Sutter
466 Second Street
Yuba City, CA 95991

Dear Judge Chandler,

On behalf of the Sutter County Board of Supervisors, I am herewith submitting its response to the findings and recommendations of the 2010-11 Grand Jury's Report dated April 12, 2011.

The Board of Supervisors appreciates the dedicated efforts of the 2010-11 Grand Jury in the preparation of its report, and trusts that you will find the enclosed material responsive.

I would be happy to meet with the Grand Jury to discuss any or all of these issues.

Sincerely,



Stephanie J. Larsen
County Administrative Officer

SJL/ja

Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2010-11 Grand Jury Report Sutter County Animal Control Shelter

Animal Control Services and the Community Services Department have received the FY 2010-11 Grand Jury Report on Animal Control Services. We welcome all findings and recommendations that we can implement reasonably and cost effectively. Animal Control Services of the Community Services Department appreciates recommendations from all sectors and looks forward to implementation of reasonable recommendations.

The FY 2010-11 report by the Grand Jury presented a very critical view of Animal Control Services in Sutter County. In fact, there is not one positive comment about the services or about the work of the staff of Animal Control Services. The report slams the very people who have been recommending that the animal shelter needs to be replaced. The management of the Community Services Department and the Supervisor of Animal Control Services have been forthright in explaining the condition of the shelter for many years. Many tours have been conducted by them to illustrate to County and City leaders and the media the deplorable conditions at the shelter. No one from the Community Services Department or the Animal Shelter has tried to hide from the public the need to replace this facility.

Several Grand Juries in the past decade, who have been comprised of citizens equally interested in the kind and humane treatment of animals, have investigated and reviewed the services provided by Animal Control. In the Grand Jury report of FY 2001-02, which is before staff recommended that a new shelter would be needed, stated the following: "The facility seemed very clean and well maintained."; "The animals, cages, and the surroundings were clean and in proper order. A complete tour of the facility was made." Likewise, the Grand Jury report of FY 2002-03, again prior to staff recommendation of a new facility, stated, "The animals, cages, and surroundings were cleaned, well maintained and in proper order."

In February 2004, Mr. Richards Hall, Director of Community Services, submitted a plant acquisition request to the Public Works Department for the FY 2004-05 budget indicating that there was a need for an expanded facility for the animal shelter, and the reasoning was the increased population of animals from the increased human population in Sutter County. A secondary need resulted from the state's Hayden Bill, which required animals to be held for a longer period of time. He indicated that the shelter expansion need was rapidly escalating to critical.

In subsequent budget requests to the Board of Supervisors, two other reasons were indicated: 1) rodent issue, and 2) septic issue. In the intervening years of FY 2003-04 through FY 2007-08, there were no Grand Jury reports regarding Animal Control Services. The Sutter County Grand Jury, for the period of FY 2008-09, reviewed Animal Control Services and their findings were as follows:

The Grand Jury finds Sutter County Animal Control Services employees provide quality service to Sutter County.

The Grand Jury finds Animal Control facilities are outdated but well maintained by Sutter County staff.

The Grand Jury finds Sutter County employees conducted extensive research to provide Sutter County citizens with a quality Animal Control Facility to meet current and future needs.

The Grand Jury report of FY 2009-10 did not have any findings or recommendations related to animal care.

Also, during the period when the County and the two cities were negotiating to build a new shelter, Citygate Associates made recommendations to Sutter County. Part of their report said the following:

“These observations are not to be taken as criticisms of the Community Services Department or of the Animal Control Division. We have been impressed with the professionalism and dedication of all the personnel with whom we have had contact. The fact that a program does not exist in Sutter County, or the fact that existing programs could be better developed or more robust is in most instances attributable to a lack of resources, not a lack of imagination, will, desire or commitment.”

These past Grand Jury and Citygate reports have provided Animal Control Services with a balanced view of what they do. A balanced view means giving recommendations for improvement as well as pointing out the positive aspects of the service provided. The FY 2010-11 Grand Jury, on the other hand, gave no positive findings or recommendations for Animal Control Services.

The Grand Jury started this investigation because of a referral from a former Animal Control Officer, who also submitted his concerns to the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) and the State Unemployment Department. In The Grand Jury Report, they only make a recommendation on one of his 27 accusations and that relates to the number of employees needed to perform the duties of Animal Control Services. Cal/OSHA addressed only one concern of his, which was the rodent issue. The State Unemployment referee denied his claim for unemployment benefits because the conditions of the shelter didn't warrant his claim and his resignation was not justified based on his claim.

Thus the Grand Jury, failing to substantiate all but one of the former Animal Control Officer's concerns, elicited the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program team consisting of Dr. Hurley and three veterinarians from the program, to only identify problems and issues within the shelter. They were not to identify any strengths or positive aspects of Animal Control Services. These aforementioned facts illustrate that the FY 2010-11 Grand Jury appears to have been negatively predisposed in their investigation and report of Animal Control Services.

It appears the statistics the Grand Jury used were derived from a report provided by the UC Davis Koret evaluation team. The statistics the UC Davis team used were extracted from Sutter County Animal Control's Chameleon database using a custom report developed by the UC Davis Veterinarian Hospital. The statistics presented by the Grand Jury appear to contradict what is in our own database. Animal Control staff cannot validate the Grand Jury data as accurate. When

the Animal Control Division's reports are used, a completely different picture emerges. Attachment 1 shows the Sutter County Animal Shelter Kennel Statistics for calendar year 2010. This report shows lower euthanasia and higher adoption rates than most animal shelters and is consistent with industry standards.

Although the Findings and Recommendations section of the Grand Jury report did not directly address disease control and sanitation measures, this issue is extremely important and we believe that it needs to be addressed in our response. In fact, publication of this response has been delayed so that we can report significant progress towards achieving these goals. The County has taken and is planning a number of measures to upgrade the physical conditions of the existing animal shelter and to improve operational procedures. These include the following planned upgrades to the existing animal shelter:

1. Currently, the animal shelter's washer and dryer are outdoors, exposed to the weather. A planned upgrade will involve the addition of a temporary building that will allow us to move linen washing indoors. We will also add a dishwasher and a hot water heater. The dishwasher will be the same type specified in the architect's designs for the new shelter. To save money, the dishwasher will be pre-purchased. It will serve temporary duty in the old shelter, and then will be moved to the new shelter shortly before it opens.
2. The dog kennel surfaces will be sealed after a very intense high pressure steam cleaning.
3. The cat holding area will be expanded for proper separation of sick cats from the general population. We intend to pre-purchase the cat cages for the new animal shelter and place them in the same temporary building which will house the washer, dryer, and dishwasher.
4. We plan to add 10 additional dog kennels. The expansion will allow Animal Control staff to move dogs during kennel cleaning, isolate sick dogs from the general population, and to relieve overcrowding.
5. We intend to remove the old refrigerator box that is currently used for limited storage. It will be replaced with two rat proof storage containers.
6. The walls and ceiling of the cat room and trustee room will be completely renovated with the concrete-lined wallboard that was used in the euthanasia room to prevent rodent intrusion. In addition, the concrete floors will be sanitized and treated with a protective sealant. These upgrades will improve sanitation and allow for more extensive cleaning.

