

MINUTES
City of Los Angeles
BOARD OF ANIMAL REGULATION

April 5, 1999, 9:00 a.m.

The Board of Animal Regulation Commissioners convened in regular session on Monday, April 5, 1999, at 419 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, California 90013.

Call to Order/Roll

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

Commission Members Present: President Afriat and Commissioners Barrett and Avila.

Commissioner Jackson was absent, and the Mayor's Office has not designated a Commissioner to fill the position vacated by Commissioner Hunter.

Staff Members Present: Dan C. Knapp, Linda Gordon, Dr. Dena Mangiamele, Bob Peña, Fred Michael, Renée Quimby, Laurel Broyles, Carmella Ortiz

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Commissioner Avila and second of Commissioner Barrett, the Minutes of the Meeting of March 22, 1999, were approved without objection (3 Ayes).

Old Business

None

New Business

Items A through C were trailed pending arrival of several additional staff members.

D. Update on Pit Bull Training Classes

Robert Pena reported the Department has arranged with the Villalobos Rescue Center and the Pit Bull Support Group, through Tia Torres, to conduct informational training classes for pit bull owners. Two classes have been held so far: the first class, on March 27, was attended by about 50 people, and others had to be turned away. The second and third classes are scheduled to be held on April 10th at the East Valley shelter; 30 people have already registered for each of those classes. Classes will be scheduled for the West Valley area as well, in Councilperson Chick's district, and in the West Los Angeles and South Los Angeles districts. In addition, basic obedience, socialization and puppy classes for pit bull owners only, will be held starting on April 17th at the North Central shelter. Initially the Department was going to charge a fee, but Tia Torres has decided to waive the fee for the present, although owners will be asked to make a donation.

Some people have criticized offering the classes, feeling that only the responsible pit bull owners are being reached, but Mr. Pena feels that they also need information, and that they will in turn bring other owners in for training. At the first class, Tia Torres indicated that two young men who might be described as "gang bangers" brought their two pit bulls, stayed for the class, and signed up for the obedience class.

Commissioner Barrett stated that she feels the classes are one of the best things the Department has done during her tenure on the Board; that attendance might not be so high if there were not such a public issue now, but she feels the right audience is being reached. Those owners willing to give up their animals are the ones who are concerned about their family members. Those who come to class are willing to learn, and are looking for tools to allow them to keep their pets, and still keep their families safe. Those who like their animals to be vicious will not be turning them in to the shelter, or attending classes. Mr. Pena affirmed that he has been receiving calls from as far away as Riverside and Ventura Counties, from people who want to sign up for these classes. Attendees have said they will be sharing their information with others, and showing the certificates they receive to landlords and neighbors to demonstrate they want to be responsible pet owners. President Afriat thanked Mr. Pena and congratulated him.

E. Emergency Preparedness Update

Fred Michael, the Department's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, distributed folders to each Commissioner containing the City's Y2K Preparedness brochure, and contingency planning information. The City is taking a very aggressive approach to Y2K preparations. Each Department has been given assignments by the preparation team, of which Mr. Michael is a member. Several exercises are planned for this year: a General Managers' exercise in May, and an emergency preparedness workshop in October, which will have Y2K preparedness as its theme.

The second folder item was a correspondence study catalog containing the City's new home study course on caring for animals during disasters, which was put together for FEMA. It is being well received throughout the country. The third item described a standardized emergency management system the Department is training its new employees in, as well as re-training long time employees. The Fire Department indicated employees need periodic retraining in this system, particularly employees who do not use an incident command system every day, as Fire Department employees do.

The fourth item was a brochure from the Southern California Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, an organization that works in conjunction with the private sector to assist during disasters. Mr. Michael has been invited to become a board member of the group, representing animal issues, to increase cooperation between the City and private groups during disasters. Also included in the packet was a flyer on March Pet Owner Awareness by the City Administrative Officer's Emergency Preparedness Division, which Mr. Michael was involved in putting together. The flyer was posted during the month of March, and was well received throughout the City. During 1998-99 the Department was involved in the State of California's winter weather flood preparedness campaign. The Department had staff involved in handing out information and answering questions.

Mr. Michael continues to work with the Department Airlift Rescue Team (DART). The team has received a great deal of interest from other agencies. He received a call from Ventura County, which is buying rescue equipment and wants advice on training. The Emergency Preparedness Fair is coming up April 16, 17 and 18 at the Los Angeles Zoo parking lot. It is the City's only large outreach program for emergency preparedness, focusing on City services, services provided by other agencies, and goods and services available from private vendors.

