

**Animal Services Follow-Up Audit
November 2011**

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Animal Services Follow-Up Audit



Office of the City Auditor

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Project # 11-12

November 11, 2011

Executive Summary

*12 of 12 prior audit
recommendations fully
implemented*

Fully Implemented

- *Five-year strategic plan*
- *Participation in regional organization*
- *Tracking of volunteer hours*
- *Method of euthanasia*
- *Better utilization of PetPoint*
- *Documenting waived fees*
- *Accounting for controlled substances*
- *Promoting animal adoptions*
- *Monitor and report telephone statistics*
- *Addressed employee survey issues*

The City Auditor's Office has completed a follow-up to the March 2010 Animal Services Audit. The follow-up audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, except for peer review. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. The objective of the follow-up was to determine the implementation status of prior audit recommendations.

There were 12 recommendations included in the initial audit report, for which management concurred with 11 and did not concur with one. Although Animal Services did not concur with the recommendation to host mobile adoptions, grant funds were received and used to operate a mobile adoption unit. The City Auditor's Office, therefore, concluded that all 12 prior audit recommendations had been fully implemented.

Follow-up audit results indicate that Animal Services management:

1. developed a five-year strategic plan;
2. became a member of the Texas Animal Control Association;
3. started tracking volunteer hours, by function;
4. established a preferred euthanasia method;
5. started using the cashiering and receipting function of the PetPoint system;
6. initiated a process to adequately document waived fees;
7. ensured the accuracy of PetPoint data;
8. began recording and monitoring controlled substances within the PetPoint system;
9. operated a mobile adoption unit;
10. began promoting animal adoptions through a Facebook page and the Friends of Arlington Animal Services website;
11. began monitoring Animal Services incoming calls for service and reporting statistical data to management; and,
12. addressed issues noted during the employee survey that was conducted during the initial audit.

Audit Scope and Methodology

The City Auditor's Office reviewed various documents relating to this follow-up audit. The following methodology was used in completing the audit.

- Reviewed previous audit report and management's responses dated March 5, 2010
- Reviewed departmental documentation related to the implementation of prior audit recommendations
- Reviewed the Strategic Planning Draft Report
- Reviewed the Texas Animal Control Association (TACA) website
- Reviewed the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation website and City accounts payable files
- Reviewed documentation relating to the tracking of volunteer kennel hours, by function
- Reviewed the current method for euthanasia
- Reviewed the daily use of the PetPoint receipting and cashiering function
- Reviewed the process for documenting waived fees
- Reviewed the process for ensuring the accuracy of data within the PetPoint system
- Reviewed the process of tracking controlled substances (Ketamine and Sodium Pentobarbital) within the PetPoint system
- Reviewed the Arlington Animal Service Center's Facebook page and the Friends of Arlington Animal Services (FAAS) website
- Reviewed statistical reports from the Action Center relating to Animal Service incoming telephone calls for service
- Discussed the prior employee survey results and subsequent actions taken

Status of Prior Audit Recommendations

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should ensure that Animal Services develops a strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives and routinely communicates its progress towards meeting those goals.

Management's Response: Concur.

Staff and [University of Texas at Arlington] UTA are currently reviewing a proposed agreement and partnership for services with the UTA Institute of Urban Studies, to design and facilitate a strategic planning process for Arlington Animal Services resulting in a Five Year Plan.

*Target Date: Commence: May 2010
Completion: February 2011*

*Responsibility: Assistant Director of Community Services
Animal Services Manager*

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. Community Services management, along with the Animal Services' Advisory Board and the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) Institute of Urban Studies, has developed a five-year strategic plan.

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should ensure that Animal Services participates in local, regional or national statistical organizations or studies that will help establish comparative performance data. Such participation will help the division establish reasonable goals, benchmark best practices and help identify improvement areas.

Management's Response: Concur.

*Target Date: December 2010
Responsibility: Animal Services Manager*

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. The Animal Services Division continues to be a member of the Texas Animal Control Association (TACA) which is "an association committed to the advancement of all animal control and animal welfare professionals through education, leadership, and advocacy." Membership in the TACA provides information such as: 1) educational opportunities (certification and training); 2) new legislation affecting animal control centers; 3) quarterly newsletters; and 4) web links to various animal centers in Texas and other informational resources. A wide variety of information is available through the aforementioned resources which can help the Animal Services

Division develop goals and best practices for daily operations. In addition, the five-year strategic plan establishes some goals and describes some areas for improvement.

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should ensure that Animal Services records kennel hours by function for employees, community service workers and volunteers and track the number of days that volunteers and community service workers were needed to accomplish basic animal care duties. This documentation should be utilized in establishing appropriate staffing levels.