The initial cost estimate for these improvements totaled over \$260,000 – a cost that did not seem feasible for a building that is due to be demolished within the next 18-24 months. Staff from Sutter County Community Services, the Animal Control Division, Sutter County Public Works, and the County Administrative Office have been working with staff from the Cities of Yuba City and Live Oak to find alternative construction methods that will achieve these same goals. As of this writing, we believe that we will be able to recommend a cost-effective solution that will win the approval of all three jurisdictions. Those recommendations will be presented to the Board for their consideration on July 12, 2011.

Regarding operational procedures, animal shelter staff has stepped up everything they do regarding intensified cleaning and cleaning procedures, along with weekly more intensive cleaning of cat and dog areas. Personnel performing daily cleaning duties now change their clothes after daily cleaning is complete; the soiled clothes are then washed. In addition, staff washes/sanitizes their hands in between animal handling and cat cage cleaning. Carpet beds used for cats are "kept" with that specific cat; once the cat leaves the facility the carpet pad is disposed of. By the time this report is sent to the Board of Supervisors and the Grand Jury, Animal Control will also have implemented a policy of changing cleaning cloths between each animal cage.

Often, an animal will arrive at the facility showing no symptoms of illness and later becomes ill. The Grand Jury report infers that all illnesses to an apparently healthy animal on intake were later acquired at the shelter. In fact, the animal may have had the illness prior to coming to the shelter without showing any overt symptoms. Many common diseases have incubation periods where no symptoms are exhibited yet the animal is contagious and/or will later become ill. For example, common canine viruses such as Parvo have an incubation period of 5 to 10 days and for Distemper it is 6 to 22 days. Examples of very common cat viruses are Rhinotracheitis, which has an incubation period of 2 to 5 days, and the often deadly Feline Calicivirus can make a surviving cat a carrier for 2 to 3 months.

As will be discussed in more detail later, the three jurisdictions also agreed to hire a Kennel Assistant to increase monitoring and managing of shelter cleaning, sanitation, and animal care, and to increase adoptions. The staff of Community Services and the Animal Control Division are dedicated to improving operational procedures and the physical condition of the animal shelter so that the animals entrusted to our care can become or remain healthy and, ultimately, find a loving human family to adopt them.

In summary, the personnel at Animal Control Services over many years have provided kind and humane treatment to animals. There are many citizens in Sutter County who have found that to be true. Many of them have called the Animal Control Supervisor and voluntarily expressed that same sentiment since the Grand Jury released their report.

Grand Jury Findings

Finding 1

"The Grand Jury finds that the Sutter County Animal Shelter may be in violation of California Penal Code 597, California Veterinary Practice Law 4826, California Veterinary Practice Law 4840, California Veterinary Practice Law 4831, and California Civil Code 1834."

Response

The Community Services Department disagrees with this finding except for the issue of providing medicine for common illnesses.

Regarding California Penal Code 597:

California Penal Code Section 597 relates to proper feeding and sheltering the animals in the shelter from weather. Sutter County Animal Control Services properly feeds and shelters from weather the animals in its care. Dr. Hurley of the UC Davis Koret Medicine Program did not observe a full daily feeding schedule since she left at about 1:00 pm in the middle of the feeding cycle. Animals are allowed to free-feed 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. (At 4:00 pm, the food is picked up and stored so rats can't get at it). The feeding is monitored to ensure that all animals receive adequate food. When there is a special feeding requirement, such as a dominant animal or one with special dietary concerns, those animals are fed individually. If a dog is a particular problem, the dog is moved.

Water is provided to each dog kennel by an automatic watering valve. The dogs quickly adapt to the water lick system. In addition, bowls of water are provided and monitored throughout the day.

Raised beds are provided in each kennel, along with adequate blankets for all the animals for the nighttime hours. During the time the UC Davis team was observing the shelter, the kennels were being cleaned, explaining the wet conditions in the kennels. Cleaning had not been completed before they left the shelter.

The cat cages are monitored for food and water throughout the day. Bowls that get tipped over or spilled are refilled as needed. On a daily basis, the cat cages are provided a clean towel, fresh food and water, and the litter boxes are emptied and filled with clean litter.

The staff, including the trustees, are dedicated to the compassionate and humane treatment of all the animals in their care. Sutter County is aware that there are limitations to the operation of the shelter due to the condition of the facility. A planned new shelter will remediate these concerns.

Regarding California Veterinary Practice Law 4826, 4840:

Animal Control staff takes sick and injured animals to a local veterinarian, or consults with a veterinarian, either in person or telephonically, for general treatment. On occasion, there may have been times when an animal that was sick with symptoms of a common illness was treated without veterinary consultation. Since receiving the Grand Jury report, the practice of giving the animals medicine for common illnesses without veterinarian consultation has ceased.

Regarding California Civil Code 1834:

Animals receive proper nutrition, shelter, and are treated kindly and humanely at all times. Animals with medical needs are provided prompt veterinary care.

Recommendation 1

“The Grand Jury recommends Sheriff J. Paul Parker immediately begin an investigation to include the violations of California Penal Code 597, California Veterinary Practice Law 4826, California Veterinary Practice Law 4840, California Veterinary Practice Law 4831, and California Civil Code 1834. In the course of the Sheriff's investigation of these findings, individuals who are found to be culpable should be charged.”

Response

The Community Services Department agrees with this recommendation. The Community Services Department welcomes the investigation by the Sheriff's Department and any other legitimate organization which can provide recommendations to improve our care and service. No one involved with Animal Control Services purposefully violated any laws as referenced in the Grand Jury Report. We are open to an inspection of our practices and procedures. The construction materials of the current shelter are not conducive to good sanitation practices. The planned new shelter will remediate any concerns about the sanitation of the shelter.

Finding 2

"The Grand Jury finds the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program has the expertise to analyze all aspects of the Sutter County Animal Shelter and to provide recommendations for correction."

Response

The Community Services Department agrees that the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program has the expertise to analyze all aspects of the Sutter County Animal Shelter.

