

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIR, PERSONNEL, AUDITS, AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE relative to funding necessary to optimally run the Department of Animal Services (DAS) to include funding for all seven City-owned shelters and funding and staffing for a Citywide Cat Program and an enhanced Spay and Neuter Program.

Recommendations for Council action, pursuant to Motion (Koretz – Blumenfield):

1. INSTRUCT the DAS to report as to how much it would cost to optimally run the DAS to include:
 - a. Funding all seven City-owned shelters.
 - b. Funding and staffing a robust Citywide Cat Program.
 - c. Funding for an enhanced, robust Spay and Neuter Program.
2. REQUEST the current Mayor and next Mayor to work with the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and DAS to transfer \$3 million in emergency funding from the City's Reserve Fund to the 2022-23 Fiscal Year Animal Services budget in order to cover the cost of enhancing the spay/neuter program, increasing funding for Citywide Cat Program, enhancing the budget for food and other shelter operational needs and animal enrichment programs.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the CAO nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On October 24, 2022, the Chair of the Personnel, Audits, and Animal Welfare (PAAW) Committee considered a Motion (Koretz – Blumenfield) relative to funding necessary to optimally run the DAS to include funding for all seven City-owned shelters and funding and staffing for a Citywide Cat Program and an enhanced Spay and Neuter Program.. According to the Motion, for the 2022-23 fiscal year the DAS received only enough of the City's General Fund monies to, according to DAS management, fully staff and operate four municipal animal shelters.

As of October 1, 2022, however, the DAS is operating six shelters, all understaffed, with one additional shelter being operated under contract by a nonprofit organization. In other words, DAS has seven shelters with the means to fully operate only four of them. In the summer of 2022, with society still plagued by periodic surges of COVID variations, the DAS's staff is further depleted by sick leaves and quarantines. As a result it is a challenge to accomplish all the tasks necessary to properly care for the animals housed in the shelters. Feeding the animals, cleaning the kennels and cages, providing exercise,

enrichment and veterinary care, and optimally showcasing animals for adoption opportunities sometimes is not achieved to the degree desired by management, staff and the public. Additionally, the constraints on shelter hours of operation limit the Department's ability to serve the public and take full advantage of volunteers who are willing to assist with the animal welfare mission. Despite this, the Department has been able to maintain a high live-release rate, especially for dogs and cats that far surpasses what it was able to do even 15 years ago.

In this century, a series of recessions and the pandemic have hobbled the City Budget, and the DAS has noticeably struggled even more to obtain the staffing budget it needs. Under City law, its fundraising and grant-seeking efforts cannot be used to pay for staff, so addressing the issue comes down to formal budgeting. The DAS is one of the few City Departments whose mission involves the care of living beings. As such, while the City has played a national leadership role with regard to animal welfare policy over the last couple of decades, a more reliable manner of funding the Department should be a priority going forward. After consideration, the Committee Chair moved to recommend approval of the Motion. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,



Councilmember Paul Koretz, Chair
Personnel, Audits, and Animal Welfare Committee

COUNCILMEMBER VOTE

KORETZ: YES

HARRIS-DAWSON: ABSENT

BONIN: ABSENT

ARL

10/24/22

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-