



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

June 24, 2013

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

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PIT BULL ATTACK (ITEM NO. 79-A, AGENDA OF MAY 14, 2013)

On May 14, 2013, the Board directed the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of the Department of Animal Care and Control (ACC) to report back during the June 24, 2013, Budget Deliberations on recommendations that would better protect the public from dangerous and vicious dogs.

Background

On the morning of Thursday, May 9, 2013, a woman walking on Avenue S in the unincorporated area of the Antelope Valley known as Littlerock was attacked and mauled to death by a pack of pit bull dogs. This tragedy underscores the important public safety role played by an animal control agency. In 2012, ACC responded to more than 97,000 calls for service, more than 10,000 of which were for biting or aggressive dogs. Another 17,000 emergency calls were handled for other urgent reasons such as providing law enforcement assistance and rescuing injured animals.

Animal Care and Control Recommendations

The following six recommendations are provided to assist ACC in protecting the public from dangerous and vicious dogs.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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1. Countywide Animal Control Field Officers

ACC indicates there is a critical need to have more Animal Control Officers (ACO) in the field both responding to community requests for services and investigating cases of animal cruelty and neglect. In addition, ACC further indicates there is a need to increase its ability to respond to priority calls, as well as other requests for services and to care for sheltered animals.

2. Personal Protective Equipment

According to ACC, personal protective equipment is needed to increase the safety of ACOs. Recommended equipment includes collapsible batons, OC (pepper) spray, ballistic vests, and duty belts to hold the assigned safety equipment while working. The use of collapsible batons and OC (pepper) spray require training for the safe and effective use of this equipment. Certified training has been identified through the Sheriff's Department.

3. Vehicles

ACC indicated that there is a need to purchase six animal control trucks to support the increase in ACO positions and to have sufficient vehicles to properly respond to constituents' calls.

4. New Critical Case Processing Unit

In 2011, the Board enacted an ordinance that allows ACC to conduct administrative hearings to determine whether certain offending dogs are potentially dangerous or vicious. As a result of the ordinance, ACC developed a pilot program known as the Critical Case Processing Unit (CCP). Below is an overview of the ACOs' responsibilities assigned to CCP.

- ACOs within CCP are responsible for completing property inspections to ensure that the owner of the dog involved in a minor incident is educated on his or her responsibilities as a dog owner. Ultimately, this matter would be referred to as a Safe-Neighborhood Program case.

- If a dog is identified as a potentially dangerous dog, then the case will proceed to a hearing. If the hearing officer finds that the dog is potentially dangerous, then restrictions may be placed on the owner such as: (a) property inspections; (b) a muzzle be required whenever the dog is taken off the property; (c) training requirements; (d) a special collar; (e) spay/neuter; (f) micro chipping; and (g) additional liability insurance requirements.

In cases of a vicious dog, ACC may request the dog be destroyed or additional restrictions be placed on the owner which includes a secured kennel run, signage on the property, and/or notification to utility companies and the post office that a dog is on the property.

- An ACO can also present the case to a judge and request the court to retain jurisdiction if they believe the owner is unlikely to adhere to the administrative hearing requests.
- If an owner of a dog that is declared potentially dangerous or vicious decides they are unable or unwilling to meet the additional conditions regarding ownership of their dog, the dog may be relinquished to ACC.

ACC is currently utilizing existing resources to fund the CCP Unit and have indicated they do not have sufficient staff to fully implement the pilot program.

5. Major Case Unit

The Major Case Unit (MCU) is responsible for in-depth criminal investigations including animal cruelty, neglect, illegal animal fighting, and animal hoarding. These cases are focused on seeking criminal prosecution for animal-related crimes and are very time intensive. According to ACC, these cases require the investigating officer to gather sensitive information from numerous and sometimes unwilling witnesses in order to satisfy all the elements of a crime.