Recommendation 2

"The Grand Jury strongly recommends Sutter County Board of Supervisors contracts with the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program for a complete analysis of the current Shelter so that deficiencies in the cleaning process, intake of animals, identification of deadly diseases, and the prevention of overcrowding in the dog and cat kennel areas are identified. Plans need to be developed and implemented before transitioning to the new Shelter."

Response

The Community Services Department cannot fully implement this recommendation. The Community Services Department contacted the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program representatives to ask them to perform a site visit and make recommendations for changes to animal care programs at the shelter. Dr. Hurley declined, expressing reticence that their future recommendations would be successfully implemented. The County is considering contracting with another consultant to perform an equally competent and experienced review of the practices and procedures of the shelter.

Finding 3

"The Grand Jury finds that several documents provide excellent guidance for the management of animal shelters. One such document is the "Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters" published by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians 2010."

Response

The Community Services Department agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 3

"The Grand Jury recommends that the Director of Community Services require that the "Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters" be adopted for use as a template by the

Shelter Supervisor to develop policies that will ensure humane treatment of all animals housed in the Shelter.”

Response

The Community Services Department agrees with this recommendation. Sutter County Animal Control has received the “Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters”. The document was only recently published in December 2010. No such standards existed prior to its publication. The “Guidelines” contain various levels of guidelines: “unacceptable”, “must”, and “ideal”. Animal Control is reviewing the standards and using the document as an important baseline for improving our policies and procedures. It would be the County’s goal to eliminate any unacceptable practices and comply with the “must” practices. Although we value the level of care found in the document, some of the guidelines are not applicable or possible in the current shelter, but will be considered for implementation within the new shelter.

Finding 4

“The Grand Jury finds the Sutter County Animal Control Shelter does not have a Premises Permit allowing the legal practice of Veterinary Medicine at the facility. A Premises Permit allows the Animal Shelter to practice veterinary medicine while under the supervision of a licensed California Veterinarian. It is illegal to provide veterinary services without a Premises Permit. There is no exception for an Animal Shelter.”

Response

The Community Services Department agrees with this finding. Since the Grand Jury report was published, animals are not provided medicine for common illnesses at the shelter except under the direction of a licensed California veterinarian. It should be noted that the Sutter County Animal Shelter does have a Premises Permit for euthanasia procedures.

Recommendation 4

“The Grand Jury recommends that the California State Laws that govern the practice of Veterinary Medicine be followed. The Grand Jury highly recommends the unlawful practice of Veterinary Medicine at the Shelter cease immediately. The Grand Jury recommends that Sutter County contract with a licensed California Veterinarian to provide proper medical care to the animals housed at the Shelter.”

Response

The Community Services Department disagrees with this recommendation. Animal Control Services has attempted to share the animal care business with all local veterinarians. Some veterinarians prefer to do certain types of care or procedures; others have different preferences regarding the types of services they are willing to provide to Animal Control.

We have had discussions with one of the local veterinary hospitals regarding an animal care contract. This was to include the veterinarian coming to the shelter on a regular basis to check on all of the animals. To date, this effort has not come to fruition. However, any animal that needs care is taken to a veterinarian and is treated under the direct supervision and direction of that veterinarian.

Finding 5

“The Grand Jury finds the County Animal Shelter to be an unhealthy environment due to the severe rat infestation.”

Response

The Community Services Department disagrees with this finding. Though it is true that there was a rat infestation problem, the rodent situation at the shelter is now under control. Actions taken include changing the feeding schedule, removing all food at the end of the day, securely storing all food supplies in rat-proof containers, placing a multitude of traps on all possible rat passageways, promptly repairing all rodent damaged walls, removing the walnut-bearing trees, and extensive reconstruction and rat-proofing of the two most problematic rooms. In October 2010 – six months prior to publication of the Grand Jury report -- the County entered into a rodent control program with a national brand pest control service. Although unpleasant to contemplate, there have been no documented cases that a human or animal has become sick at our shelter due to the habitation of rats.

Recommendation 5

“The new Shelter will not be ready for occupancy for 18 – 24 months. The Grand Jury recommends that an independent rodent service be hired to remove the rats by any means necessary.”

Response

This Grand Jury recommendation has been implemented (see response to Finding 5, above). In October 2010, Sutter County established an ongoing agreement with an independent national brand professional pest control company to assist with rat control. The Community Services Department disagrees that the rats should be removed by “any means necessary.” Poisoning or fumigation could be harmful to the sheltered animals.

Finding 6

“The Grand Jury finds the Policies and Procedure Manual is seriously outdated. Employees and inmate-trustees with only verbal instructions in the Shelter’s policies and procedures are subjected to incomplete or inconsistent teaching, as well as manifest inconsistent performance of their duties.”

Response

The Community Services Department agrees that it is essential to have up-to-date policies and procedures, but disagrees that the Shelter’s policies are outdated. All policies and procedures are updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that the policies are aligned with current procedures. A comprehensive review is conducted annually. A copy is and has been available and accessible to all staff.

In addition, as stated above in response to Recommendation 3, Animal Control is reviewing the “Guidelines for standards of Care in Animal Shelters” with the goal of using this document as an important baseline for improving our policies and procedures. It should be noted that UC Davis, while providing good information, presents a rather idealized set of standards that many animal

shelters across the state – including ours – will have difficulty fully implementing due to limited resources.

Recommendation 6

“The Grand Jury recommends the Policies and Procedures Manual, covering each aspect of the Shelter’s operations, must be updated annually, and a copy be made available in both the administrative office and the kennel area. The Grand Jury recommends each employee be required to read the Manual and indicate in writing having done so. This documentation should then be placed in the employee’s file.”

Response

The Community Services Department agrees with most of this recommendation. All policies and procedures are reviewed both annually and on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are current and applicable. The policies and procedures manual is kept in a binder in a bookcase in the front counter area of the animal shelter’s front office. It is accessible to all staff, including the trustees. Everyone knows where it is and all staff are encouraged to use it for reference.

It is not feasible to keep a copy of the policies and procedures manual in the kennel area. Because the kennel area is an industrial area, having the manuals placed in the kennel would be impractical. We agree with the Grand Jury regarding documentation. From now on, we will require employees to indicate in writing that they have read and reviewed the policies and procedures manual.

Finding 7

“The Grand Jury finds that all animal control vehicles have been equipped with radios except two. Although some of the trucks are now equipped with radios, the Animal Control Officers are not allowed to use them until training has been provided.”

Response

The Community Services Department agrees that radios are essential for the safety of our Animal Control Officers, and thanks the Grand Jury for bringing this issue to our attention. As of the date the Grand Jury report was published, all of the Animal Control vehicles have been equipped with modern radios and scanners. The radios were installed in the vehicles over the 11 day period between February 11 and February 21, 2011. These radios allow the officers to contact local law enforcement as needed for emergencies and dispatch. From the day the radios were installed in the trucks, the officers have been able to use them. Once the Department received approval of our written procedures from the Sheriff’s Office, formal training took place the same day – May 20, 2011. The officers have been trained on the use of the radios.