In January an event called Legacy of Northridge: Five Years Later was held. Mr. Michael participated as a speaker at the event. The Mayor's Office has mandated that all Departments participate in Terrorism Awareness Training. The information has been sent out to all shelters, and a video will be viewed by all employees. The final item in the packet was the City's Emergency Preparedness Organization Chart; it indicates that animal issues are an important part of emergency planning in the City.

President Afriat asked if all the computers in the Department are Y2K compliant at this point. Mr. Michael indicated the Department had an audit by an outside agency last week. This department identified some problems about three years ago, because of concerns about meeting rabies enforcement requirements. Jack Nylund, Senior Systems Analyst, began working with the Information Technology Agency then to correct the problems. In January, 1999, through his efforts, the Department was able to go online with their changes. A few small items remain to be corrected; they will be changed out in approximately June, 1999. This department was identified on its Y2K scorecard as being among the best-prepared departments in the City, at about 85% preparedness.

President Afriat asked if the voice-mail system is Y2K compliant, as he had heard recently that it is an area that is sometimes overlooked. Mr. Michael did not know if that system is compliant. President Afriat asked if someone would look into this, as he is aware that software exists which can test for voice-mail compliance. Commissioner Avila asked what ratings the Police and Fire Departments received on Y2K readiness. Mr. Michael did not have exact figures with him, but indicated other departments' preparedness ranged from about 60% up to 80% or more, with no department reaching 90% or above. He will distribute information on the audit as soon as it is available.

Commissioner Avila indicated he has read that one of the biggest problems anticipated will be everyone checking their computers, telephones and generators at the same time on January 1, 2000, to see if they work. Mr. Michael indicated that in this time zone it would be possible to be forewarned about possible consequences as they occurred and were dealt with in earlier time zones. He will be ordering extra supplies and animal food, but spreading the orders out over the next several months, so as to minimize the impact of the orders. In addition, he will be distributing emergency preparedness information to the staff to allow them to be fully prepared, so that they feel comfortable leaving their families to come in to work in the event of an emergency.

Commissioner Barrett discussed the fact that Dateline this week covered the rescue of the horse lying upside down in the ravine at Porter Ranch last year. While they did not give the Department credit for the rescue, they did show the use of the sling, and indicated it was important in saving the horse's life. A show seen last weekend, with Alex Payne, had a segment with a horse being picked up with ropes; two other horse rescues were conducted since the

Northridge earthquake using ropes and cargo nets. This is unnecessary with the slings available. The training team meets and practices once a month. Commissioner Barrett indicated hobbles would have been useful at Porter Ranch, because one person was kicked in the head. The DART team is looking into acquiring an acrylic sled that can be used to drag a sedated horse along the ground to a safe spot where the sling harness can be attached. Mr. Michael pointed out the equipment is not enough, that regular training practice is equally important. The commissioners thanked Mr. Michael.

The honorees having arrived, the Board returned to Agenda Item A.

A. Presentation of 10 and 25 Year Service Pins

General Manager Dan Knapp introduced Dr. Dena Mangiamele, who offered a history of each person's services with the Department, and presented service pins to the following staff members: a 25 year pin went to Richard Pusateri; 10 year pins went to Demetria Curtis, Marcial Evangelista, Martha Nunoz-Lopez, and Sharon Thomas. The Commissioners congratulated the recipients and thanked them all for their many years of service to the Department.

B. Update on AB 1482

Linda Gordon, Senior Management Analyst, gave a report on AB1482. It was introduced by Assemblywoman Elaine Alquist, representing the area around Santa Clara. The bill proposes a postponement of the mandates and requirements of 1785 for one year, but as written it applies only to the County of Santa Clara. The Assemblywoman is not interested in amending to include other communities, although a coalition has been speaking with her chief of staff for some time about this issue. The Assemblywoman has stated that she will only consider amending if she is contacted by her fellow legislators representing other areas, not because of requests from other agencies or municipalities. Because the bill is written specifically for Santa Clara County, it goes to the Local Government Committee and may move very quickly through the Assembly. The Department has been in contact with the Chief Legislative Analyst's office, to determine if some of our local legislators will offer some support for amendment to this bill. The CLA's office is being relied upon for guidance in that regard.

Commissioner Barrett indicated that after this week's Public Safety Committee meeting she sent copies of the current status of the bill to Councilmembers Feuer and Chick, who had expressed interest in it. Commissioner Barrett's understanding was that the bill was initially introduced to delay holding periods for all entities statewide, then was narrowed to involve only private humane societies that had public contracts, then finally narrowed only to affect Santa Clara County. In addition, she understood that when the bill was first introduced, Senator Hayden stated he did not have a problem with an extension on the holding periods, but later changed his mind. Santa Clara faces even a bigger problem with SB 1785 than Los Angeles does, because they include nine communities that have contracted with private humane societies which intend to terminate their contracts, leaving those communities completely without animal control operations in place.