Management’s Response: *Concur.*

Target Date: May 2010
*Responsibility: Animal Services Manager
Community Services Supervisor*

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. In October 2010, Animal Services began tracking volunteer hours, by function, to determine how many hours were worked by volunteers to provide basic animal care. According to staff, since the number of hours worked by individuals performing community service at the Animal Services Center is minimal, Animal Services does not track community service hours. Through May 2011, the monthly average was approximately two full-time equivalents (FTE) for volunteers, with a total salary savings of approximately \$50,300 during that time period. Although the volunteer hours are tracked and calculated at FTEs, due to budget constraints, this information is not specifically used to establish staffing levels.

The Animal Services Center currently has four full-time employees working in the kennel area. All of their time is spent performing basic animal care. Therefore, their time is not tracked specifically.

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should seek direction from the City Manager and/or Mayor and Council regarding the preferred euthanasia method for the City of Arlington. If the intravenous and intraperitoneal injections are recommended, two-person euthanasia teams would be required and additional staff would be necessary.

Management’s Response: *Concur.*

Target Date: October 2010
Responsibility: Community Services Director

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. The Animal Services Center has established intravenous with a two-person team as the preferred method for euthanasia. However, there are still some instances when the

intraperitoneal or the intracardiac methods (after sedation) are used. Based on a review of 30 kennel cards for euthanized animals during a three-week period, 26 indicated the use of the intravenous, two-person team.

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should ensure that Animal Services utilizes the receipting and cashing function of PetPoint. Services recorded in PetPoint should be reconciled to cash receipts on a daily basis.

Management's Response: *Concur.*

Target Date: May 2010

*Responsibility: Community Services Supervisor
Animal Services Administrative Coordinator*

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. Animal Services staff is currently using the receipting and cashing functions of PetPoint. For each transaction, information is entered into the PetPoint system at which time two receipt copies are printed – one for the customer and one for the cashier. At the end of the day, the cashiers close-out and balance to their registers. Documentation and funds are then given to the Animal Services Coordinator who reviews the daily activity, determines its accuracy and prepares the daily deposit.

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should ensure that Animal Services specifically documents waived fees, including the rationale for waiving fees, in PetPoint.

Management's Response: *Concur.*

Target Date: May 2010

*Responsibility: Community Services Supervisor
Animal Services Administrative Coordinator*

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. Animal Services has begun a process of documenting waived fees. When fees are waived, information is entered into the PetPoint system and a hard copy is retained within the kennel card files. The following information is included: 1) details of why fees were waived; 2) a copy of the Redemption Agreement signed by the owner; 3) a copy of the owner driver's license; 4) a copy of the receipt that shows if any other fees were paid; and 5) if applicable, documentation supporting why the animal was out of its confined area (i.e. storm blew fence down, etc.).

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should ensure that the Animal Services Manager identifies staff with the appropriate skill level to ensure that data recorded in PetPoint and/or AMANDA is reasonable, relevant and reliable. This could include assigning an individual to periodically review system usage, identify training needs and ensure that staff receives necessary training and instruction on how to use the systems.

Management's Response: *Concur.*

Target Date: October 2010
Responsibility: Animal Services Manager
Community Services Supervisor

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. During the regular daily course of business, the Animal Services Coordinator and the Animal Care Supervisor review data within the PetPoint system. The Animal Services Coordinator reviews transactions that are performed within the administrative area which includes verifying fees charged and reviewing the daily deposit. The Animal Care Supervisor reviews information within the kennel operations. When an animal is adopted, rescued, released to owner or euthanized, information for that specific animal is verified before any action is taken.

Management will need to revisit the review process in the near future. Animal Services staff indicated that they will stop using PetPoint sometime in January 2012 and will make a transition to the AMANDA system.

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should ensure that Animal Services determines whether the PetPoint system can be utilized to decrease the amount of paperwork required to account for controlled substances. If PetPoint can be utilized, the Community Services Director should require written policies and procedures to ensure proper recording, reporting of improper use and/or unaccountability for controlled substances, and should retain records for the amount of time required by local, state and/or federal law.

Management's Response: *Concur.*

Target Date: October 2010
Responsibility: Community Services Supervisor
[City] Veterinarian

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. Controlled substances are currently being tracked through PetPoint, as well as in individual manual books. Tests were performed to compare the manual books to the PetPoint system with no exceptions noted. The Animal Care Supervisor tracks and monitors all controlled substances, including the back-up supplies and the supplies used by the individual employees. The

Animal Care Supervisor has implemented a process to audit drug boxes on a monthly and quarterly basis.

