



## Recommendation for Action

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**File #: 24-3837, Agenda Item #: 2.**

**2/1/2024**

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### **Posting Language**

Approve an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 3-1 relating to animal reporting requirements, impoundment procedures, public safety measures, and definitions in order to help create efficiencies within the Animal Services Office.

### **Lead Department**

Animal Services Office.

### **Fiscal Note**

This item has no fiscal impact.

### **Prior Council Action:**

July 28, 2022 - Council approved Resolution No. 20220728-098 directing the City Auditor to perform an audit of the Animal Services Office effectiveness and to identify an external animal sheltering expert knowledgeable in No Kill policies and practices to assist in identifying strategies and recommendations for improved flow of operations, quality care for animals, and a successful, sustainable No Kill shelter.

### **For More Information:**

Don Bland, Chief Animal Services Officer, 512-978-0521; Jason Garza, Deputy Chief Animal Services Officer, 512-978-0536.

### **Additional Backup Information:**

At the July 28, 2022, Council meeting, Council approved a resolution directing the City Auditor to perform an audit of Animal Services Office's effectiveness and to identify an external animal sheltering expert knowledgeable in No Kill policies and practices to assist in identifying strategies and recommendations for improved flow of operations, quality care for animals, and a successful, sustainable No Kill shelter.

The City Auditor's Office provided their audit findings to the Council Audit and Finance Committee on September 27, 2023. The findings from the audit were:

- The City's animal welfare priorities conflict with each other, contributing to Austin Animal Center's (AAC) inability to achieve stated goals.
- AAC is not finding enough homes for its animals and is overcrowded.
- Relationships between key stakeholders and within AAC are strained.
- AAC does not have complete and accurate data, and not all data is tracked in a way that will allow management to access it in a user-friendly format.

The audit report provides the following recommendations within the report:

- The City Manager should work with Council, AAC, and key stakeholders to establish a policy that balances the City's no-kill goals, the community's intake needs, and the humane treatment of its

animals.

- The Chief Animal Services Officer should work with stakeholders to develop, implement, and monitor a strategic plan.
- The Chief Animal Services Officer should: a. establish, implement, and monitor a sanitary plan for the shelter including animal kennels, common-use areas, and outdoor spaces; b. develop, implement, and monitor a process for cleaning all areas of the shelter. The process should minimize the risk of transmission of infectious diseases; and, c. identify resources needed to address structural issues noted in this report, and address these issues if possible.
- The Chief Animal Services Officer should ensure staff and volunteers are trained and monitored.
- The City Manager should work with an independent third party to facilitate engagement sessions with key shelter stakeholders and implement an approach for building and maintaining trust across the shelter's internal and external stakeholders.
- The Chief Animal Services Officer should periodically verify data to ensure that it is accurate, complete, and consistent across different systems.

The ordinance for Council's consideration will clean-up definitions, clarify reporting requirements, amend impoundment language, and add requirements for public safety.

Additionally, in an effort to ensure transparency surrounding the revised provisions of the Code, the Chief Animal Services Officer (ASO) will make public all data, as allowed by law, that relates to all classifications of Dogs on the Dunbar Bite Scale and any corresponding euthanization determinations made by the Austin Animal Center's Leadership team made up of (at minimum) the Chief ASO, the Deputy ASO, the Head Veterinarian, the Animal Services Program Managers, and the Behavior Supervisor, and Dog volunteer coordinator(s).