

CITY OF PALM DESERT
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: July 10, 2025
To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
From: Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk
Subject: City Council Meeting of July 10, 2025

Below you will find questions received from the Mayor or Councilmembers and answers provided by City staff regarding tonight's City Council meeting:

ITEM 2a: STUDY SESSION - OVERVIEW OF RIVERSIDE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES – PROPOSED CONTRACT AND COST RECOVERY MODEL

Q1: What is the City of Palm Springs' animal services delivery model, and what are its associated annual costs?

A1: As part of its animal services delivery model, the City of Palm Springs operates animal control services in-house but contracts with a nonprofit organization, now operating as Greater Palm Springs Animal Allies, for shelter operations. In Fiscal Year 2025–26, the City budgeted \$412,568 for animal control services, which covers the salary and benefits for two positions, and \$1,303,452 for shelter services. The City constructed the current 20,000+ square-foot animal shelter in 2011 at a cost of approximately \$7.2 million. As of February 2021, the nonprofit employed 40 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to operate the facility; City staff has reached out to confirm whether this figure remains current but has not yet received a response. In 2024, the shelter reported total costs of \$5.83 million, with the City's contribution representing approximately 22% of that total. The nonprofit has expressed growing challenges related to the aging facility, which lacks sufficient functional space. As of March 2025, the shelter was housing 301 animals, nearly 1.8 times its designed capacity of 170 animals. The City retains responsibility for utilities and janitorial services, while the nonprofit handles interior maintenance, landscaping, and pest control.

Q2: What is the procedure for responding to Priority 1 calls placed after 5:00 p.m.?

Q3: What options are available to extend service hours beyond 5:00 p.m. to improve responsiveness to the public, particularly for calls that are currently routed to RSO after hours?

Q4: Has the City ever permitted pets in City-owned housing units? How have other valley cities approached this policy?

Q5: How does RCDAS currently document the locations where animals are picked up?

Q6: What training and credentials are required for staff responsible for determining adoptability, conducting behavioral evaluations, and making euthanasia decisions? Does RCDAS track which staff members are involved in each step of the intake and evaluation process?

Q7: What factors contributed to the sharp increase in projected costs for other cities in Fiscal Year 2025–26? Was there an underbilling issue prior to the most recent fee study?

- Q8: Are there any plans to hire or contract Animal Behavior Specialists?**
- Q9: To what extent are field officers currently following Exhibit A, Section A.8 of the Description of Standard Field Services, related to returning animals in the field? Are these efforts adjusted during periods of increased animal displacement, such as around holidays with fireworks?**
- Q10: How many cats have been turned away since May 2025? Has there been a formal or informal policy change regarding kitten intake during the summer months?**
- Q11: Under Exhibit B, Section B.1 of the Standard Field Services, the County may post animal photos online to aid with pet recovery and adoption. Is this currently being done, and has it been standard practice in the past?**
- Q12: While Exhibit B, Section C.10 outlines policy details for dogs, is there a corresponding policy for cats?**
- Q13: Are there any licensed kennels or catteries operating in Palm Desert? What enforcement mechanisms exist, if any, for unlicensed or backyard breeding operations?**
- Q14: What are the total shelter intake numbers for dogs and cats for Fiscal Years 2021–22, 2022–23, and July–May of 2023–24?**
- Q15: How many cats and dogs were spayed or neutered each calendar year from 2019 through 2024?**
- Q16: Are there any plans to host or support large-dog spay/neuter clinics?**
- Q17: Has any funding from Sub-fund 11102 or Sub-fund 11109 been expended since 2020? If so, how were the funds used, and what are the four project codes or purposes associated with Sub-fund 11109?**
- Q18: When does RCDAS anticipate resuming reporting on historical performance metrics such as:**
- a. Live dog release rate**
 - b. Live cat release rate**
 - c. Licenses issued in unincorporated areas per 1,000 residents**
 - d. Priority 1 call response times**
 - e. Annual spay/neuter procedures for cats and dogs?**
- A2. City staff will be prepared to address several of the questions during the upcoming Study Session. Any questions that fall under the purview of RCDAS or require additional data will be referred to the County for response and follow-up.**



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: February 25, 2021 CONSENT AGENDA

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A REVISED AND RESTATED ANIMAL SHELTER SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH FRIENDS OF THE PALM SPRINGS ANIMAL SHELTER

