



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MADERA

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July 8, 2014

The Honorable D. Lynn Jones
Presiding Judge
Madera, County Superior Court
209 W. Yosemite Avenue
Madera, CA 93637



Subject: Response to the 2013-14 Grand Jury Report entitled "Madera County Animal Services."

Honorable Judge Jones:

Pursuant to the California Penal Code 933.05, the Madera County Board of Supervisors submits this response to the findings and recommendations in the 2013-14 Madera County Grand Jury Report on "Animal Services." See Attachment #1.

The following are the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations and the Board of Supervisors' responses:

Finding 1:

The lack of a computer application to log calls in the County Animal Services Department increases the possibility of lost calls.

Response:

Partially disagree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (2). The response of the Director of Animal Services to the above Finding is considered appropriate and is submitted as the Board of Supervisors response. (See Attachment #2)

Finding 2:

The Madera County Animal Services and the City of Madera Animal Control Division are understaffed. This impacts the city and county's ability to adequately respond to calls.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Finding 3:

The County Animal Services Facilities need upgrading and repair.

Response:

Agree with the finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1).

Recommendation 1:

The purchase of computer software be made to manage calls and record keeping.

Response:

The recommendation will not be implemented at this time. The response of the Director of Animal Services to the above Recommendation is considered appropriate and is submitted as the Board of Supervisors response. (See Attachment #2)

Recommendation 2:

Additional staff be hired to manage the workload in the Madera County Animal Services Department.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The response of the Director of Animal Services to the above Recommendation is considered appropriate and is submitted as the Board of Supervisors response. (See Attachment #2)

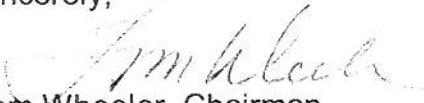
Recommendation 3:

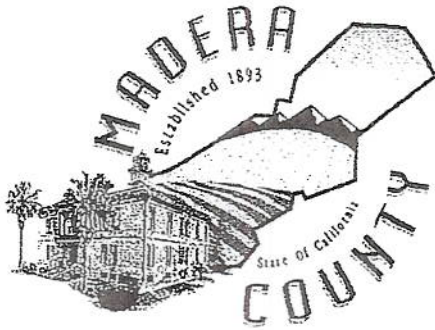
The needed building upgrading and repairs be made.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The response of the Director of Animal Services to the above Recommendation is considered appropriate and is submitted as the Board of Supervisors response. (See Attachment #2)

Sincerely,


Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Madera County Board of Supervisors
Attachments



Department of Animal Services

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REMEMBER TO SPAY AND NEUTER

Kirsten Gross, Director

To: Darin McCandless

From: Kirsten Gross

Subject: Grand Jury Report

We received a copy of the Grand Jury Report. The Grand Jury did a thorough job during the investigation. The investigation was prompted by the alleged complaint that we did not respond to a vicious dog complaint.

In review of the facts presented by the Grand Jury, there are some corrections on the fact list that should be noted;

1. Madera County has an Animal Services Department which consists of five Animal Control Officers and a staff of five shelter workers.

Correction:

Animal Services also has two staff members that are primarily office staff.

This brings the total of employees up to 12 not including myself.

4. The County of Madera Animal Services receives direct calls. These calls are written on call slips. This procedure is all paper based. It also receives calls from 311 and 911 services, and the Sheriff's Department.

Correction:

Most of our calls come through the 311 service and are computer based.

When the 311 system is down, computer access is restricted, or when staff is in the field, we generate call slips to give to officers as service requests.

9. The department euthanizes approximately 600 dogs each month.

Correction:

The department euthanizes approximately 600 animals each month which is mixture of dogs, cats, and other types of animals.

12. There is one building at the shelter where the roof is sagging and the doors cannot be closed.

Correction:

The steel double doors that separate the two sides of the older stray building have been stuck twice from the roof sagging. The maintenance staff did make some repairs and the door can be opened at this time.

15. The County Animal Services had a staff of 17 prior to 2012-2013 budget cuts.

Correction:

The staff reductions occurred in 2008 where we dropped 7 staff members leaving 10 staff members to perform the work. We have not seen full recovery to 2008 staffing levels since that reduction.

FINDINGS

1. The lack of computer application to log calls in the County Animal Services Department increases the possibility of lost calls.

Response: I disagree partially with the finding. Although most of our calls are generated through the CRM system, which is all computer based, we do use paper call slips occasionally. The call slips are generated when the CRM system is not operating, computer access is restricted, or when staff is working in the field. The department files the completed call slips should we need to retrieve them at a later date.

2. The Madera County Animal Services and the City of Madera Animal Control Division are understaffed. This impacts the city and county's ability to adequately respond to calls.

Response: I agree with the findings. Since the department had a reduction of staff in 2008 from 17 to 10 staff members there has not been budget available or approval to resume those staffing levels. This staffing shortage does prevent the department from providing the services that Madera County constituents had come to expect. I cannot respond to the service levels in Madera City.

3. The County Animal Services Facilities need upgrading and repair.

Response: I agree with the findings. The original brick building is over 50 years old. The building is in need of major repairs or replacement. The County maintenance department responds to all requests for minor repairs. Funding for upgrades or new buildings is not available at this time but is under discussion.

Grand Jury Recommendations

1. The purchase of computer software be made to manage calls and record keeping.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time as the CRM system should be adequate for managing calls and record keeping.

Since most of the calls received are initiated through the CRM system, we do have computer records for those calls. In regards to the call slips that are hand written and filed, we can also post those items on the CRM when we have adequate staffing. This would centralize our information on the CRM and keep our records updated on the computer.

This past year we have received 2,642 requests for service just from the CRM system.

2. Additional staff be hired to manage the workload in the Madera County Animal Services Department.

Response: The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future when the budget is available. The number of service requests annually from CRM total 2,642. The number of animals impounded is close to 8,000 annually. The number of people at the counter requesting services is a minimum of 40 per day or 8,000 annually. This is an incredible work load for 12 people who are operational 7 days a week and provide emergency services 24 hours daily.

I totally agree that to adequately provide the services needed for our growing community, the staffing levels at the Animal Services Department must be increased. I will be requesting additional staffing with next years' budget requests if not before.

3. The needed building upgrading and repairs be made.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. At this time the maintenance department is reviewing building repairs that will address the sagging roof in the older building. We have not yet received the estimates for these repairs from outside contractors. The funding for these repairs has also not been determined. The repairs should be completed within the next 60 – 120 days.

Animal Services will address other maintenance issues as needed and expedite the repairs whenever possible.

Animal Services is also involved in the discussions about the complex and the new buildings that are planned at the complex. At the end of the month we meet with architects to establish the future needs of the department associated with

planning for a new facility. The greatest obstacle will be the funding for an expensive new building.

We have also had discussions with interested parties to seek a "Safety Department" tax measure for funding a new Animal Services building. With the support of the leadership in the county and cities, as well as from the community we can look forward to a new facility in the future. The new facility is long term project with completion dates estimated between five and ten years in the future.