6. Communication Center Expansion

According to ACC, approximately 700,000 calls are received by the centralized Communications Center annually. They further indicate there is a critical need to increase the capacity of ACC to respond to this volume of calls. Utilizing analysis-based industry standards for call volume and response times, both the Internal Services Department and CISCO Systems Inc. independently recommended ACC staff the 24-hour Communications Center with 26 agents

(call takers/dispatchers) during the peak calling hours of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. However, based on current staffing levels there are a total of eight and ten agents during peak hours, leaving a gap of 16-18 agents. The Communications Center has the capacity to house a total of 13 agents at any given time.

Given the above, ACC is requesting funding to establish a new Communication Center in the Antelope Valley, located at the Lancaster Animal Care Center, by placing a modular building on the campus and installing telecommunication equipment. This Communications Center annex will allow Antelope Valley based call takers/dispatchers to use their unique knowledge of the area to gather and dispatch information critical for prompt response and resolution of complaints. According to ACC, this expansion will reduce the call volume demand on the centralized Communications Center located in Downey, reduce telephone waiting times, abate the number of calls abandoned, and enhance efficiency and customer service for all residents Countywide.

The estimated cost for the modular building is \$800,000. The estimate includes the purchase and installation of a double-wide modular building, including the building foundation; site utility connections; telecommunications equipment; design, plan check, inspections, and project management; hazardous materials testing; and site preparation. Upon completion of the development and analysis of building the proposed Communication Center, the CEO will return to the Board for approval to establish the project, scope, and budget.

Chief Executive Office Recommendation

The Chief Executive Office (CEO) is recommending as part of Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-14 Final Changes a total of \$773,000 and five positions, of which \$365,000 is recommended in ongoing funding and \$408,000 in one-time funding. This funding will be allocated to ACC to address the shortage of ACOs, to equip ACOs with personal protective equipment, and to purchase six animal control trucks to ensure they have sufficient vehicles to properly respond to constituents' calls.

ACC FY 2013-14 Final Recommended Budget

Programs	On-Going	One-Time	Total Funding	Positions
1. Countywide Field Officers	\$365,000		\$365,000	5
2. Personal Protective Equipment		\$100,000	\$100,000	
3. Animal Control Trucks		\$308,000	\$308,000	
Total	\$365,000	\$408,000	\$773,000	5

As part of FY 2013-14 Final Changes, the CEO is recommending a total of \$2.4 million, of which \$1,627,000 in ongoing funding and \$800,000 in one-time funding be placed in the Provisional Financing and Uses (PFU) Budget. This is until the CEO completes its review and analysis of ACC's requests for a new CCP Unit, additional positions for the MCU, and a new Communication Center in the Antelope Valley. We will submit final recommendations regarding the aforementioned requests during Supplemental Budget.

PFU FY 2013-14 Final Recommended Budget for ACC

Programs	On-Going	One-Time	Total Costs	Positions
4. Critical Case Processing Unit	\$695,000		\$695,000	9
5. Major Case Unit	\$219,000		\$219,000	3
6. Communication Center	\$713,000	\$800,000	\$1,513,000	10
Total	\$1,627,000	\$800,000	\$2,427,000	22

Other Issues

Animal Care Center Replacement

ACC indicates that four out of the six County animal care centers are more than 50 years old. These aged facilities are either beyond their useful life or require renovation or expansion; present hazards to staff, volunteers and the public; are not optimally located to serve the current jurisdiction of ACC; or are too large for proper population and disease control. The CEO Capital Projects Division and ACC will continue to work together to review facilities over 50 years old and will report back in the near future on this matter.

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Ordinance Changes

ACC has been working closely with County Counsel and will bring forward a recommendation to revise sections of Los Angeles County Code Chapter 10.37 to provide further enhancements to the County's laws regarding potentially dangerous and vicious dogs.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please have your staff contact Georgia Mattera, CEO Public Safety, at (213) 893-2374.

WTF:GAM:SW
VC:cc

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Sheriff
Animal Care and Control
Internal Services

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