FROM: David H. Ready, City Manager

BY: Marcus L. Fuller, Assistant City Manager

SUMMARY:

The City and the Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter (“Friends”) entered into an agreement in 2012 for the operation of the City’s new Animal Shelter at Mesquite Avenue and Vella Road. Friends has successfully operated the Animal Shelter since that time, and Staff recommends the City Council approve a Revised and Restated Agreement with Friends to continue the City’s long-term partnership with Friends for operation and management of the City’s Animal Shelter.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve the Revised and Restated Animal Shelter Services Agreement with Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter, a California non-profit corporation, with an initial term through June 30, 2026, subject to a five year extension through June 30, 2031; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

BACKGROUND:

In 2011 the City completed construction of, and opened for public use, a new state-of-the-art 20,000 square feet Palm Springs Animal Shelter facility and grounds located at 4575 E. Mesquite Avenue, (the “Shelter”), as generally depicted in Figure 1 on the next page. Initially the City operated the Shelter with its own staff, but in 2012 the City evaluated operation of the Shelter by third parties and non-profit organizations.

On October 17, 2012, the City Council approved the privatization of the Shelter operations and approved an Operating Agreement with Friends. The initial term of the agreement was through June 30, 2018, with two – three year optional extensions. The term of the original agreement extends to June 30, 2024 in accordance with the allowable extensions. A copy of the 2012 staff report is included as **Attachment 1**.

