

STAFF REPORT

City of Lancaster, California

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Date: January 12, 2010

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: Barbara Boswell, Finance Director
Kelvin G. Tainatongo, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject: **Adopt Resolution establishing Animal Control fees related to Amended Animal Control Ordinance and increases by Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and adopt a new agreement between the County of Los Angeles Department of Animal Care and Control and the City of Lancaster for Animal Control Services**

Recommendations:

1. Adopt **Resolution No. 10-03**, establishing animal control fees.
2. Adopt Agreement for Animal Control Services between Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control and the City of Lancaster.

Fiscal Impact:

All fees collected are offset against the cost of providing animal control services. Without modification the County's increased cost of services to cities would have a significant impact of approximately 110% to Lancaster. Consequently, staff has worked with the County to develop a proposed new agreement for Animal Control Services which revises the Service Level Plan to reduce costs and meet City budget expectations.

Background:

Animal Control Fees Background

At its regular City Council meeting of November 10, 2009, the Council introduced Ordinance No. 938, amending the Municipal Code related to Animal Control. Included in the ordinance were fees to provide recovery for the costs related to the enforcement of potentially dangerous and/or vicious dogs.

The proposed fees are:

- Potentially Dangerous or Vicious Dog Hearing Fee – Fee equivalent to actual cost of conducting hearing

- Potentially Dangerous or Vicious Dog Hearing Appeal Fee - Fee equivalent to actual cost of conducting appeal
- Potentially Dangerous Dog Fine, as determined by hearing – not to exceed \$500 for each separate basis upon which said determination is made, for the purpose of defraying costs of implementation
- Vicious Dog Fine, as determined by hearing – not to exceed \$1,000 for each separate basis upon which said determination is made, for the purpose of defraying costs of implementation
- Penalty for initial violation of spay/neuter provision - \$250
- Penalty for subsequent violations of spay/neuter provision - \$1,000
- Spay/Neuter by County of Los Angeles Animal Care and Control – full cost reimbursement
- Delivery of animal to another County of Los Angeles Animal Care and Control Department approved veterinarian – fee based on the department’s hourly rate established by the Auditor/Controller, billed in minimum one hour increments
- Impound costs for violation of spay/neuter provisions – full costs of impoundment including daily board costs

The City contracts with the County of Los Angeles for animal control services, including those services related to issuing and renewing animal licenses. The City received a letter from the County of Los Angeles Animal Care and Control notifying us that the County Board of Supervisors had approved changes to fees related to issuing or renewing animal licenses. It is appropriate for the City Council to also adopt the new fee structure in order to be consistent with those being charged by the county.

The proposed fees are:

- Imposition of a field enforcement fee of \$40 per location for animal licenses issued or initiated in the field by Department of Animal Control staff
- Modification of the flat \$20 delinquency charge to an amount equal to the amount of the animal license. For example: \$5 altered cat license would incur a \$5 delinquency charge, a \$20 altered dog license would incur a \$20 delinquency charge

Animal Control Services Agreement Background

Unfortunately, the County’s announcement of increased billing rates to the City for field and shelter services far exceed the amount of fees collected. As a result, staff recommends a new Service Level Plan that includes the following changes:

- Reducing the field service hours from 24 to 12 hours during the day, a cost savings of \$65,000 (response to law enforcement and life threatening calls will continue during non-field service hours). City and County staff have reviewed hourly calls for service history to ensure minimal service impact with this change.
- Eliminating City-wide canvassing for licenses, a cost savings of \$132,000 (field officers on a service call will still be able to require owners to secure a license for their unlicensed pet)
- Eliminating field follow up of stray dog calls that have lapsed over 24 hours, a cost savings of \$10,000

The total cost savings under a new proposed Animal Care and Control Service Level Plan would be approximately \$207,000. This will help us reach our target budget for Animal Control services. It is incumbent that both the City and Animal Care and Control partner to educate the public about being responsible pet owners, securing their property, and encouraging owners to drop off their unwanted pets to the Shelter instead of letting them stray or requesting Animal Control to pick up their pets.

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Attachments:

1. Resolution No. 10-03
2. City-County Municipal Services Agreement