Commissioner Barrett asked how critical it is for Los Angeles to be included in this legislation, considering that the critical space problems in our facilities cannot be alleviated within the next several months. Mr. Knapp replied that it is true that our facilities are operating at 150%

capacity, and that it would take up to five years to change that situation, even if holding periods were delayed. Commissioner Afriat expressed concern that passage of this legislation would give decision-makers the signal that they could ignore the problem for another year. He strongly recommended before the Department pursued inclusion in or support of this bill that it be brought before the Commission again for consideration. Commissioner Barrett reiterated the view that the legislation only postpones the problem for a year. President Afriat stated the greatest impact would be the holding time for owned animals. But since the Department is already greatly over capacity, and if the Department is given additional funds to allow the Special Enforcement Unit to pick up additional animals, an impact will be felt in spite of postponing holding period extensions.

C. Update on SB 90

Senior Management Analyst Linda Gordon reported that SB 90 was enacted in 1977-78 to permit state reimbursement of local governments for implementation of state-mandated programs. Under that bill local communities may enter a claim with the state Department of Finance for any state-mandated program that incurs costs to that community. SB 1785 assumes that the fees collected for increased adoptions would make up for any increased costs. However, local agencies disagree with this analysis, and anticipate costs over the amount covered by adoption fees. The lead claim for funds from SB90 to cover SB 1785 costs has been filed with the state by the County of Los Angeles, in the amount of approximately \$5.875ML, not including municipal facility programs. It has been joined in this claim by Tulare County, and the City is on record as being in support of both those claims. The Commission on State Mandates requests that no more than one test claim be filed. The counties' claim has been accepted, and hearings will be held. Then the claim will go to the State Department of Finance, with recommendations. The department of Finance will also hold hearings. If the claim is found to be valid, it will be referred to the state legislature for funding. The process will probably extend over to the second session of this legislative period, and at best estimate will appear as part of the 2000-2001 funding package. The Claim will be monitored by the CAO's office, and the state has already been informed the City anticipates incurring substantial cost to implement SB 1785 mandates.

Public Comments

President Afriat announced that the Commission was prepared to hear public comments. No speaker cards were collected for comments at this meeting.

VI. Deputy General Manager's Report

The Deputy General Manager was to report in the Manager's absence; however, General Manager Knapp was in attendance, and delivered his report. He began by noting that Mr. Nylund informed him that the Department's voice mail should be complaint, as ITA is installing a new system.

Mr. Knapp is preparing the work plan for the next year. As soon as it is completed he will forward it to President Afriat. After this week's meeting the Public Safety Committee sent on to the Council, whose President re-routed it to the Budget and Finance Committee, a request for 18 additional Animal Control Officers, including two five-member teams for Special enforcement and a five-member pilot task force to enforce the Spay/Neuter Ordinance presented to Council by

Mark Ridley-Thomas. Also referred on to Budget and Finance were a Director of Field Operations position, and encouragement to fill the Assistant General Manager's position, which the Committee believed was not in the budget. Next Monday Public Safety will look at a motion from the Personnel Committee for a per capita comparison of expenditures for animal control.

Mr. Knapp asked Lieutenant Moriarty to have the new, Spring 1999 class of Animal Control Officer recruits stand and be introduced to the Commission. The class will graduate in two weeks. Recruits are: Amy Anderson, Julie Bastian, William Dekruyf, Patricia Hegland, Andrew Redfield, and Jay Wooliver. The Commissioners welcomed the new recruits.

Mr. Knapp introduced one final item. Recently, the Commission passed the Barking Dog Ordinance, and requested it be passed along to the Council. Councilman Feuer requested that it be placed on the Commission agenda again for the Commissioners' input regarding the appeal process, as well as an estimation of costs involved. Mr. Knapp anticipates that some constituents, although in support of the Ordinance, will wish to be heard by the Commission. This item will appear on the agenda for the next meeting.

Commissioner Barrett asked what is happening about the Real Stories of Animal Control project. Mr. Knapp stated that a contract has been finalized with Cassady Productions, and Public Information Director Jackie David is working with them to put together two pilots.

Items not on the Agenda

President Afriat reminded members of the public present that there would not be a second meeting in April. The next meeting will be on May 3, 1999, in the Commission Room.

Upon motion by Commissioner Avila, seconded by Commissioner Barrett, the meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

May 3, 1999

ATTEST

Steve Afriat
PRESIDENT

Carmella [Signature]
COMMISSION SECRETARY