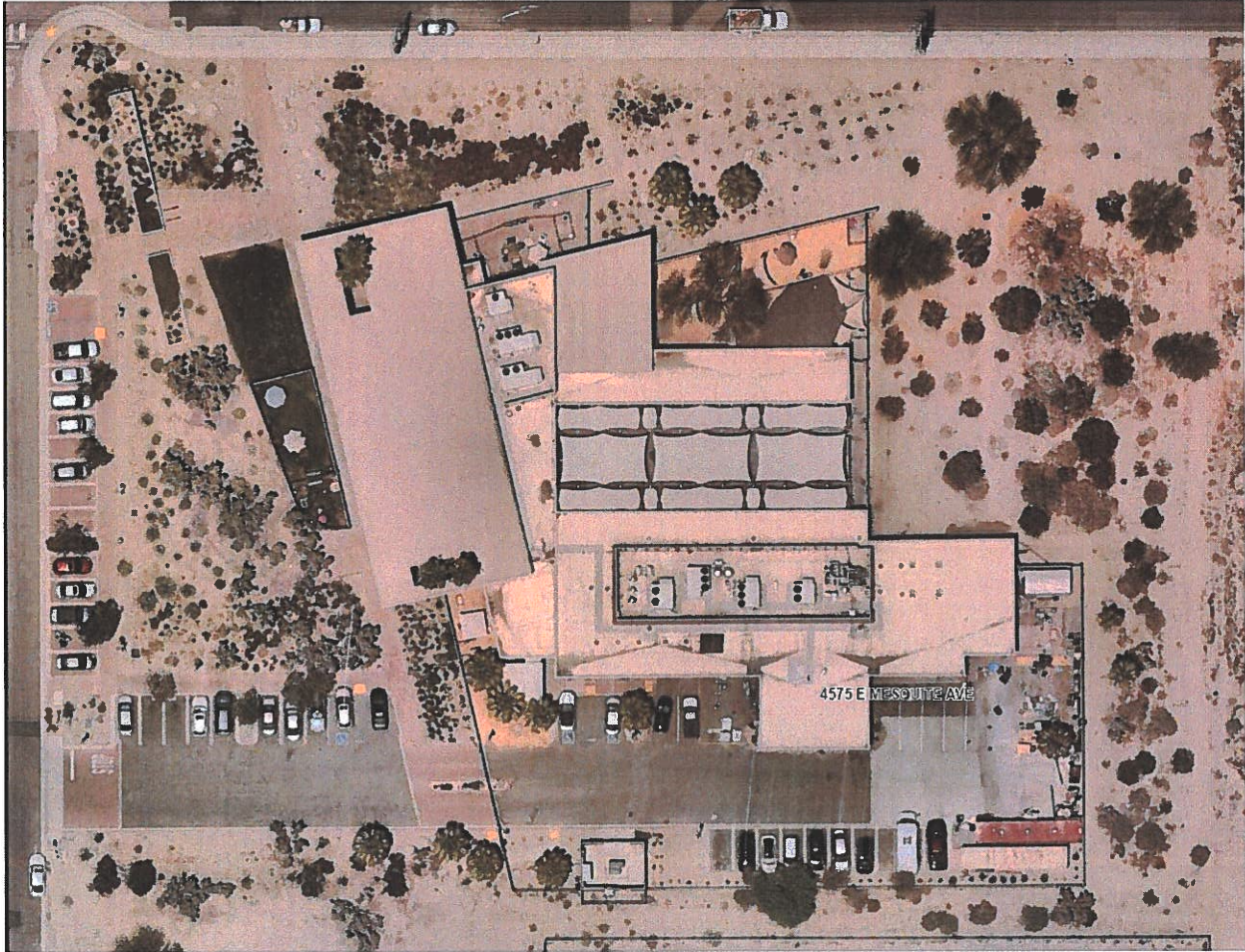


Figure 1

On November 6, 2013, the City Council approved an amendment to the agreement to amend certain provisions. A copy of the 2013 staff report is included as **Attachment 2**.

As part of the City’s budget process for the current 2020/2021 Fiscal Year budget, the City Council approved a decrease in the annual payment (and eliminated the automatic annual increase) to Friends for operation of the Shelter, including a requirement for Friends to assume certain City maintenance obligations. These changes were reflected in a Side Letter Agreement approved by the parties.

A copy of the amended agreement and Side Letter incorporating the recent changes implemented in the current FY 2020/2021 budget is included as **Attachment 3**.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Friends has successfully operated the Shelter since 2012, and the City and Friends have met periodically over the last 2 years to discuss overall changes to the original agreement to reflect Friends' current operations and to extend the term for a longer period of time. Staff recommends the City Council consider approval of the Revised and Restated Agreement to provide for a long-term partnership for continued operation and management of the Shelter by Friends.

The scope of services to be provided by Friends remains the same as in the original agreement, with minor changes in obligations between Friends and City that were accommodated in amendments previously approved by the parties.

The following list identifies the changed terms and conditions in the proposed agreement:

- Section 2(G) – original agreement did not allow for Friends to expand the capacity of the Shelter. The proposed agreement allows for Friends to adjust the capacity of the Shelter upon notice to City, and to allow Friends to accept and care for animals received from outside the City limits provided the cost therefore is paid from Friends' own funding sources and that no City funds are used.
- Section 6(D) – the original agreement (Section 6E) required that Friends have 14.2 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) and specific listing and title. The proposed agreement reflects that Friends currently has 40 FTEs and requires Friends to notify City of any decrease to its staffing plan as part of its annual budgeting process.
- Section 7 – this section relating to insurance and indemnification has been completely revised and restated to incorporate the City's current standard terms and conditions.
- Section 9 – this section relating to maintenance of the Shelter has been revised to reflect the current mutual obligations of each party – particularly with Friends' obligation to assume responsibility for interior maintenance of the Shelter, and for onsite landscape maintenance and pest control services.
- Section 10 – this section has been revised to identify the City's payment of the Management Fee to Friends for its operation of the Shelter. The Management Fee is maintained at the current level of funding appropriated in the FY 2020/2021 budget at \$940,402 payable in monthly installments. This section will allow Friends to request an increase to the Management Fee as part of the City's annual budget process, and will be subject to the City Council's appropriation of funds in the adopted budget.
- Section 12 – the term is effective upon approval and will extend for 5 years and 4 months through June 30, 2026, with a 5-year extension available through June 30, 2031.
- Section 13 – this section incorporates standard terms and conditions applicable to city contracts.

A copy of the proposed agreement is included as **Attachment 4**.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this item is categorically exempt under CEQA, in that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that this action will have any effect on the environment.

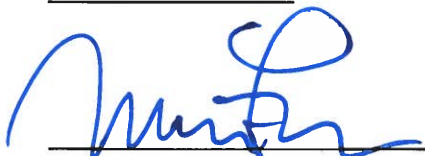
FISCAL IMPACT:

The City agreed to pay Friends an annual amount of \$995,000 starting with the 2013/2014 fiscal year (July 1, 2013), subject to an annual increase in accordance with the Consumer Price Index. Over time, the annual payment increased due to the CPI to \$1,115,402 for the 2019/2020 fiscal year (July 1, 2019).

