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April 24, 2020

The Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chair
Budget and Finance Committee
c/o Holly L. Wolcott, City Clerk
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Krekorian:

RE: DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES PROPOSED FY 2020-21 PROPOSED BUDGET

The Department of Animal Services (Department) has reviewed the Mayor's FY 2020-21 Proposed Budget and considering the challenging time that we are in, the unknown obstacles that we as a City have yet to face, and the shared sacrifices required of everyone, we are grateful for the resources proposed by the Mayor's Office. The Department remains resolved and committed to navigating the challenges ahead while providing essential services to the communities we serve.

CHALLENGES

Animal Sterilization Fund -

The Animal Sterilization Fund (ASF) is expected to end FY 19-20 with an ending balance of approximately \$250,000 based upon current projections. Although many things are still unknown during this time, the one thing that is known is that the \$400,000 allocation to the ASF in the FY 20-21 Proposed Budget will be insufficient for the City to maintain the Free, Discount and Mobile Spay/Neuter Programs in their current iterations of providing and/or subsidizing approximately 21,000 surgeries annually nor does the Fund have the ability to reimburse the City for any past or future salary and related costs reimbursements. Without additional funding in FY 2020-21, the City will need to reduce the number of Free, Discount and Mobile spay/neuter surgeries provided to City residents by approximately 15,000. The only spay/neuter surgeries that will not be impacted are those performed on animals adopted from our Animal Services Centers (Centers) which are entirely funded through adoption and licensing revenue.

Any reduction in the number of spay/neuter surgeries that the City is able to provide and/or subsidize will have a grave impact on the number of unwanted pet births in the City and will increase the number of intakes at our Centers which will increase the cost of care in the Care Centers and will negatively impact the City's live/save rate for years to come.

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It is expected that the court will render its determination of the TNR Injunction in the foreseeable future. If the injunction is lifted and the City wishes to continue with its plan to fund spay/neuter surgeries for community cats, funding will need to be identified before a community cat program can be established. As previously discussed, neither the ASF nor the Department have the necessary resources to fund a community cat program.

10% Furloughs -

The North Central and West Valley Centers were temporarily closed on April 10, 2020, due to the COVID-19 crisis. Implementation of the 10% furloughs contained in the proposed budget will further impact the day-to-day operations of the four (4) remaining Centers which are operating at reduced 12-hour shift staffing levels required to ensure the health and safety of our employees and animals in our care. Implementation of the 10% furloughs will further erode the number of staff available and necessary to operate these four (4) Centers or to re-open all six (6) in the future.

Classifications that will be hardest hit by the proposed furloughs will be those staffed by employees responsible for the health and safety of our animals and for the safety of the public-at-large. Animal Care Technicians and Animal Care Technician Supervisors are responsible for providing safe and secure housing, food and humane care for the animals while meeting their mental and physical needs through daily enrichment activities. Our Veterinary Technicians and Veterinarians are responsible for evaluating all animals entering our Centers and providing daily veterinary care, services, and examinations. Animal Control Officers and Senior Animal Control Officers are responsible for ensuring the public's safety by providing City-wide 24-hour coverage to address public safety, animal cruelty, and other issues causing danger to people or animals. To continue to provide these critical services it is imperative that the aforementioned classifications are exempt from furloughs.

Revenue -

The Department's revenue projection contained in the Mayor's FY 2020-21 Proposed Budget was formulated on full staffing levels (before the crisis) and did not take into consideration any reductions such as 10% across the board furloughs. Revenue generated by Animal License Canvassers, the Administrative Citation Enforcement Program, and permitting activities will be negatively impacted should the proposed furloughs be implemented for staff performing these duties.

Summary

We recognize the unprecedented economic challenges facing our City, state, and nation and there is no doubt, sacrifices will be required from the entire City Family. Our Department is committed to managing our operations in the most efficient and cost-effective manner to ensure resources are wisely utilized in service to the communities that we serve.

Sincerely,



Brenda F. Barnette
General Manager

cc: Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr., CD 9
Councilmember Paul Koretz, CD 5
Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, CD 3
Councilmember Mike Bonin, CD
Barbara Romero, Deputy Mayor
Ashley Stracke, Office of the Mayor
Richard H. Llewellyn, Jr., City Administrative Officer
Soozy Rios-Bellenot, Office of the CAO