



AGENDA REPORT

City Council

DATE:	May 3, 2022
TO:	Mayor Butt and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Councilmember Nathaniel Bates
Subject:	Update on the Contra Costa County Animal and Sheltering Services
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	There is no financial impact to receiving a report.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	On 10/25/2016 and 11/27/2018, the City Council received a report from Contra Costa Animal Services on the status of services. On 6/18/2019, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into reoccurring contracts for various services including animal services through FY2020-2021 and again on 12/01/2020 for FY2021-2022.
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	The City of Richmond has contracted with the Contra Costa County for many years for animal services. Due to the high volume of complaints received from Richmond residents, an update on services and discussion on the new city agreements is requested.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	RECEIVE a report from the Animal Rights Coalition on the animal and sheltering services by the Contra Costa County Animal Services Department – Councilmember Nathaniel Bates (510-620-6743). This item was continued from the April 26, 2022, meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Due to the increase of complaint calls received by various departments from Richmond residents, it is requested that representatives from the Contra Costa Council Animal Services Department provide a report on how they are addressing the various issues regarding services.

Most recently, the Animal Rights Coalition is concerned about the agreement between the City and the County regarding the animal shelter, the level of services, the response time to service calls and the increase in fees.

The Coalition would like the City to negotiate a contract with the County that better serves the animals and is a better use of taxpayer dollars. The City needs to get to the root of the problem with the County regarding these long-term issues that have existed for years.

The new agreement between City of Richmond and the Contra Costa County will increase fees and reduce services that are currently very limited.

Animal Control is only doing what is mandated by the ordinances. The ordinances need to be amended.

Animal Right Coalition

PRESS RELEASE:

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, Calif. (April 6, 2022) — *In Defense of Animals, the Animal Rights Coalition (ARC), and over 300 Contra Costa residents (see alert below and here) are urging Contra Costa County officials to enact a comprehensive, fair and humane Animal Services Agreement. The calls were prompted by the release of a new City-County Services Agreement by Contra Costa County Animal Services that would increase its funding but decrease the scope and quality of the services it provides for companion animals, community cats, and wildlife.*

On November 30, 2021, a civil grand jury report highlighted the county's homeless animal problem and limited ability to help wildlife due to funding restrictions, and made several recommendations for improvements. At a meeting on February 22, 2022, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors responded to the report, stating, "The county anticipates that under the new city agreements, there will be a greater level of service throughout the county." However, the new agreement will increase City fees and reduce services.

Animal Services has proposed the new service agreement to the cities of Brentwood, Clayton Concord, Danville, El Cerrito, Hercules, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, San Ramon and Walnut Creek.

If it's signed, the agreement will affect animal guardians and citizens who care about animal companions, community cats, and wildlife, by failing to outline a plan to provide the basic standard animal services.

All live wildlife calls — either transporting injured wildlife to Lindsay Wildlife Hospital or humanely euthanizing them if necessary — have been eliminated from this agreement. Citizens are already putting themselves at risk trying to help injured, sick, and orphaned wild animals and sharing their frustrations publicly on social media platforms like Nextdoor because their needs are not being met by Contra Costa Animal Services.

Not only does the new Animal Service agreement ignore wild animals, it also fails dogs and cats. The serious overpopulation of dogs and homeless community cats is not addressed, one spay/neuter and vaccination clinic is inadequate, and a trap/neuter/return program for community cats is not included.

There are no policies to ensure impounded adoptable animals are not killed and returned to their guardians, transferred to rescues, or adopted into safe and loving homes.

“The new Contra Costa Animal Services’ agreement is alarmingly vague – it states CCAS will provide basic services yet fails to include any details that would make it accountable to citizens,” said Cassidy Schulman, Community Cats campaigner for In Defense of Animals. “Contra Costa County citizens are being asked to pay more and get less — it’s just not fair on animals or taxpayers. We urge the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors to negotiate a comprehensive, fair, and humane Animal Services Agreement. The human and non-human animal residents of Contra Costa County deserve nothing less.”

There has been a lot of frustration on the part of nonprofits and individual animal rescuers who are seeing a trend toward dog and cat abandonment. The nonprofits and volunteers, working with a fraction of the County Animal Service budget, are overwhelmed. They are concerned they will not be able to continue to fill the Animal Services void, especially with the reduction of services.

Members of the public are encouraged to take action:

<https://www.idausa.org/campaign/wild-animals-and-habitats/latest-news/contra-costa-county-animal-services-agreement-disastrous-for-countys-animal-companions-community-cats-wildlife/>

Contacts:

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ARC, Annie Wright, animalrightscoalition925@gmail.com*

In Defense of Animals is an international animal protection organization based in Marin, California, with over 250,000 supporters and a 39-year history of fighting for animals, people, and the environment through education and campaigns, as well as hands-on rescue facilities in India, South Korea, and rural Mississippi. www.idausa.org

ARC is an animal advocacy group in Contra Costa County. We are a grassroots group of citizens, and rescue volunteers helping communities with animal welfare issues, such as pet abandonment, homeless dogs and community cats. We believe healthy animal companions and healthy communities go hand in hand.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

None