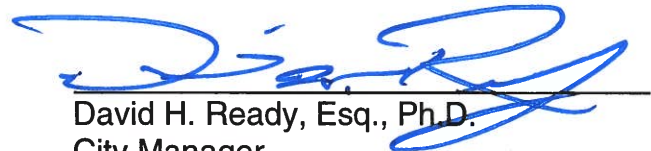
In April/May 2020 as the City was preparing the revised 2020/2021 fiscal year budget, Friends agreed to reduce the City's annual payment to assist in its budget deficit challenges. The current annual payment for the 2020/2021 fiscal year (starting July 1, 2020) is \$940,402 – less than the original amount paid in 2013.

The proposed agreement maintains the City's payment to Friends of \$940,402 as this amount is what is appropriated in the current fiscal year budget. However, in fairness to Friends, the proposed agreement allows for Friends to submit its annual operating budget to the City by March 1 annually for Staff to consider its budget and any proposed increase to Friends annual payment. The proposed agreement provides flexibility in considering changes to Friends' annual payment in the context of their annual operating budget and will consider outside funding or donations that Friends can secure. Any final amount to be paid to Friends in each year will be subject to the City Council's approval through its appropriation of funding for the Animal Shelter in each fiscal year budget, similar to how the City Council budgets and appropriates funding for other enterprises including the Convention Center and Golf Course.

SUBMITTED BY:



Marcus L. Fuller, MPA, P.E., P.L.S.
Assistant City Manager



David H. Ready, Esq., Ph.D.
City Manager

Attachments:

1. 2012 Staff Report
2. 2013 Staff Report
3. Current Agreement
4. Proposed Agreement

ATTACHMENT 1



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 17, 2012

NEW BUSINESS

SUBJECT: ANIMAL SHELTER PRIVATIZATION

FROM: David H. Ready, City Manager

BY: Interim Animal Shelter Director

SUMMARY

The proposed action would approve an Operating Agreement for the Palm Springs Animal Shelter with a non-profit organization.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve Operating Agreement _____ for the Palm Springs Animal Shelter, with the Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter.
2. Authorize the Finance Director to make all financial transactions (appropriations, amendments and transfers) necessary to implement the Agreement.
3. Appoint a member of the City Council to serve as Liaison to the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

This fall, after passing the first year anniversary of the opening of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter, the City has spent a good deal of time evaluating its ability to operate the much larger shelter vs. a model of having a non-profit organization carry out the operations. Staff believes this past years' experience, as well as a growing national trend of non-profits operating shelters, supports the need to shift from a City operated facility to this proposed model.

The City of Palm Springs has successfully utilized a model of contracting with private entities that can lend greater specialized expertise to a particular municipal operation (e.g. The Palm Springs Convention Center, Tourism and the Palm Springs Wastewater Treatment Facility).

With the opening of the new Palm Springs Animal Shelter in October, 2011, the City went from a 50 year old 4,000 sq. ft. facility to a state of the art 20,000 sq. ft. facility. The City's approach to handling its homeless animal population moved from a

ITEM NO. 50

traditional municipal shelter to more of a sanctuary model where animals are maintained until they can be rehomed. These major changes resulted in an increase in shelter staff from 3.5 employees to 10 employees, as well as increasing the annual operating cost from approximately \$331,000 in fiscal year 2010-11 to over \$1.05 million in the current fiscal year. Moreover, this year's costs were held down by utilizing temporary employees while evaluating the long term solution to operating the shelter. Continued operation of the shelter by the City next fiscal year utilizing regular employees will increase the annual cost to over \$1.3 million.

With these cost levels in mind, the Procurement and Contracting Department developed and circulated a "solicitation of interest" document to known entities with animal care experience to gauge the level of interest in a privately operated shelter. Following a month of advertising and searching the City received one Statement of Interest from the Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter ("Friends").