Recommendation 7

“The Grand Jury recommends that radios be installed in the two remaining vehicles not equipped with radios. The Grand Jury also recommends training on operation of the radios begin immediately so that all Animal Control Officers will have communication between local law enforcement and animal control.”

Response

The Community Services Department implemented this recommendation prior to the publication of the Grand Jury report. All of the Animal Control vehicles have been equipped with modern radios and scanners. The radios were installed in the vehicles over the 11 day period between February 11 and February 21, 2011. These radios allow the officers to contact the local law enforcement as needed for emergencies and dispatch. From the day they were installed, the officers have been able to use the radios. The officers were formally trained in the use of the radios on May 20, 2011, and additional training is available if an officer feels additional training is needed.

Finding 8

“The Grand Jury finds that the inmate-trustees are male, non-violent offenders. They are on-site during public hours, thus presenting a poor image for the Division. They take an inordinate amount of Shelter staff time to train. During the workday there is little to no supervision of the inmate-trustees as they go about their daily Shelter duties. In the rare case where an inmate-trustee wants to learn and work, it is unlikely that person will be there for more than a few months. Both Citygate Associates LLC and the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine report confirmed that it is difficult to come up with any redeeming modifier other than they are free labor. However, they are free only in a direct cost sense. The use of inmate-trustees institutionalizes turnover, which is detrimental for any organization (much less a service organization), creates supervision problems, is bad for the morale of regular employees, and creates a poor public image. Use of inmate-trustee labor also makes disease control more problematic because inmate-trustees will not have time to acquire the knowledge of disease symptoms. Although limited training is provided to the inmate-trustees, they do not have the knowledge required to improve the disease prevention capabilities of the Shelter.”

Response

The Community Services Department disagrees with this finding. There is at least one staff member at the shelter at all times to supervise the trustees. It is not always possible to be with them at all times. For example, one trustee may be preparing food, while another trustee may be cleaning the dog kennels and another trustee cleaning the cat cages. The County has developed an educational training program in animal care and shelter management in conjunction with the One Stop program. All trustees receive this training when they are assigned to the shelter.

There has been no proof provided that there is a direct correlation between the use of inmate-trustees and unnecessary deaths at the shelter.

Recommendation 8

“The Grand Jury recommends that inmate-trustees be supervised at all times by a fully trained Animal Control Officer. The Grand Jury also recommends phasing out the use of inmate-trustee labor and institute an aggressive volunteer program.”

Response

The Community Services Department disagrees with this recommendation. As stated above, there is always at least one staff member at the shelter to supervise the trustees. It is not always

possible to be physically with them at all times. For example, one trustee may be preparing food, while another trustee may be cleaning the dog kennels and another trustee cleaning the cat cages.

If it were not for budget constraints, Sutter County would consider phasing out the use of trustee labor. The County supports implementing a volunteer program when we open the new shelter. However, the creation of a volunteer program is not a panacea, nor can volunteers substitute for full-time trained staff. Volunteers may only work a few hours a day, a few days a week. The Grand Jury recommendation appears to assume that an aggressive volunteer program would provide high-quality animal care and be available 7 days a week, 365 days a year, including holidays. This is unrealistic.

Volunteers in animal shelters typically walk dogs, assist with adoption fairs, groom animals, assist with socialization efforts of the animals, assist at the front desk and in animal supply gift shops, elicit donations, etc. They typically don't do the heavy cleaning duties that our trustees currently perform. Therefore, volunteers would not substitute for trustee labor.

However, Animal Control is considering starting a volunteer program on a limited scale to enhance our adoption program. A more expansive volunteer program will be pursued once the new animal shelter has been constructed.

Finding 9

“The Grand Jury finds the current budget for the Shelter is inadequate and does not include funds to fully staff all positions.”

Response

Sutter County agrees that ideally a budget should be developed to allow the shelter to fully fund all positions. However, this is not feasible in the current economic environment. Nevertheless, with the concurrence of the Cities of Yuba City and Live Oak, a Kennel Assistant position has been funded. The new Kennel Attendant should be able to provide consistent oversight of trustee labor and in basic care of the animals. We believe that the new Kennel Attendant will represent a significant improvement in staffing.

Recommendation 9

“The Grand Jury recommends a budget be developed that will allow the Shelter to fully fund all positions. Without a fully staffed Shelter, the continued use of inadequately trained and poorly supervised inmate-trustee labor will lead to more unnecessary deaths in the animal population at the Shelter.”

Response

The Community Services Department agrees in part with this recommendation. Sutter County agrees that ideally a budget should be developed to allow the shelter to fully fund all needed positions with hired staff rather than trustee labor. However, this is not feasible since other entities share in the expenses of the shelter and the economic downturn has severely compromised all three jurisdictions' ability to fund increased staffing.

The trustees participate in a training program as described in the response to Finding 8. There has been no proof offered that there is a direct correlation between the use of inmate-trustees and unnecessary deaths at the shelter.

Finding 10

“The Grand Jury finds the inmate-trustees have inadequate training to recognize illness or complete an evaluation of the temperament of the animal. This creates a serious risk.”

Response

The Community Services Department agrees with this finding. The trustees are not tasked or required to recognize illnesses or evaluate the temperament of animals. If they do notice a possible illness, the trustee is instructed to bring this to the attention of one of the Animal Control Officers. Trustees are trained to not take risks dealing with animals.

Trustees are assigned duties such as cleaning kennels and cat cages, feeding the animals, cleaning the facility and vehicles, laundry, ground maintenance and assisting officers with in processing of animals.

Recommendation 10

“The Grand Jury recommends that the inmate-trustees only be assigned duties such as cleaning of vehicles, laundry, dishes, non-animal housing areas, preparation of food dishes, and litter pans.”

Response

The Community Services Department disagrees with this recommendation because it limits additional, reasonable duties the trustees can perform. Trustees are assigned duties such as cleaning kennels and cat cages, feeding the animals, cleaning the facility and vehicles, laundry, ground maintenance, relocating and moving animals around the facility and assisting officers with in processing of animals. They also assist the public by giving them access to view potential adoptable animals.

As we discussed in the General Comments section, Animal Control has stepped up its sanitation and disease control standards, to include changing clothes after the daily cleaning duties are completed, staff wash and sanitize their hands and change cleaning cloths between animal handling and cat cage cleaning, etc. All of these new standards apply to trustees as well as County employees.

