

From: Laura Sellmer <laurasellmer@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 6:02 AM

To: Mayor <Mayor@longbeach.gov>; Council District 1 <District1@longbeach.gov>; Council District 2 <District2@longbeach.gov>; Council District 3 <District3@longbeach.gov>; Council District 4 <District4@longbeach.gov>; Council District 5 <District5@longbeach.gov>; Council District 6 <District6@longbeach.gov>; Council District 7 <District7@longbeach.gov>; Council District 8 <District8@longbeach.gov>; Council District 9 <District9@longbeach.gov>

Cc: CityClerk <CityClerk@longbeach.gov>

Subject: Please read before Tuesday's Council Vote Agenda Item 27

-EXTERNAL-

Dear Mayor and City Council Representatives,

In advance of the City Council meeting to approve the city's 2024 budget, I am writing to urge you to increase Animal Care Services budget -or- vote to postpone approving the 2024 Budget until September 12, if staff requires more time to make these changes:

Animal Care Services needs to add vital services:

- 1) add a veterinary spay-neuter team, to include one vet and two vet techs
- 2) upgrade three vital rehoming positions: Behaviorist, Cat Foster Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator and designate all as PHA III's
- 3) add a Dog Foster Coordinator designated as a PHA III
- 4) add a separate line item for animal food, since animal food spending cannot currently be tracked.

ACS needs a dedicated Veterinary Spay Neuter team. The backlog of spay and neuter surgeries is unprecedented. The minimum estimate is that 1100 ACS adopted animals placed in homes are still not fixed. Giving unfixed animals to new owners violates State Law*. If ACS cannot fix animals currently at the shelter without a dedicated spay and neuter vet team, how can the City expect the shelter to spay and neuter a 2-year backlog of spay and neuter surgeries?

Without a spay neuter team, it is unjust for the City to outsource all its spay neuter obligations to the scarce affordable spay neuter community clinics. The affordable clinics are already in great demand and residents wait for months to get appointments. If ACS starts competing with the community for limited appointments it is only going to hurt the community's chances of getting owned animals fixed. ACS needs its own dedicated Veterinary Spay Neuter team in the structural budget. Outsourcing is not the answer for a core City service.

ACS needs the Behaviorist, Cat Foster Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator all designated all as PHA III's in the 2024 ACS Budget. These positions all require the skills, training, aptitude and education of a PHA III. The city cannot attract and retain the talent without fair compensation.

Adding a new Dog Foster Coordinator position is vital so dogs can leave shelter safely. This position also needs to be designated a PHA III in order to attract and retain the skills, experience, aptitude and education required for the work. One foster coordinator cannot expect to meet the needs of over a hundred families caring for hundreds of ACS dogs, puppies, cats

and neonatal kittens in foster care. We need a Dog Foster Coordinator to complement the existing Cat Foster Coordinator.

Thank you in advance for taking action to make ACS a priority and supporting these increases to the 2024 Budget.

Sincerely,

Laura Sellmer

*State of California. Food and Agriculture Code- FAC, Division 14, Chapter 1, 30503.,(a),(1),(b) and Division 14.5., Chapter1, 31751.3,(a),(1),(b)

References:

ACS Audit Phase II, 2018:

“Veterinary Services: The Medical Team’s staffing level cannot keep up with its significant workload.” (ACS Audit, Phase II, 2018, Highlights Page 0)

“ACS veterinarians recommended that ACS should have a full-time surgical team led by one veterinarian who can exclusively perform spay-and-neuter and other surgeries, and another veterinary team dedicated to the regular care and monitoring of animals.” (ACS Audit, 2018, Phase II, Finding #4, Page 10)

“Animal Care staffing levels do not allow for minimum care requirements - including properly feeding animals and cleaning their housing to be met.” (ACS Audit, Phase II, 2018, Highlights Page 0)

“Based on a staffing analysis of core shelter functions, at a minimum 12 additional staff are needed in various shelter roles.” (ACS Audit, Phase II, 2018, Shelter Staffing Shortages, Page 3)