

Response to Grand Jury Report

Report Title: County Delivery of Animal Care Services

Report Date: June 9, 2014

Response by: Thomas Allman, Sheriff, Mendocino County

Findings

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F5,

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F1, F4, F6, F7

Attach a statement specifying the findings or portions of the findings that are disputed, and include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

Recommendations

Recommendations numbered ___ have been implemented.

Attach a statement describing the implement actions.

Recommendations numbered ___ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

Attach a statement with the schedule for implementation(s).

Recommendations numbered R1, R4 require further analysis.

Attach an explanation, and the scope and parameters of the analyses or studies, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

Recommendations numbered ___ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

Attach an explanation.

Signature:  Date: 08-15-2014
Thomas D. Allman, Sheriff-Coroner

Number of pages attached: _____

FINDINGS

- F1. **“Organizational separation of Animal Control and Animal Care has led to discord between the two factions resulting in delivery-of-service problems.”**

I disagree partially. I cannot answer for Animal Care, but I believe the Sheriff's Office provides a better service to the public and we have trained with Animal Care for disaster training. The communication between both departments could be improved by having regular briefings.

- F4. **“Animal Care gives the impression to Animal Control that they would rather not have Animal Control bring in animals. This results in Animal Control working with owners longer than usual in cases of abuse or neglect rather than confiscating the animals.”**

I disagree partially. Due to overcrowding at Animal Care they have no room to properly house animals when brought in. The overcrowding at Animal Care has no determining factors in removing an animal from an abusive situation or our investigation.

- F5. **“The overcrowding has a very serious effect on staff morale and is severely detrimental to the well-being of the animals.”**

I (we) agree with the findings numbered “F5”.

- F6. **“The relationship between the management of the two organizations has become acrimonious hindering the possibility of meaningful dialogue.”**

I (we) partially disagree. I believe that both management teams strive to have a good working environment with Animal Care and have assisted and attended numerous trainings at their facility. Because of having each department in charge of a very important function, there is a need for closer infrastructure to prevent miscommunication.

- F7. **“Senior staff at the Animal Care Facility appear to want to make the facility a no-kill facility. Keeping a dog in a 4 x 8-foot kennel or a cat in a 2 x 3-foot cage for up to or more than a year is cruel treatment.”**

I (we) disagree partially. I do not know if they want to make the Animal Care a no kill facility, but housing the dogs/cats in the manner described above, the animals often get anxiety related illnesses and display erratic behavior. I have talked to Animal Care staff for the last few years to ask they obtain the Haz-Mat Facility located behind them for day yards, which would allow the dogs to socialize and exercise and maintain their mental and behavioral suitability for adoption.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. **“The Board of Supervisors re-integrate Animal Control and Animal Care as a single operational unit under the Sheriff's Office. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F6)”**

This response requires further analysis, but this decision should ultimately be made by the Board of Supervisors.

- R4. **“The management of the Shelter be trained in all aspects of Shelter operations including management, contracts, negotiations and implementation of contracts. (F1, F6, F8)”**

This requires further analysis, but the decision should be made by Health & Human Services, which is currently in control of Animal Care.