

From: Kelley Cusack <kelleycusack17@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 9:36 AM

To: Mayor <Mayor@longbeach.gov>; Council District 4 <District4@longbeach.gov>; CityClerk <CityClerk@longbeach.gov>

Subject: City Council Agenda #27 Please read before tonight's meeting.

-EXTERNAL-

*****Urgent***** Shelter animals need help! On agenda for a vote tonight September 5.

Repost - city council Agenda item #27

SUBJECT LINE:

Please read before Tuesday's Council Vote Agenda Item 27

EMAIL CONTENT:

Dear Mayor and City Council representatives,

With the City Council meeting to approve the city's 2024 budget looming, I am requesting that the 2024 Animal Care Services budget be increased to address major deficits in essential care and services provided to the animals of Long Beach. If this cannot be done at this week's meeting, I request that the vote be postponed at minimum one week to accommodate these vital considerations.

Based on the ongoing crisis at the shelter, it is clear that the shelter is suffering from major deficiencies in resources. This has led to the perpetuation of overcrowding and suffering of the humans and animals, and to animals being adopted out without being spayed or neutered. Not only has this created a burden on the shelter, it has created a massive, untenable situation in the community of Long Beach, which has been called on to step up to support the shelter and the city's homeless animals. It has also meant that mandatory spay and neuter mandates in the city (LBMC 6.16.085) have not been upheld.

This is what Animal Care Services desperately needs: (1) a fully functioning Veterinary Spay Neuter Surgical Team, (2) a Dog Foster Coordinator and (3) increases to rehoming salaries that pay for the skills, training, experience and education required of an Animal Behaviorist and Foster Care Coordinators. These are not minimum wage positions.

I urge you to provide the funding that the animal shelter desperately needs. A major finding in the 2018 Audit was that ACS needed 12 additional staff positions just to meet the bare minimum standards. Yet five years later, staffing level has actually dropped from 51.20 FTE's to 50.96 FTE's. The shelter has been over capacity with animals for nearly two years and staffing hours are fewer. A big problem is that ACS Volunteers are tasked with work that should be done by staff, which violates the union rules. Please add a new Dog Foster position to help transition dogs responsibly out of the shelter into foster care.

Another request in the 2018 Audit was that ACS needs its own dedicated Veterinary Spay Neuter team. Today, the backlog of spay neuter surgeries is unprecedented. The shelter's estimate is that 1100-1400

adopted animals still need to be fixed. This is state law. If the bureau cannot fix animals currently in its care, how can it fix the 2 year backlog of surgeries? Please do not blindly outsource the City's spay neuter obligations to the affordable community clinics. The handful of clinics are already impacted and residents wait for months to get appointments. Many give up and do not fix their animals. Residents should not find themselves competing with the City for a scarce resource. This hurts the people who need it most and would be an inequity. ACS needs its own dedicated Veterinary Spay Neuter team

Thank you for taking the time to hear my concerns and for making Animal Care Services as high a priority as it is to your constituents. Long Beach is widely known as one of the most dog-friendly cities in the country and its citizens love their animals (and all animals). Please add these items to the budget to assist with that priority and to honor what the citizens of Long Beach want for our animals.

Thank you,

Kelley Cusack

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