



Staff Report

TO: City Council
FROM: Sean Thuilliez, Chief of Police
DATE: February 6, 2024
SUBJECT: First Amendment to Ramona Humane Society Sheltering Services Agreement

Description Consideration of the first amendment to Ramona Humane Society Sheltering Services Agreement and scope of services.

Background and Analysis:

On Monday, December 18, 2023, Animal Control Services staff met with representatives from the Ramona Humane Society CEO to discuss changes in Ramona Humane Society's business model and the impact to the City of Beaumont.

Ramona intends to shift operations towards animal rescue rather than animal control service. To reflect these changes, they have changed their name to Haven Pet Center effective January 1, 2024, and are rebranding as such.

Over the last few years, the shelter/rescue/animal control business has seen a drastic increase in the number of unwanted/abandoned animals directed to shelters. Ramona's current capacity for animal sheltering is 150 animals, however they have been providing sheltering services in excess of 400 animals each month. Shifts in the industry have made it difficult to provide staffing to care for the animals, as well as veterinarian services to keep up with the demands for spay/neuter and other services.

Ramona is not alone in this struggle; it is a nationwide issue and organizations are attempting to find ways to address and educate the public on animal ownership and the overcrowding of facilities.

As of February 6, 2024, Ramona Humane Society would like to amend the current agreement with the City of Beaumont for sheltering services to no longer provide services for owner surrenders and feral/stray cat intakes. The City of Beaumont is the only agency that still allows the public to surrender their animals and we have been behind the curve on this trend for several years.

Animal Control Services staff contacted the Riverside County Department of Animal Services, City of Redlands, City of Fontana, City of Moreno Valley, as well as the San Bernardino County Animal Control Services and determined that each of these agencies had stopped providing this service several years ago and now direct animal owners to other resources such as rescues, obedience training, private re-homing, and other animal adoption/foster services.

The end goal is to put the responsibility of pet ownership back on pet owners and reduce pet populations within sheltering organizations, who are often forced to euthanize healthy pets due to lack of space and resources to house them.

Further, Ramona Humane Society would like to end intakes of healthy stray/feral cats. Feral/stray cats form colonies and hierarchies, which adapt to the ecosystem in which they live in. Removing healthy stray or feral cats from these colonies, does little to impact the cat populations in the urban and rural areas, but heavily impact shelter services, since many of the cats taken in cannot be rehomed and then are forced to be euthanized.

The current agreement with Ramona Humane Society remains in effect until November 1, 2024, providing all other services as indicated on Exhibit "A," except Ramona Humane Society would like to amend the agreement to no longer provide the following services:

- ACO-Owner Surrender,
- Owner Surrender-Shelter,
- ACO-Owner Request Euthanasia (except on a case-by-case basis for animals with a history of severe behavioral concerns or bites),
- Owner Request Euthanasia (except for sick or dying animals),
- Intakes of stray/feral cats.

The current agreement allows for the parties to make amendments to this agreement (Section 24 – Amendments to this Agreement), provided the parties meet and confer, negotiating in good faith to reasonable amendments as deemed appropriate.

The proposed change in services will help to reduce the number of animals taken into the shelter and provide space for animals who either can be reunited with their owners or be adopted to loving homes. The proposed change will also reduce the department's cost for sheltering services, since many of these animals are not reclaimed or able to be adopted by other owners.

Currently the department takes in approximately 85 owner surrenders and 120 stray/feral cats in a calendar year.

The proposed amendments are in line with current industry practices and will improve conditions within Ramona Humane Society to help to facilitate the adoption or reunification of healthy pets brought in by our Animal Control Service Officers.

Fiscal Impact:

Cost to prepare this staff report is approximately \$500. The contract with Ramona Humane Society is based on usage, therefore we will no longer collect fees that would have previously been collected and passed through for these services.

Recommended Action:

Approve the Amended Agreement with Ramona Humane Society as presented.

Attachments:

- A. Amendment to Agreement with Ramona Humane Society
- B. Exhibit B Scope of Work/Fees