



SOLANO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Thomas A. Ferrara, Sheriff-Coroner

530 Union Avenue, Ste. 100, Fairfield, CA 94533
(707) 784-7000

July 16, 2018

Honorable John B. Ellis
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Solano
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Re: Sheriff's Response to 2017-2018 Solano County Grand Jury Report – Animal Care/Animal Control

Judge Ellis:

Under Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, I am responding to the following recommendations contained in the 2017-2018 Grand Jury Report that pertain to matters under my control as the Solano County Sheriff-Coroner:

Finding 1 - Members of Solano Animal Control Authority (SACA) indicated concern with the contract and lack of cooperation from Humane Animal Services (HAS) in providing appropriate fiscal information.

Response to Finding 1 – This matter is not under my control.

Recommendation 1 – SACA, the contracting party, review, renegotiate and rethink the existing contract. SACA send out requests for proposals to find an agency that provides appropriate fiscal information.

Response to Recommendation 1 – This matter is not under my control.

Finding 2 - Licensing is the law, not a choice. All interviewed enforcement agencies admitted that implementing licensing laws is a low priority.

Response to Finding 2 – I agree with the finding.

Recommendation 2 - Law enforcement agencies review policies and ensure that pet owners are aware of and follow the state, county and city regulations.

Response to Recommendation 2 – The recommendation has been implemented. The Solano County Sheriff's Office Animal Control Bureau receives a monthly report from Pet Data regarding licensed and unlicensed dogs within our jurisdiction (unincorporated Solano County and the City of Vallejo). Unlicensed dog owners are sent a letter informing them of the appropriate County Ordinance / City Municipal Code regarding licensing and where/how to obtain a current license for their dog.

Dedicated to Community Service

Finding 3 - Animal Care/Animal Control services in Solano County are not consistent or easily accessed.

Response to Finding 3 – I disagree partially with the finding. While service providers vary by jurisdiction, resulting in some differences in the way services are provided, those under my control are consistent and easily accessed. The Solano County Sheriff's Office has a single line for Vallejo that has been in place for a number of years and is familiar to the residents of Vallejo. The unincorporated area uses a different line without a Vallejo prefix. Both numbers connect citizens to the same phone tree that will give them options to best meet their needs. Citizens are often confused as to whom they should call for Animal Care vs Animal Control, this single phone tree will get them to the most appropriate service provider. In some cases 9-1-1 is utilized by citizens when they feel the exigency of the problem warrants it. 9-1-1 calls in Vallejo go to the Vallejo Police Department Dispatch Center and can then be forwarded to Solano Dispatch. 9-1-1 calls originating from unincorporated areas go directly to Solano Dispatch. Solano Dispatch can then directly radio Sheriff's Animal Control Officers or forward the call to the desk officer.

Recommendation 3 - The cities in Solano County develop a communication system that connects all responding agencies and allows citizens to access needed assistance with a single call.

Response to Recommendation 3 – The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. It is unlikely that a single phone line could be established county wide for all animal control issues. Solano County has two Animal Control Agencies (Solano County Sheriff's Animal Control and Humane Animal Services) that have different jurisdictions. Additionally, there is the Solano County Shelter (Fairfield), Humane Services of the North Bay (Vallejo), and SPCA (Vacaville). Each of these entities provides different services to different areas of the county. Additionally, each of these entities is funded through different sources. With all the different services each of these entities provides, a single line phone tree would need to have an extraordinarily high number of options to get the user to the proper service provider. It would be similar to a single non-emergency line for all of the police departments, jails and fire departments in the county.

Finding 4 - There is no effective program in Solano County to ensure animal license enforcement and compliance.

Response to Finding 4 – I disagree partially with the finding. The Solano County Animal Control Bureau utilizes the information supplied by Pet Data to inform unlicensed dog owners of their obligation to license their dog within our area of jurisdiction. Officers in the field frequently warn or issue citations to unlicensed dog owners when they are contacted during a call for service. The volume of calls we receive does not allow officers the time to visit individual unlicensed dog owners for the sole purpose of issuing a citation.

Recommendation 4 - The cities and the county collaborate on a plan to address license enforcement and compliance.

Response to Recommendation 4 –The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. Each City has its own municipal code for an unlicensed dog, so it would be inappropriate for Solano County Animal Control Officers to issue Vacaville Municipal Code violation citations. Humane Animal Services is under contract with the Solano Animal Control Authority (SACA) to provide enforcement services to the cities of Dixon, Rio Vista, Suisun, Fairfield and Vacaville. Additionally, nothing prevents the police officers of those cities from issuing warnings or citations for violations of their City's Municipal Codes for licensing violations.

Finding 5 - Veterinarians are the first line of defense in addressing the health and safety of family pets, yet there is no effort to create a collaborative program to ensure that pets in Solano County are licensed.

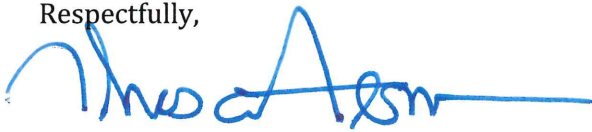
Response to Finding 5 – This matter is not under my control.

Recommendation 5 - Solano Animal Control Authority (SACA) work with the Napa Solano County Veterinary Medical Association to create a program to increase the number of licensed animals in Solano County.

Response to Recommendation 5 – This matter is not under my control.

I would like to thank the Solano County Grand Jury for its time invested in this matter and for its report of findings and recommendations. As always, the recommendations and comments of the Solano County Grand Jury are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,



Thomas A. Ferrara
Sheriff-Coroner

cc: Solano County Grand Jury
County Administrator's Office