Animal Services will discontinue using PetPoint and will transition to AMANDA sometime in early 2012. Therefore, after changing to the AMANDA software, management will need to revisit this process.

Recommendation:

The Animal Services Manager should consider partnering with current volunteers, the Arlington Animal Services Center Advisory Board, Friends of the Arlington Animal Services, etc. to host a mobile adoption on at least a quarterly basis.

Management's Response: *Do Not Concur.*

Animal Services provides real-time online viewing of animals which assists in the outreach and promotion of adoptable companion animals. Unless mobile adoptions are done in conjunction with a major national event, such as Adoptathon, the return on staff and volunteer resources is usually negligible at best. With a \$5.6 million shelter, resources are best utilized to assist potential adopters who are actively seeking companion animals.

Offsite adoptions may encourage "impulse adoptions", whereby a person adopts an animal without proper thought and planning, only to later relinquish the animal at a shelter. According to a study published in the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, this issue may be mitigated when mobile venues utilize full-time, well-trained adoption counselors, and potential adopters are screened appropriately. These factors are essential to the successful and ethical adoption placement of companion animals.

Target Date: Not Applicable

Responsibility: Not Applicable

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. As part of the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation's FY2009/2010 Spring Cycle, a \$5,000 grant was provided to Community Services to regularly operate a mobile adoption unit with the objective to increase the City's rate of successful adoptions. During FY2011, the North Texas Animal Control Authority provided five (5) mobile adoptions on behalf of the City of Arlington.

Recommendation:

The Animal Services Manager should consider partnering with volunteers, the Animal Services Center Advisory Board, Friends of Arlington Animal Services, etc. to routinely air an animal adoption segment on the City's cable channel to help promote animal adoptions.

Management's Response: *Concur.*

Target Date: August 2010
Responsibility: Animal Services Manager

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. The Animal Services Center did not air animal adoption segments on the City's cable channel. Instead, Animal Services created a Facebook page which contains a link to Friends of Arlington Animal Services (FAAS). The FAAS website, which is updated twice each week, shows a picture of each animal that is available for adoption (and those scheduled for euthanasia), gives some information about the animal, and includes comments made by people that have viewed the site.

Facebook provides Animal Services with a much larger audience base than the cable channel (can be viewed nation-wide rather than just in the Dallas/Fort Worth area). According to Animal Service staff, adoptions have increased since creating the Facebook page.

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director, in conjunction with the Information Technology Director, should ensure that Animal Services management is provided instructions and/or training to produce statistical reports from the enterprise phone system. Animal Services management should then use the statistical reports to monitor phone volumes, adjust staffing and report call volume to senior management.

Management's Response: Concur.

Target Date: May 2010
*Responsibility: Information Technology [Department]
Animal Services Manager*

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. Beginning in October 2010, the answering of incoming Animal Service telephone calls on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. was transitioned to the Action Center. Therefore, it was not necessary to provide instruction and/or training to Animal Services personnel on the use of their enterprise phone system. Nor was it necessary to use call volume as a means to adjust staffing levels.

The Action Center has a system and personnel capable of monitoring statistical data from the phone system. During this audit, various reports were reviewed which contain statistical data relating to Animal Service Center calls. Some of the reports include, but are not limited to:

- monthly comparison of calls presented, calls answered and calls abandoned;
- daily performance reports including: 1) calls accepted, answered and abandoned; 2) percent of calls abandoned after answered; 3) average wait time for abandoned calls; 4) average wait time in queue; 5) average talk time for calls; and 6) average wait time before answer;
- daily statistics relating to individual call takers;

- call taker's login and logout; and
- daily call activity in 15 minute increments.

Statistical data such as the items listed above are reported to Community Services and Financial and Management Resources management on a regular basis.

Recommendation:

The Community Services Director should ensure that the Animal Services Manager reviews the survey results, develops strategies to address identified issues and communicates openly with employees regarding those issues.

Management's Response: Concur.

Target Date: May 2010
Responsibility: Animal Services Manager
[Animal Services] Supervisory Staff

Implementation Status:

Fully Implemented. Animal Services management indicated that after the initial audit report was issued, regular monthly meetings were planned with employees and supervisors to discuss the issues related to the employee survey. Animal Services staff also stated that various informal meetings were held with staff to discuss issues that impact their ability to perform their jobs. Throughout this process, there were no meeting minutes or notes to reflect either the issues that were discussed or the outcomes of those discussions. However, it should be noted that a number of concerns mentioned in the employee survey related to workload issues. Management has responded to workload issues in two ways - transitioned initial telephone calls from Animal Services to the Action Center, and worked diligently to increase volunteer hours.