

MOTION

PERSONNEL & ANIMAL WELFARE

13-0345

The Department of Animal Services (Animal Services) has given notice to its employees that beginning March 31, 2013 it will eliminate the "graveyard shift" (midnight to 6:00 a.m.) for all sixteen of its Animal Care Technicians (ACTs) working at the City's six animal shelters. The ACTs will be transferred to day-time shelter shifts. Animal Services management has justified this decision as a way to mitigate the current staffing imbalance as a result of staff reductions and an increase in the number of kennel spaces over the past few years. In lieu of the ACTs working the graveyard shift, Animal Services intends to employ security guards.

ACTs working the midnight to 6:00 a.m. shift are the only employees available to monitor and care for animals dropped off by the public, which includes pregnant animals, some of which are in labor, and newborns. ACT duties also include monitoring animals for distress, breaking-up fights, ensuring animals receive emergency care and maintaining cleanliness of animal shelter kennels. ACTs also provide post-operative monitoring as prescribed by shelter veterinarians, such as preventing animals from pulling sutures, monitoring of medications and food intake. In addition, 911 calls regarding injured or dangerous animals are routed to the nighttime ACTs.

Various interested parties and stakeholders have raised serious concerns as to the elimination of nighttime ACTs. A candlelight vigil was recently held at the East Valley Animal Shelter on March 20th to oppose the elimination of the "graveyard shift". Given the scope of the possible negative impacts, the City Council should be briefed as to the merits of the proposed staffing changes and also the process by which this decision was made.

I THEREFORE MOVE that General Manager, Department of Animal Services, be instructed to report to the Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee on its elimination of the "graveyard shift" at the City's six animal shelters and impacts on the 16 affected Animal Control Technicians (ACT); the Department is also instructed to address the following questions:


1. Will kennel cleanliness standards be maintained without ACTs on duty from 12 a.m. to 6 a.m.?
2. What will happen to unsupervised animals that show signs of distress or engage in fights with other animals from midnight to 6:00 a.m.?
3. What happens to animals, especially those which are pregnant or newborns, left at the shelters by the public during the "graveyard shift"?
4. How will 911 calls from the public regarding dangerous or injured animals be handled? What City agency will respond to these calls and at what cost? Will this responsibility fall to LAPD?
5. How will care be provided to animals that have undergone surgery and cannot be left alone from midnight to 6:00 a.m., or to animals that are on medication, such as anti-seizure drugs, and require regular monitoring? Will they be sent to a hospital? What is the annualized cost?
6. What is the cost to employ security guards to replace ACTs?

I FURTHER MOVE THAT the City Council instruct the Department of Animal Services to defer the implementation of the elimination of the Department's "graveyard shift" (midnight to 6 a.m.) at City animal shelters scheduled for March 31st, 2013, for consideration and review by the Council.

PRESENTED BY: 

PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY: 


MAR 22 2013

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