The City staff requested that the Friends prepare a proposal to operate the shelter and that document has been utilized as a basis to negotiate the proposed agreement. A general comparison between the "City Operation" vs. "Friends Operation" is as follows:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>CITY OPERATION</u>	<u>NON-PROFIT</u>
Model Type	Municipal Shelter	Sanctuary Shelter
Days Open	5	6
Hours/Wk Open	30	34
Staff Groomer	no	yes
Registered Vet. Tech staffer	no	yes
Intake Behavior Assessment	Minimal	"Safer" evaluations
Number of Full-time Employees	10	11
Part-time Employees	2	6
Humane Education	Not Currently	Yes
Low Cost Rabies Clinics	Not Currently	Yes, twice a year
TNRM Program	Thru Friends	Yes
Off-site Adoption Programs	Thru Friends	Yes
Foster Program	Thru Friends	Yes
Behavior Rehab Program	Thru Friends	Yes
Transfer/Rescue Program	Staff & Friends	Yes

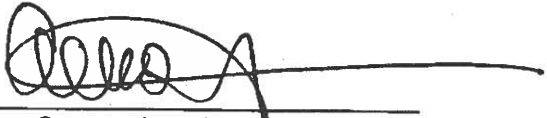
The business points of the proposed Operating Agreement are as follows:

- Privatized Operations begin November 1, 2012.
- Initial Contract Term would be 5 years 8 months (to coincide with fiscal year).
- Two (3) year options would follow with mutual consent.
- The Friends would be required to offer all services normally found at a modern animal shelter.
- Compensation for the remainder of the 2012-13 fiscal year would be the funds remaining in the Animal Shelter Budget (3305) as of November 1, 2012 plus a prorated share of the remaining utility budget for the facility.
- Compensation for fiscal years 2013-14 and 2014-15 would be a flat \$995,000.

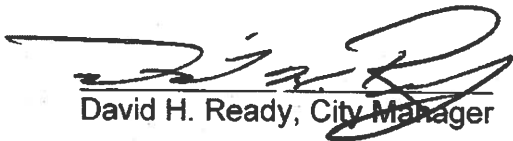
- Compensation for the remaining three years of the initial term shall be adjusted based on CPI movement in calendar year 2014.
- Facility maintenance would be based on a normal landlord /tenant split.
- Friends would be responsible for all medical costs.
- Friends would administer the Dog Licensing program for the City and retain the estimated \$22,000 in revenue.
- Animal Control would be maintained as a separate entity operating from the City Police Department.

FISCAL IMPACT:

In the first full year of operations it is proposed that the City provide the Friends \$995,000 which would allow the City to avoid its estimated cost of operations of \$1,305,000; an avoided cost savings of \$310,000. Future years will be evaluated to determine annual savings to the City for avoided costs, as appropriate, based on the Friends operating experience at the end of each fiscal year.



Allen Smoot, Interim Animal Shelter Director



David H. Ready, City Manager

Attachment: Operating Agreement

ATTACHMENT 2



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: NOVEMBER 6, 2013 CONSENT CALENDAR

SUBJECT: APPROVE AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE ANIMAL SHELTER SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH FRIENDS OF THE PALM SPRINGS ANIMAL SHELTER TO AMEND THE PAYMENT SCHEDULE TO MONTHLY.

FROM: David H. Ready, City Manager

BY: Chief of Staff/City Clerk

SUMMARY

The City Council will consider an amendment to the Animal Shelter Services Agreement with Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter to provide for an amended payment schedule.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve Amendment No. 1 to the Animal Shelter Services Agreement with Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter. A6292.
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Amendment to the Agreement and all necessary documents to effectuate the Agreement.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

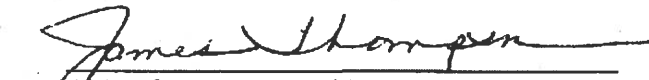
The City has successfully transitioned the operation of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter, to the Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter, and the Friends have operated the Shelter for the last year.

The agreement provided for the City's contribution to be payable in quarterly installments, which provides cash-flow challenges for the Friends who must pay monthly operational expenses. This amendment amends the Agreement for the City to provide monthly installments.

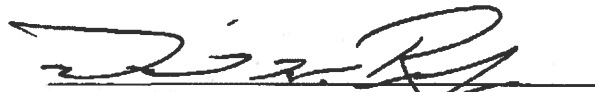
Additionally, the amendment clarifies, that as a City facility, the City shall be responsible for the payment of utilities and the janitorial services contract.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The estimated cost of utilities for the remainder of the fiscal year is approximately \$125,000, sufficient funds are available in Continuing Appropriations.



