

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. A(3)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: February 12, 2013

TITLE: A Request to authorize the Town Manager to Negotiate a Contract for Services for Animal Control with Orange County Animal Services

DEPARTMENT: Police	PUBLIC HEARING: NO
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Carolyn Hutchison, 918-7412; Arche McAdoo, 918-7439

PURPOSE

The purpose of this item is for the Board to consider authorizing Town staff to negotiate a contract for services for animal control in Town. A resolution requesting such authorization is provided for the Board's consideration.

INFORMATION

The Town's Animal Control Officer position is vacant at this time. As a result, police officers at both the line and administrative levels are currently handling the duties and responsibilities of the animal control officer position in addition to their regular duties and responsibilities. In keeping with the Police Department and Town goal to continue evaluating existing programs and operations for cost-effective methods of service delivery and to maintain the existing level of services, the Police Chief and Finance Director have met with the Orange County Animal Services Director and Deputy Financial Services Director to explore the possibility of contracting with the County for the provision of animal control field operations and service within the Town.

We are considering many factors, among them: no deterioration of current level of service; enhanced service, to include proactive education/awareness programs and activities, canvassing of neighborhoods to share information when necessary, coordination of resources between and among other animal services agencies, and continuity of service on a "24-7-365" basis; enhanced public relations; productivity improvement to the Police Department; retention of animal control related revenues; and costs associated with any such contract for services.

No deterioration of current level of service: The Town is considering a contract for services that includes one dedicated Animal Control Officer (ACO) assigned specifically to Carrboro. The ACO will respond to and investigate animal-related calls for service in Carrboro and will be responsible for understanding and enforcing the Town's animal control ordinance. Other Animal Services staff (e.g., the Animal Services Director or Animal Control Manager) will be responsible for holding any hearings described by the Town's ordinance. The Animal Control Manager will also be responsible for the oversight and management of the Carrboro ACO.

Enhanced service: The ACO will provide proactive animal control education and awareness programs and activities within Town. Education and awareness program topics may include rabies risks and

awareness, dog bite prevention for children, animal safety more generally, responsible pet ownership, and reporting animal control concerns. When necessary, the ACO will canvass neighborhoods to share information about situations involving animal control concerns, e.g., wildlife concerns such as coyotes or information about rabies and low cost rabies vaccination clinics. The ACO, employed by Orange County Animal Services to work in the Town of Carrboro, will be able to utilize and coordinate resources between and among other animal services agencies to ensure strong service coverage and will bring a level of experience and expertise necessary for the safe, effective, and efficient provision of animal control services in Town. The County will provide continuity of service to the Town on a “24-7-365” basis, to include after-hours emergency animal rescue services, for which the Town currently contracts (with Orange County).

Enhanced public relations: Orange County Animal Services personnel regularly engage residents through various public meetings and information sessions and via electronic means of communication. They issue press releases that serve to educate and inform people about animal-related topics and events of interest, such as rabies cases, spay-neuter clinics, and volunteer opportunities, and they maintain a website that is a resource for people with animal-related concerns. The website includes information about general topics such as rabies and low cost rabies vaccination clinics as well as information specific to Carrboro and other municipalities within Orange County, e.g., animal ordinances. The website also provides information on making complaints and lost and found animals (including digital photos of these animals for ease and accuracy of identification).

Productivity improvement to the Police Department: Line police officers and administrative police personnel currently handle all the duties and responsibilities of the Animal Control Officer position in addition to the duties and responsibilities of their current positions. In the event of an emergency involving a dangerous or potentially dangerous animal, Orange County Animal Services personnel may be able to assist Carrboro staff, but when time is of the essence, delays associated with a request for assistance may hinder public safety. Line police officers now spend approximately 10% of their work time dealing with animal-related calls for service. The Field Operation Captain, who supervises the Animal Control Officer, now spends 15 – 25% of his time dealing with issues related to animal control. The Police Chief now spends approximately 1% of her time handling animal-related issues and concerns. When police personnel are busy with animal control issues, other duties and responsibilities related to public safety and law enforcement receive less attention.

Retention of animal control related revenues: Orange County will continue to collect license fees for the Town. The Town will continue to receive revenues associated with license fee collection, less a 10% fee for the collection service (which is already in place).

Other costs considerations for contracted services: In formulating the scope of service for the Town’s needs, it is important to note that preliminary discussions indicate that the County is interested in recovering only direct and indirect costs of field operations related to animal control and not of costs associated with office inquiries, phone contact, and dispatching of calls. The preliminary figures provided by County to Town staff do not represent a full cost recovery for all animal control services that may benefit the Town. There may also be an opportunity to phase in the direct costs over a period of time.

FISCAL IMPACT

For the current fiscal year, the Town has an adopted budget of \$65,303 for direct expenses related to animal control services. When you factor in indirect costs and departmental oversight, the total estimated cost for animal control services is roughly \$80,000. In terms of revenue, the Town in the past has netted an average \$6,600 for animal fees collected by the County on behalf of the Town.

By contracting with the County, the Town can reduce animal control service costs by \$6,000. The higher level of service delivery and community outreach benefits that would be gained by such a contract would be much greater than the cost reduction.

RECOMMENDATION

Town staff recommends that the Board consider adoption of the attached resolution.