



# Department of Animal Services

**MAYOR**  
Dee Margo

**Animal Shelter Advisory Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**September 9, 2020**

**CITY COUNCIL**

**District 1**  
Peter Svarzbein

**District 2**  
Alexandra Annello

**District 3**  
Cassandra Hernandez

**District 4**  
Dr. Sam Morgan

**District 5**  
Isabel Salcido

**District 6**  
Claudia L. Rodriguez

**District 7**  
Henry Rivera

**District 8**  
Cissy Lizarraga

**CITY MANAGER**  
Tommy Gonzalez

**1. Call to Order- Establish Quorum**

A meeting of the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee was held virtually at 6:21 p.m. by Chair Julie Rutledge.

Board Member A.S.A.C.	Present	Absent
Regina Wagner		X
Celeste Varela	X	
Sandra DiFrancesco	X	
Mary Kay Rosenkranz	X	
Yansi Parent		X
Barbara Candelaria	X	
Vacant		
Elvira Stephanie Frias	X	
Vacant		
Julie Rutledge	X	
Alexandra Annello		X

Animal Services staff present: Paula Powell, Maribel Karisch, Misty Monteros Michele Anderson, Ramon Herrera, Andrea Read, Renee Rojas and Adan Parra.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Discussion and action on the approval of the August 12, 2020 minutes.

*Celeste Varela motioned to accept the August 12, 2020 minutes as corrected; Sandra DiFrancesco seconded; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.*

**3. Reports-Support the City of El Paso's Initiative to Reach and Sustain a 90% or Greater Live-Release Rate by 2020**

**A. Department of Animal Services August update and statistics**

Paula Powell mentioned that Animal Services continues to follow the six strategic goals in their efforts to no-kill. The intake increased to 1,025 in August due to the pick-up of more animals. Even though the intake

**Paula Powell – Director**

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DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES



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increased, there were still less animals than last year. The intake was 2,379 for August 2019. With less animals in the shelter, the outcome was at 1,046 compared to 2,562 last year same time. There are currently 118 cats and 234 dogs out on foster. The shelter euthanasia breakdown for August was: 10 infectious, 12 owner requested, 13 behavior, 20 non-infectious and 20 trauma. The died-in-care was 14 in shelter and 33 in foster. The LRR for dogs was 91.85% and 85.19% for cats for an overall LRR of 89.14% for August. The calendar LRR was 85.31%. The fiscal LRR was 85.91% compared to last year's 84.94%. The shelter animal count LRR was 89.14% compared to 89.33% in 2019. The community live-saving rate was at 95.09% for 2020 and 95.66% in 2019.

Paula explained that there was a dynamic decrease in deaths during the months of April to July. Euthanasia decreased from 1,352 in 2019 to 301 in 2020, a drastic 77% decrease due to several factors which included reduced intake and disease. The died-in-care decreased from 648 in 2019 to 168 in 2020, that's a 74% decrease. Data collected from Environmental Services Department presented a 28% decrease of deceased animal pick-ups. There were 2,201 in 2019 and 1,586 in 2020; and it was made possible thanks to the community's support. During the ongoing operational changes, there was a combined total of 2,055 deaths in the shelter and community, a 51% decrease. At the same, officers continued responding to service calls with the recommended changes from the National Animal Care and Control Association. Bite and aggressive dog calls also decreased. With the reduction in intake and the community live-saving push, there was a 293% decrease in the average inventory. Paul added that the community stepped up to help foster animals during the COVID-19 operational changes, however more fosters will be needed once the eviction crises starts.

Animal Services started a new program called *Stronger Together- The HASS Model*. There were several services that Animal Services provided to the community through the program: 1,714 pets were vaccinated, over 6 tons of pet pantry food was distributed, 20 community events were safely hosted, officers responded to 6,367 calls, 1,734 pets were sent to foster homes, over 1,100 lost and found reports taken and 651 community cats had surgery since September 1<sup>st</sup>. Animal Services is also working with the El Paso County Animal Welfare Department. In August, the Animal Welfare Department had three spay/neuter clinics at the Socorro Clinic. In total, 27 spays and 21 neuters were performed and 55 vaccinations were administered. For more information on upcoming events visit [spayneuter@epcounty.com](mailto:spayneuter@epcounty.com).

Animal Services started Phase I on September 1<sup>st</sup>, focusing on community cats. Intake is by appointment only from Sunday to Thursday. Ongoing services will continue during Phase I, which includes virtual adoptions, fosters, return to owner. All these services are by curbside, and pick-up/delivery are available.

**Paula Powell – Director**

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In addition, Animal Services is having monthly meetings with 311 managers and supervisors to help resolve public concerns by providing an updated call script, quick reference guides and officers are sitting in to assist with Animal Services calls.

Paula responded to several questions from committee members:

Paula explained that the formula to calculate the community live-saving rate was obtained from Maddie's Fund. She also mentioned that flight transfers take place every two weeks and fostered animals are included in these flights. She also explained that a message can be added to a found report, in the event that the finder is not able to take care of the pet.

Michele Anderson presented the Paw Cast.

## 4. Call to the public

Lisa Vandermuelen  
Karen Washington  
Beth Schrock-Valles  
Ann Nila

## 5. Main Agenda

### A. Research and Advise on Effective Ordinances and Policies to Improve Overall Health, Welfare and Safety for Animal

#### A1. Discussion and action on community involvement and responsibilities related to stray animals and means of getting them back to their owners.

Julie Rutledge explained that due to all the public comments from last month's meeting, Facebook and the protests at Animal Services, she acknowledged the importance for the ASAC to have a discussion and provide advise to the community's concerns. With the Humane Society, Animal Services, County and Animal Rescue League trying new things as well, Julie asked the ASAC for comments, suggestions or recommendations on how they can provide better communication to the community.

Barbara Candelaria mentioned that it has been frustrating when calling 311. She also added that since there's been fewer animals during the closure, Humane Society and Anima Services could have been performing spays and neuters. Barbara suggested having the pet food pantry work along side the food pantry distributions throughout the city.

Paula Powell explained that the safety of Animal Services employees and community is paramount and will be hiring twenty-one employees

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for additional services in the near future.  
Celeste Varela suggested placing this item on every month's agenda as ASAC moves forward with community involvement.

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**B. Promote Education and Engagement of Animal Health and Welfare**

**B1. Discussion and action on how to increase public awareness of the need to clean up after your dog.**

*Celeste Varela motioned to delete item B1: Sandra DiFrancesco seconded; all members voted in favor and motion passed unanimously.*

**6. Future Agenda Item**

Discussion and action on community involvement and responsibilities related to stray animals and means of getting them back to their owners.

**7. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM

**Sandra DiFrancesco motioned to adjourn; Elvira Stephanie Frias seconded; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.**

Prepared by: Maribel Karisch

Approved by A.S.A.C. Chairman

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