Finding 11

“The Grand Jury finds that developing plans for the new Shelter, forming a Joint Powers Authority, developing a budget and a plan to allow for a smooth transition of the Animal Shelter from the County to the Joint Powers Authority is lacking at best.”

Response

The Community Services Department disagrees with this finding. While it has been difficult at times, Sutter County has been attempting for over seven years to address this issue with the

cities. Issues raised by the cities have always been given strong consideration and are responded to in a timely manner.

Shortly after the Grand Jury report was published, the County and the two cities adopted a "Ten Point Plan" (see Attachment 2) which addresses many of the major issues related to development of the JPA and a transition plan for transfer of lead agency responsibility from Sutter County to Yuba City. The FY 2011-12 budget was developed in conjunction with input and compromises by all three entities.

Over the next few months, all three entities intend to focus on (a) physical improvements that can be made to the existing shelter to improve conditions during the interim period between now and the time the new shelter opens, (b) finalize the provisions of the JPA, and (c) finalize the provisions of the transition plan. We believe that most issues regarding the JPA and the transition plan can be resolved through informal discussion. For any issues that may require more protracted negotiations, the principals of Citygate Associates stand ready to act as a mediator in resolving any outstanding issues. Yuba City has stated publicly that they will fund a mediator, if necessary.

Recommendation 11

"The Grand Jury recommends that the County work with the cities of Live Oak and Yuba City more closely to ensure that all questions raised by both city managers be addressed in a timely manner."

Response

The Community Services Department agrees in concept with this recommendation. Sutter County always strives to work closely with Yuba City and Live Oak to ensure questions raised are addressed in a timely manner.

Conclusion

In the final comment, the Grand Jury "concluded" that the money spent for the Citygate Report was wasted. The Grand Jury alleges "that few of the recommendations (contained in the Citygate report) were implemented." Sutter County, in fact, implemented the majority of the recommendations. Many more recommendations are specific to when a new shelter is built; therefore, the County has not had an opportunity to implement them. Some recommendations were impractical or not financially feasible. All recommendations were seriously considered.

See Attachment 3 for a complete listing of all of the Citygate recommendations and their implementation status. Of 56 recommendations, 39 have been implemented or are in progress, 3 require the completion of the new animal shelter to implement, 9 (several of which are related to each other and duplicative) were deemed infeasible to implement, and five were not implemented.

Sutter County Animal Control will continue, within its limited resources, to do its best to ensure quality conditions and animal care at the Animal Shelter. Though we cannot agree with all of the

recommendations made by the Grand Jury, we appreciate legitimate criticism and we will continue to work with the Cities of Yuba City and Live Oak to make further improvements.

Official 2010 Sutter County Animal Shelter Kennel Statistics

Total Animal Intake	4,931
Total Dispositions	4,960
Stray Animal Intake	3,851
Animals Confiscated	73
Animals Surrendered By Owner:	485
Animals Brought By Owner for Euthanasia	218
Cat Intake	2,606
Dog Intake	1,978
Other Animal Intake	344
All Animals Adopted	1,156
All Animals Returned to Owner	592
Total Animals Adopted or Returned To Owner	1,748
Cats Adopted	270
Cats Returned To Owner	50
Total Cats Adopted or Returned To Owner	320
Dogs Adopted	729
Dogs Returned To Owner	510
Total Dogs Adopted or Returned To Owner	1,239
Total Animals Euthanized	2,425
Cats Euthanized	1,737
Dogs Euthanized	593
Owner Requested Euthanasia	229
Dead Animal Disposal at Intake	216
Dogs That Brought or Developed Contagious Disease	19
Cats That Brought or Developed Contagious Disease	258
Dogs with Other Medical Conditions	170
Cats with Other Medical Conditions	781
Percent Dogs Euthanized/Total Intake	30%
Percent Cats Euthanized/Total Intake	67%
Percent All Animals Euthanized/Total Intake	49%
National Percentage Dogs Euthanized*	56%
National Percentage Cats Euthanized*	71%
Total National Euthanasia Percentage	64%
Percent Dogs Adopted/Intake	37%
Percent Dogs Adopted or Returned/Intake	63%
Percent Cats Adopted/Intake	10%
Percent Cats Adopted or Returned/Intake	12%
Percent Overall Adoptions/Intake	23%

Percent Overall Adoptions and Returns to Owner/Intake	35%
National Percentage Dogs Adopted*	25%
National Percentage Cats Adopted*	24%
National Percentage Overall Adoptions*	24%
Percent Dogs with Contagious Disease/Number of Dogs Euthanized	3%
Percent Dogs With or Developing Contagious Disease Total Number of Dog Intakes	1%
Percent Cats In Shelter Who Brought In or Developed Contagious Disease	10%
Number of All Animals Died In Kennel	320
Number of Cats Died In Kennel	275
Number of Dogs Died In Kennel	42
Number of Cats With Contagious Disease Euthanized	258
Percentage of Euthanized Cats Had Contagious Disease	15%
Total Cats with Contagious Disease Euthanized or Died In Kennel	533
Percent Cats with Contagious Disease Euthanized Or Died In Kennel of Total Cat Intake	20%

**Source: National Council on Pet Population Study & Policy, 1994-1997. The Council is conducting an updated survey on animal shelters which has yet to be published. There are no other available sources for animal euthanasia and adoption rates that have relied on statistical surveys.*

Ten Point Plan for Animal Service in Sutter County, Yuba City and Live Oak

The CEO's from Sutter County, Yuba City and Live Oak have cooperatively developed a proposal for the continuation and orderly transition of animal services oversight in Sutter County. The proposed plan recognizes both the near term and long term needs for continuation of animal services and provides for the construction of the much needed new shelter as soon as possible. This proposal represents a reasoned compromise on key points for all parties and will be forwarded to the Sutter County Board of Supervisors, the Yuba City Council and the Live Oak City Council with a recommendation for adoption.

1. The JPA representation will be two elected officials from each jurisdiction. Voting will be weighted proportionately based on annual contributions to the operating budget. Sutter County and Live Oak will have veto authority over budget and major policy decisions. Major policy decisions are defined as those issues that materially change either the levels of service or the budget.
2. Yuba City's share of population, based on the 2010 census, is 68.5%. Sutter County agrees to base cost distribution for FY's 2011-12 and 2012-13 using the traditional 66% split for Yuba City as acknowledgement of a "discount" for the lesser number of miles traveled. (An analysis utilizing one year's data will be used to determine a logical cost allocation for future years during this time period.)
3. Sutter County will remain the lead agency until the new facility is complete.
 - a. Sutter County will endeavor to reduce overhead (A-87 and/or direct) charges as Animal Services is a non-federal/state reimbursed program.
 - b. The Kennel Assistant position shall be restored to the budget using savings from the reduction of overhead charges.
 - c. Sutter County will endeavor to limit Workers Compensation charges. (Such as limiting it to a flat percentage of payroll or actual cost to including justifiable support cost).
4. Sutter County will remain the lead agency for the completion of the design and construction of the new facility. Yuba City and Live Oak will continue to be involved as can reasonably be accommodated.
5. Yuba City will assume the lead agency responsibilities with the completion of the new facility; limiting overhead cost to 10 percent of budget and workers compensation cost noted in number 2c above.
6. Yuba City will remain responsible for the full cost of design from the restart of design services in January 2011, if the project is not constructed.