JAMES THOMPSON
Chief of Staff/City Clerk



DAVID H. READY
City Manager

Attachments:
Amendment No. 1

PALM SPRINGS ANIMAL SHELTER

City of Palm Springs
Council Presentation
Wednesday, March 12, 2025



A BRIEF HISTORY:

Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Our mission is to transform lives through extraordinary animal care and advocacy. We inspire compassion and positive relationships between the community and animals through direct action and humane education.

We have been supporting the Palm Springs Animal Shelter since 1996, raising funds for shelter operations and for the construction of the current facility.

Upon the opening of the facility in 2011, the City managed operations

November 2012, “Friends” entered into an agreement with the city to operate the day-to-day programs of the city’s public, open-admissions shelter.



Commitment

FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF

We believe every animal deserves a loving, safe, healthy environment in which they can thrive.

We are committed to operating under a NO KILL philosophy, only euthanizing animals for

- Extreme behavioral issues
- Injuries or illness causing the animal irremediable suffering

2025 - Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter is now operating as (DBA) Greater Palm Springs Animal Allies, a name that better represents the scope of our work



Lifesaving by the numbers



Intakes	TOTAL	2,688
Stray		1,393
Guardian surrender		514
Animal Control confiscated		312
Adoption return		229
Transfer in (other areas)		168
TNR kept		72

Outcomes	TOTAL	2,870
Adoptions		2,119
Returned to owner		345
Transfer out		202
Died in care		103
Humanely euthanized - medical		96
Humanely euthanized -behavior		5

Live Release Rates

91.2% for cats

97.6% for dogs

Understanding the numbers...

Intakes

- Majority of intakes are strays (54.5%),
 - brought in by public Samaritans and ACO's
 - Includes friendly cats trapped during TNR
- Owner Surrenders (19.1%)
 - Palm Springs residents only
 - Main reasons include can no longer care for and moving
 - We provide assistance to people need to surrender for financial situations
- ACO Confiscated animals (11.6%)
 - consists of animals in dangerous and neglected situations
- Returned (8.5%)
 - Many reasons including allergies, issues with other animals, etc...
- Transfers for our communities are our lowest percentage (6.3%)
 - Helping our communities with emergencies
 - Bringing in smaller dogs with our public wants



Understanding the numbers...

Outcomes

- Adoptions
 - Majority of adoptions in our region but several across state lines
- Return to owner
 - 310 dogs and 45 cats - vast majority with microchips
- Transferred out
 - Across the USA and Canada and only to other no-kill organizations
- Died in care
 - We do our very best to save every animal that comes to us
- Humanely euthanized - Medical reasons
 - Due to severe medical situations to end extreme suffering
 - Includes 52 cats, 21 wildlife, 20 dogs, and 3 small pets (96 total)
- Humanely euthanized - Behavior reasons
 - 5 dogs were euthanized for severe behavior issues that were deemed unsafe to be placed in the community
 - No cats were euthanized
- We never euthanize for time or space



Other services provided by Greater Palm Springs Animal Allies

Trap Neuter Return of community cats

- 1,464
- Partially funded by the City

Low-cost Public Vaccines

- 6,016
- Thursday and Sunday Clinics

Food Bank

- 5,936 cats and dogs fed

We help over 16,500 animals annually

New for 2025

- Wildlife Center - Indio
- Medical Resource Center - Desert Hot Springs



PALM SPRINGS ANIMAL SHELTER



2024 Financial Numbers

Total Costs

- \$5,832,428

City contract

- \$1,194,384
- 20.5%

Significant increases to the budget (2023 vs. 2024)

- People - \$2,857,593 to \$3,494,176 (+\$636,583)
 - Increase base to \$20 per hour
 - Second vet, additional RVT, TNR support, Transport coordinator
- Animal Supplies - \$476,788 to \$533,639 (+\$56,851)
- In-kind volunteer hours 85,287 (value of \$2,315,428)



Our Challenges

Aging Facility

- Opened in 2011
- Design is esthetically amazing
- Design not functional for progressive shelter practices

Not enough space for animals

- Mainly large dogs (kennels doubled up)
- Cats/kittens in the summer
- Facility is designed to hold 98 cats and 72 dogs
- June 2024 - 570 animals in care
- Currently we have 144 cats 142 dogs and 15 other (301)

Rental property and HOA policies

- Limiting pet breeds and sizes
- Number of animals
- Community cat difficulties



THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME & INTEREST

Dan Rossi

Executive Director

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760.416.5718 x106

