

MOTION

The Department of Animal Services (DAS) is responsible for the shelter, care, and enrichment of the animals in its six shelters. The DAS has historically lacked the budgetary resources needed to fully staff and operate all its shelters; therefore, relying on the help of volunteers to provide integral enrichment services, such as walking and exercising dogs. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges as a large number of DAS employees left the Department or were temporarily absent, and public health measures prevented volunteers from entering the shelters. By the summer of 2022, shelters were struggling to provide an acceptable standard of care. Many animals were in overcrowded or unclean kennels and cages, dogs went weeks or months without walks, and animals were not receiving adequate behavioral preparation for adoption.

The Department's challenges are particularly acute at the South Los Angeles shelter (Chesterfield Square), which cares for the highest number of animals in the system. As of January 2023, Chesterfield Square's dog and rabbit population exceeded its kennel and cage capacity. Last year this shelter recorded the second lowest number of hours worked by volunteers. This is despite the surrounding community's deep care for animals, suggesting that more could be done to engage potential volunteers. Signaling the depth of the shelters' resource deficit, the Department requested funding for an additional ten permanent staff members at Chesterfield Square in its FY 2023-24 budget proposal.

Last year, when the issues facing the shelter system came to light, the Council sought to investigate and assist the Department in alleviating the system's challenges. The Council re-appropriated funding to the Department, increased the Department's budget by 18 percent over the previous year's allotment in the FY 2023-24 budget, and approved a series of motions that required the Department to report to the Council on the status of and plans to improve its departmental programs and procedures that were subjects of concern. It has been a year since Angelenos learned about the unacceptable level of care in the Department's shelter system. Since then, the City has appropriated more funding to the Department and compelled the Department to report on and make plans to improve its programs. It is time for the Council and Angelenos to receive an update on the Department's efforts to establish adequate conditions of care for the animals in its shelters.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Department of Animal Services (DAS) to report on how its shelters are providing proper care and preparation to animals that are up for adoption, including metrics used to evaluate adequate care and the status of the DAS's:

- a. Plan to ensure that all dogs in shelters are regularly exercised and properly attended to and if not, what additional human and/or budgetary resources are required to fully implement this plan;
- b. Plan to ensure the best possible treatment of cats, rabbits and all other small animals by both staff and volunteers during the animals' stay at City shelters and if not, what additional human and/or budgetary resources are required to fully implement this plan;
- c. Use of the orange list to ensure that community partners willing to cover the costs of expensive vet care for shelter animals on the orange list are notified and given the opportunity to provide this care;



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I FURTHER MOVE that the DAS be instructed to report on how the additional funds re-appropriated to the Department from the Unappropriated Balance Fund No. 100-58 and General City Purposes Fund No. 100-56 in 2022 and the budget increase approved in the FY 2023-24 budget were used or plan to be used and a status of:

- a. Hiring plans for each shelter and whether each shelter will be fully staffed after this plan is implemented, and if not, the number of staff needed to fully staff each shelter;
- b. Expanding the agitator course training, described in the December 30, 2022 DAS report (CF 22-1174), to new and existing Animal Care Technicians (ACTs) and Animal Control Officers (ACOs), how many ACTs and ACOs at each shelter have not or will not receive the training under current funding levels of the Department, and how much additional funding would be required to provide this training to all ACTs and ACOs;
- c. Issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a contractor to provide dog training and behavioral assessment guidance using the \$100,000 re-appropriated from the Council District 5 portion of the "Neighborhood Service Enhancements" line item in the General City Purposes Fund No. 100-56 to the Animal Welfare Trust Fund No. 859-06, Account No. 060005 (CF 22-1171).

I FURTHER MOVE that the DAS be instructed to report on the effectiveness of its volunteer program's recruitment and onboarding practices, including:

- a. The Department's efforts to increase volunteering at its shelters, particularly those with fewer volunteers such as Chesterfield Square and Harbor, whether additional budgetary resources are needed to carry out these efforts, and if so, how these additional resources would be spent;
- b. The feasibility of allowing volunteers to work shifts that are before or after hours and holidays to accommodate those who work during shelter hours;
- c. The Department's work towards boosting cohesion and facilitate good working relationships between staff and volunteers.

I FURTHER MOVE that the DAS with the assistance of the City's Chief Heat Officer be instructed to report on the current protocol for protecting shelter animals from extreme heat.

I FURTHER MOVE that the DAS be instructed to investigate and report on other major cities' procedures related to animal care and adoption preparation, volunteer recruitment and onboarding, spay/neutering promotion, and protecting shelter animals from extreme heat.

PRESENTED BY: _____

MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON
Councilmember, 8th District

SECONDED BY: _____

Amelie Padilla

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