7. Yuba City will pay for a third party to facilitate agreement on all other terms and conditions of the JPA and supporting documents.
8. Yuba City has a strong preference for the new facility to be located at the City donated site identified on Live Oak Blvd. Yuba City will pay for site plan modifications to accommodate this request.
9. Yuba City will remove the cap on the Animal Services operational budget in exchange for more involvement in the development of the annual operational budget.
10. Each Jurisdiction shall retain its right for animal shelter capacity based on the percentage construction cost contribution by jurisdiction. Shelter capacity will be openly shared on an animal demand basis. (Intent is to allow independent field services by each jurisdiction, if desired.)

Citygate Recommendation Summary

Administration

Recommendation IV-1:

Develop a long-term strategic plan for the Animal Control Division.

Response:

This recommendation has not been implemented due to funding and staffing shortages. To do a comprehensive Strategic Plan involves the entire staff working together. It is very labor intensive and time consuming and was not feasible under the budgetary constraints of the past several years. Should the Board decide that a comprehensive Strategic Plan is essential, staff would request that an outside consultant be contracted to “coach” the division through the Strategic Planning process.

Recommendation IV-2:

Re-examine the governance of the Animal Control program.

Response:

The cities and County are working on a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for governance of the shelter.

Recommendation IV-3:

Develop a Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives for the Animal Control Division that defines the purpose of the Division and desired accomplishments.

Response:

The Animal Control Division has completed this recommendation. The goals and objectives can be found in the Policies and Procedure Manual. The goals and objectives will need to be revised once the new shelter is completed and the JPA assumes governance.

Recommendation IV-4:

Staff the Division with the number of personnel necessary to provide quality customer service.

Response:

The Animal Control Division was fully staffed in 2008, which included adding two Animal Control Officers (ACOs) in response to Citygate’s recommendations. Due to budgetary constraints, one Animal Control Officer (ACO) and the Kennel Assistant position were left vacant after the incumbents resigned and one ACO was laid off. Currently the two ACO positions are vacant and unfunded. With the consent of the two cities, a Kennel Assistant position was funded in the FY 2011-12 budget. The new employee will be hired shortly.

Recommendation IV-5:

Phase out the use of inmate labor.

Response:

Sutter County agrees that ideally a budget should be developed to allow the shelter to fully fund all needed positions with hired staff rather than trustee labor. However, this is not feasible since other entities share in the expenses of the shelter and the economic turndown has severely compromised all three jurisdictions' ability to fund increased staffing. Ultimately, this recommendation will have to be considered by the new JPA.

Recommendation IV-6:

Develop a Performance Management System which measures the extent to which key objectives are being achieved.

Response:

This recommendation is an element of Strategic Planning (see Recommendation IV-1 above).

Recommendation IV-7:

Develop additional detailed written policies and procedures to aid the day-to-day operation of the Division.

Response:

Since the Citygate report was published in 2007, additional policies and procedures have been added to the Policies and Procedures Manual. The Animal Control Policies and Procedures Manual is a living document and will be modified on a continual basis.

Recommendation IV-8:

Institute recurrent training in safe vehicle operation.

Response:

Safe vehicle operations training is covered in weekly and monthly staff meetings.

Recommendation IV-9:

Institute recurrent training relative to the handling of rabies suspect animals and the protocols for rabies testing.

Response:

Recurring training in the handling of rabies suspect animals and the protocols are reviewed multiple times a year.

Recommendation IV-10:

Institute initial and recurrent training in proper lifting and restraint techniques.

Response:

In coordination with the County Safety Officer, initial and recurring training is held routinely.

Recommendation IV-11:

Institute training in Chameleon for all staff.

response:

The Chameleon Software System has many modules, some available to staff and some we would have to purchase as extras. The basic system can be used by very large agencies such as LA County or small agencies like Yuba and Sutter Counties. Staff is trained and uses the system to accomplish the functions performed in animal control shelters. Reports requested by the Grand Jury, Sutter County CAO and Yuba City were generated through the Chameleon System.

The Animal Control Staff currently uses the Chameleon Software Program for the following areas:

1. **Licensing** – Storing and selling licenses in the Animal Control Office, researching licenses and dogs owned for Officers in the field, giving information about licensing over the phone. The system is used to send out renewal notices, late renewals notices monthly and to send quarterly past due late notices and then a list to send officers out to cite for licensing.
2. **Kennels** – The Chameleon system is used to log animals coming in through the office and animals coming in from the field. We use the system to inventory and monitor the animals in the kennels and quarantine.
 - a. **Quik Kennel** – Scanners are used to log the animals into the kennels on intake, out-going, and changing kennel assignments for animals. It updates the computer information quickly without the chance of mis-keying information.
 - b. **Visual Kennel** – It shows the kennel visually and shows each animal in each kennel. It helps with monitoring the number of animals in a kennel, and any illness/injury, so we can monitor the animals more closely.
3. **Bite Reports** - This keeps the records tied to each animal and puts an icon on animal records for safety and record information. It also ties together the animal, owner, address, animal type, holds, quarantine records. We are still working on a better report format to hopefully make the paper manual bite reports obsolete.
4. **Impounds** - Intakes with pictures are uploaded to the PetHarbor website so owners can check to see animals impounded and animals available for adoption.
5. **Payments & Receipts** – All payments are recorded by Account Codes and tied to receipt numbers.
6. **Incoming Calls & Dispatch** – The Chameleon System keeps track of calls to addresses, activities to dispatch to officers, priorities, type of calls, it helps immensely with tracking and reporting all this information.
7. **Statistics Reports** –
 - a. Kennel Inventory By Jurisdiction
 - b. Officer Calls
 - c. Licensing

- d. *Officer Daily Logs*
 - e. *Activities by Jurisdictions*
 - f. *Adoptions and lists of adoptable animals*
8. **Euthanasia** –
- a. *Pre- euthanasia list*
 - b. *Euthanasia records*
 - c. *Daily Amount*
 - d. *Individual Bottle Inventory (Euthanasia Solution)*

Recommendation IV-12:

In conjunction with the opening of the new shelter, develop a comprehensive separate manual for clerical, kennel and field activities. Use these manuals as training guides.

