

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE REVISED ANIMAL SERVICES FEES
STAFF PRESENTER: GLORIA HURTADO, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

ISSUES

Should the Council adopt a resolution revising certain animal services fees and approve a time-limited amnesty for dog license fees and penalties as requested by Sonoma County Animal Services?

BACKGROUND

Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) provides sheltering, administrative, and field services for the City of Santa Rosa, unincorporated areas of the County, the Town of Windsor, and is responsible for rabies control for the entire County. On June 25, 2013, Council amended the City Code and approved an increase in dog license fees and expired license penalty.

SCAS is proposing several additional fee increases to help recover some of the costs of services delivered to residents in the jurisdictions served. Fees and penalties collected for some services delivered to residents of the City of Santa Rosa are applied to offset the City's net cost for services.

ANALYSIS

SCAS field services include daily patrol within the City limits, returning stray animals to owners, investigating animal nuisances and cruelty complaints, investigating bite reports, and enforcing leash and license laws. Strays whose owners cannot be determined in the field by an identification tag or microchip are brought to the shelter for safe keeping. SCAS provides daily care for all animals impounded into the animal shelter. Costs of care include ongoing veterinary care and treatment as needed, daily kennel cleaning and provision of fresh bedding and clean food dishes, food, including meeting any special dietary requirements as indicated by veterinary examination.

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved Animal Services fees for FY 2015-16 to cover increased costs to provide service. Many fees on the fee schedule had not been adjusted since 2010. Fee increases ranging from 3-13% will recover increased

costs of doing business, including those associated with salaries, benefits, services and supplies. Costs for salaries and benefits are estimated to be 9% greater in FY 2015-16 than in FY 2014-15. The FY 2015-16 fees include a new Animal Services fee to recover the costs of assisting with capturing livestock that have escaped confinement.

The Board of Supervisors also authorized Animal Services to implement a limited-term amnesty program, through FY 2015-16, for dog license and late license penalty fees, with the goal of increasing compliance with licensing requirements. With this authorization, Animal Services will identify and schedule an amnesty one day per quarter and one week per year. The amnesty will be an incentive to encourage compliance from dog owners who may be reluctant to license their animal due to outstanding fees and penalties. By paying the current license fee during an amnesty period, dog owners would be provided a current license and released from responsibility from all past license and penalty fees accrued. The amnesty would also apply to dog owners who have never complied with licensing requirements.

It is challenging to estimate the impact of an amnesty on program license revenue. There is potential for some lost revenue due to the license fee and penalty waiver. However, it is also likely that there will be increased ongoing revenue due to greater license compliance. Animal Services will report back to the Board of Supervisors and the City of Santa Rosa regarding financial impact and licensing compliance outcomes. The outcomes of the FY 2015-16 amnesty program will be used to inform the decision about whether to offer future amnesty periods to support the sustainability of increased licensing compliance.

RECOMMENDATION

Sonoma County Animal Services is requesting the Council adopt revised animal services fees and approve a time-limited amnesty for dog license fees and penalties. Whether to adopt by resolution the proposed animal services fees and approve a time-limited amnesty for dog license fees and penalties is a matter of Council policy.

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Attachments:

- Animal Services Proposed Fee Schedule