Response:

This recommendation will be implemented with the new shelter.

Recommendation IV-13:

Test all staff prior to completion of probation and recurrently relative to required knowledge and skills.

Response:

The ACO II is the Field Training Officer. All Animal Control Officers are routinely trained and evaluated by the ACO II. He works with new officers to insure they have the required knowledge and skills to perform their assigned duties.

Recommendation IV-14:

Conduct a training needs assessment and provide training to all employees.

Response:

Monthly (more often if needed), the Supervising Animal Control Officer and the Animal Control Officer II prepare an agenda for their training, assess the most important training needs, and provide that training. The training needs of each employee are assessed and the employee is sent to outside training opportunities when available.

Recommendation IV-15:

Increase salaries paid in the Division.

Response:

Salaries were increased in February 2008 pursuant to a countywide compensation study. Due to budgetary constraints, salaries have not been increased in approximately 3 years.

Recommendation IV-16:

Increase the fee structure of the Division.

Response:

On two occasions since the Citygate Report, the fee structure of Animal Control Services has been increased.

Recommendation IV-17:

Institute an administrative fee to clear a “failure to license citation.”

Response:

This has been accomplished and is part of the current fee structure.

Recommendation IV-18:

Reduce shelter and clerical staff hours by closing to the public Sunday and Monday.

Response:

This recommendation was implemented on March 1, 2010.

Recommendation IV-19:

Modify the Division’s website to include report recommendations. (See Section IV, page 22)

Response:

The items listed in Section IV, page 22, are all available on the County website.

Recommendation IV-20:

When Animal Control Officer staff is increased, consider changing the current shift schedule to provide coverage before 8:00 AM, after 5:00 PM.

Response:

This was implemented when the hours of operation were changed on March 1, 2010.

Recommendation IV-21:

Provide ballistic protective vests to those officers who wish to wear them.

Response:

This was discussed with the officers, and any officer who desires a protective vest may receive it on the basis that he/she wears it at all times while on duty.

Recommendation IV-22:

Utilize the Chameleon system to generate field performance reports. Use these reports to evaluate and motivate field staff.

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation IV-23:

Order future animal control vehicles with more modern animal control compartments.

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation IV-24:

Order future animal control vehicles with ramps and either lift-gates or winches.

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation IV-25:

Order the next animal control vehicle with four-wheel drive.

Response:

Sutter County Fleet Services was consulted on this issue. Consensus was reached that this was not practical. Animal Control staff believes that four-wheel drive vehicles are not necessary. Fleet's evaluation was that four-wheel drive vehicles require expensive maintenance and repair.

Shelter Operations

Recommendation IV-26:

Contract with a veterinarian conversant with public animal shelter issues and/or the University of California at Davis in order to determine the cause of shelter animal deaths and develop solutions for this problem.

Response:

This recommendation has not been implemented. Community Services contacted UC Davis' Shelter Medicine program shortly after the publication of the Grand Jury report. Dr. Hurley declined to assist Sutter County.

Recommendation IV-27:

Replace the current cat enclosures with stainless steel cages and replace the current furniture in the trustee rest area with something that can be removed and sanitized.

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation IV-28:

Take whatever steps are necessary to control the rodent problem at the shelter.

Response:

This has taken a long time, but we believe that the rodent problem is currently under control. Actions taken include changing the feeding schedule, removing all food at the end of the day, securely storing all food supplies in rat-proof containers, placing a multitude of traps on all possible rat passageways, promptly repairing all rodent damaged walls, removing the walnut-bearing trees, and extensive reconstruction and rat-proofing the two most problematic rooms. In October 2010, the County entered into a rodent control program with a national brand pest control service. All animal shelters suffer from rodent intrusions to some extent. "Under control" means that with the actions listed above, there are far fewer rodents on site.

Recommendation IV-29:

Paint all masonry block walls with epoxy based paint and seal concrete flooring.

Response:

This was not implemented at the time because it was determined to be cost-prohibitive at the current site when we thought a new animal shelter was imminent.

However, we have re-examined this issue. Because the new shelter will not be available for 18 to 24 months, the county staff is recommending that the County take a number of measures to upgrade the physical conditions of the existing animal shelter and to improve operational procedures, including sealing concrete surfaces and masonry walls.

Recommendation IV-30:

Install a crematory unit in the new shelter.

Response:

This is not being implemented with the new shelter because it was cost-prohibitive. We will continue to use cold storage and a rendering company to dispose of dead animals.

Spay and Neuter

Recommendation VI-1:

Expand existing countywide spay/neuter programs.

Response:

This has been implemented. Additional coupons are available to citizens who wish to spay/neuter their pets.

Recommendation VI-2:

Establish/extend relationships with local non-profit groups.

Response:

This has been implemented. To wit: Sutter Buttes Canine Rescue, Paw Prints Rescue, and other breed-specific organizations. We currently work with 55 organizations.

Recommendation VI-3:

A shuttle program, as set forth in Section VI, page 9, should be studied relative to its possible effectiveness in Sutter County.

Response:

This recommendation has not been implemented.

Recommendation VI-4:

Conversations should be initiated between the County and the Yuba-Sutter SPCA relative to the effective utilization of the resources of the two agencies.

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented. We work with them on items of mutual interest and concern.

Recommendation VI-5:

More closely monitor spay/neuter deposit follow-up actions.

Response:

This would require more staffing to accomplish and we have had to reduce staff.

Recommendation VI-6:

Implement an outreach and advertising program to inform citizens of available spay/neuter programs.

Response:

This has been implemented. We aggressively promote through public outreach events. We offer spay/neuter education and information on spay/neuter certificates to assist the public in spaying and neutering their pets.

Recommendation VI-7:

Consider targeting low-income residents for spay/neuter financial assistance.

Response:

Our spay/neuter certificate program is specifically targeting low-income residents.

Recommendation VI-8:

Make provisions for complying with existing state law when Sutter County's population exceeds 100,000.

Response:

This will be accomplished with the new shelter. Space has been designed in the new shelter for a veterinary clinic where spaying and neutering procedures can take place.

Recommendation VI-9:

Monitor AB 1634 (Levine) if it is reintroduced and be prepared to comply with its provisions.

Response:

We continue to monitor legislation related to animal control. AB 1634 proposed to impose large fines (\$500) for not having your animal spayed/neutered. There have been several attempts to re-introduce the bill, but they have been unsuccessful.

Recommendation VI-10:

Contact Maddie's Fund to explore the possibility of establishing a partially funded joint public-private spay/neuter effort. (<http://www.maddiesfund.org/>)

Response:

Maddie's Fund provides two types of grants. The type mentioned by Citygate are grants that are usually applied for by private-sector veterinarians to fund spay/neuter assistance to public shelters. These funds are rarely if ever given to a public shelter, but generally go to a vet who wants to assist with the spay/neuter issues associated with animal shelters. Some private shelters, with vets on retainer or on staff, have applied for these grants. As of this writing, no

local veterinarians have expressed interest in this program. The topic will be pursued more aggressively once the new shelter is completed.

Public Education and Outreach

Recommendation VII-1:

Recognize the importance of a comprehensive public education/outreach program.

Response:

Our spay/neuter program recognizes the importance of public education/outreach programs.

Recommendation VII-2:

Make the establishment of the public education program a performance goal of the Community Services Department.

Response:

Due to financial constraints, we have not implemented a strategic plan. (See Recommendation IV-1 above)

Recommendation VII-3:

Develop an outline for the public education program to include attainable goals and objectives.

Response:

Please see Recommendation IV-1 above.

Recommendation VII-4:

Meet with the County superintendent of schools to obtain his/her support and commitment for the public education program.

Response:

Sutter County Animal Control has been going to the schools for many years upon request to provide public education to the students.

Recommendation VII-5:

Develop a budget for the public education program.

Response:

Supplies and materials come out of the current budget. There is not a specific public education line item in the budget.

Recommendation VII-6:

Obtain Board of Supervisors approval of the public education program, its goals and objectives and financing.

Response:

This recommendation has not been implemented. (See Recommendation IV-1 above)

Recommendation VII-7:

Recruit and train public education program presenters.

Response:

The public education programs are presented by the Animal Control Officers.

Recommendation VII-8:

The Supervising Animal Control Officer should meet with the leader of every group currently working with the Division and ascertain how the Division and the group can increase the number of animals released to these groups, particularly hard to place older/large dogs.

Response:

The Supervising Animal Control Officer has developed relationships with 55 breed-specific rescue groups in order to successfully place older/large dogs.

Replacement of the Animal Shelter Facility

Recommendation VIII-1:

Establish a Capital Facility Fee to partially cover costs for a new animal control facility.

Response:

The County has established a development impact fee to assist in the financing of the costs of the new shelter.

Recommendation VIII-2:

Construct a modern, fully enclosed animal shelter and administrative facility designed to successfully accommodate the County's anticipated growth over the next 30 years.

Response:

The County is in the process of constructing a modern animal shelter designed to successfully accommodate the County's anticipated growth. Design of the new shelter is now complete, and the designs are currently going through the state-mandated plan check process. Following plan check, the County can go out to bid for construction of the new animal shelter.

Recommendation VIII-3:

Pursue an SB 90 reimbursement claim for a portion of the new animal shelter facility.

Response:

The SB 90 reimbursement process and its regulations are constantly in flux. A case in point is Hayden's Law, which mandated that minimum holding times for adoptable animals be extended from three to seven days. In 2010, the State waived the mandate due to budgetary constraints. Sutter County, City of Yuba City and City of Live Oak will soon build a new shelter, and an appropriate SB 90 reimbursement claim will be submitted, if permitted under State law at that time.

Recommendation VIII-4:

Hire an architect with extensive direct experience designing animal shelter facilities.

Response:

This has been implemented. The County has hired an architect with extensive direct experience designing animal shelter facilities. Design of the new animal shelter was recently completed.

Recommendation VIII-5:

Follow the program/design process detailed in Section VIII of this report.

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation VIII-6:

Discuss the location of the new shelter with Yuba City representatives to determine if the proposed location or another location will best serve the needs of the community.

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented. Although an alternative location on Live Oak Boulevard in north Yuba City was considered, soil reports conducted in May 2011 showed that building at that site would require costly and time-consuming site remediation efforts. Yuba City, which originally recommended the site, concluded that this would not be cost-effective. The new animal shelter was designed for and will be constructed at the originally-planned site on Garden Highway in Yuba City.

Recommendation VIII-7:

Transition to fully paid staff, and away from dependence on inmate labor, in conjunction with the completion of a new animal shelter.

Response:

Please see our response to Recommendation IV-5, which addresses the same issue.

Recommendation VIII-8:

Limit inmate presence to those hours when the public is not present.

Response:

This has not been implemented because it is not a viable option. Trustees are assigned duties such as cleaning kennels and cat cages, feeding the animals, cleaning the facility and vehicles, laundry, grounds maintenance, relocating and moving animals around the facility and assisting officers with in processing of animals. They also assist the public by giving them access to view potential adoptable animals. The latter task obviously requires the trustees' presence during public hours. The other duties cannot be accomplished in the short timeframe before and after public hours.



SUTTER COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
J. PAUL PARKER
SHERIFF - CORONER

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2011

Office of the County Administrator
 Sutter County

July 8, 2011

Chris Chandler - Presiding Judge
 Superior Court of California
 County of Sutter

RE: Response to the 2010-2011 Grand Jury Final Report (Animal Control)

The following are the responses of the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator to the findings and recommendations of the 2010-2011 Sutter County Grand Jury Final Report as it related to animal control.

Animal Control

Finding

The Grand Jury finds that the Sutter County Animal Shelter may be in violation of California Penal Code 597, California Veterinary Practice Law 4826, California Veterinary Practice Law 4840, California Veterinary Practice Law 4831, and California Civil Code 1834.

Recommendation

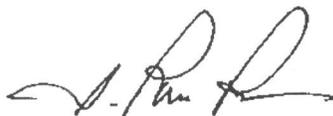
The Grand Jury recommends Sheriff J. Paul Parker immediately begin an investigation to include the violations of California Penal Code 597, California Veterinary Practice Law 4826, California Veterinary Practice Law 4840, California Veterinary Practice Law 4831, and California Civil Code 1834. In the course of the Sheriff's investigation of these findings, individuals who are found to be culpable should be charged.

Response

The Sheriff's Office concurs that conditions presented by the Grand Jury from their findings at the animal control facility are dismal and is investigating those issues presented. The Grand Jury not only presented issues that may be violations of the law, but also recommended that if individuals are found to be culpable, they should be charged either criminally or civilly. The Sheriff's Office must investigate not only the question of whether certain acts did or did not occur, but if they did occur, who was responsible and lastly, was there some type of criminal intent or neglect of duty. In order to bring any type of criminal charge, our investigation must go beyond mere suspicion and determine a conclusion supported to a moral certainty and beyond a reasonable

doubt. Until the investigation is complete, we can neither concur nor disagree with the findings.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Paul Parker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

J. PAUL PARKER
SHERIFF-CORONER

cc: Sutter County Board of Supervisors
Stephanie Larsen, County Administrative Officer