



AGENDA
CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA
CEDAR FALLS ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES TASK FORCE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2024
3:00 PM AT CITY HALL, 220 CLAY STREET, CONFERENCE ROOM 2

Call to Order

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes

1. Approve the Animal Control Task Force Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2024.

Agenda Item

1. Review the City's current animal control services and data collected over the last 6 months since bringing the service in-house, and review if the current services are adequately meeting residents' expectations and whether or not other options may be necessary.

Adjournment

Cedar Falls Animal Control Task Force

Tuesday, August 20, 2024

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

City Hall – Conference Room 2

Task Force (non-voting) Chair Mayor Danny Laudick opened the meeting with the following members in attendance: Hannah Crisman (City Council At-Large), Daryl Kruse (City Council Ward 3), Ron Gaines (City Administrator), Craig Berte (Public Safety Director), Mark Howard (Police Chief), Chase Schrage (Director of Public Works), Brian Heath (Operations and Maintenance Division Manager), Kristy Gardner (Director of the Cedar Bend Humane Society), Nick Hendrick (CBHS Board Member), and Joanne Koweil (CBHS Board Member). Absent: Dustin Ganfield (City Council Ward 5). Members of the public were also present.

Mayor Laudick introduced the only item on the Task Force Agenda, Review the City's current animal control services and data collected over the last 6 months since bringing the service in-house, and review if the current services are adequately meeting residents' expectations and whether or not other options may be necessary and stated public comment would be allowed at the end of the meeting.

Mayor Laudick stated the Task Force's goal is to give a recommendation to Council for Animal Control Services; recommendations could include remaining in-house as is, remain in-house but with changes to structure/processes/staffing, or contracting out for these services.

Director Berte reviewed the history of internal and external agencies who provided services over the past 34 years and that the City discontinued its contract with CBHS due to the proposed contracted cost increase; Berte provided information on collaboration to address processes. Chief Howard provided data about type and length of calls received since January 1, 2024 and staff hours utilized per week, spoke about training and staff knowledge, and ordinance changes for owner redemption of loose/captured animals. Director Gardner provided information regarding microchips and a training on feral cats.

Task Force members discussed: the number of domestic v. wild animal calls; protocol for dangerous or injured animals; types of calls handled by current Animal Control services and when someone would be referred to an outside professional; protocol for sick and/or injured animals v. healthy animals; training for Public Safety staff who field these calls for service; potential of dedicated staff to service; CBHS as a non-contracted resource; removal of animals that carry rabies; protocol for animals near death; CBHS as a contracted resource and cost; consistency of service, training of staff, and balancing time spent on service calls as well as other duties; budgeting and approval if potential additional staff are recommended; equipment purchases for service calls; Animal Control patrolling, night staff, and call volume; researching other cities' Animal Control; availability of local contracting agencies; previously, reports of service calls logged v. billed; service calls for aggressive animals; allocation of resources; upgrading tracking software, tentatively start date October 2025; comfort level of staff with level

of training and with animals; tentative proposal with rough numbers from CBHS; does the newly instated redemption fee paid by owners offset the amount billed by CBHS for boarding; Public Works will continue to collect dead animals; microchipped animals brought to CBHS. Mayor Laudick requested Task Force members bring recommendations, options, and cost estimates to the second task force meeting.

Mayor Laudick opened for Public Comment. Luanne Puhl, Cedar Falls, and Bruce Earnst, Waterloo, spoke in favor of dedicated Animal Control staff. Task Force members responded to public comments.

Mayor Laudick adjourned the Task Force at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Supervisor



MAYOR DANNY LAUDICK

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MEMORANDUM

Office of the Mayor

TO: City Council

FROM: Mayor Danny Laudick

DATE: July 24th, 2024

SUBJECT: Creation of Steering Task Force to review Cedar Falls Animal Control Services

REF: (a) Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised
 (b) Iowa Code §21, Official Meetings Open to Public (Open Meetings)
 (c) Iowa Code §22, Examination of Public Records (Open Records)

1. **Purpose.** This memorandum creates a Task Force to provide direction to the City Council and City staff on the appropriate next steps for providing quality, cost-effective animal control services in the City of Cedar Falls. This memo provides the Task Force's scope of work, member selection process, and a timeline for completion.

2. **Background.**

- a. *City Animal Control Services.* In November of 2023, the City of Waterloo informed the City of Cedar Falls that our contracted animal control services provided through the City of Waterloo would be increasing in cost from an average annual rate of \$115,000 over the last six years to \$590,767 in FY25, an increase of over 500%. Due to this significant increase, the City of Cedar Falls made the decision to pursue other more feasible options to provide animal control, and ultimately decided to bring animal control in-house under our Public Safety program.
- b. *Animal Control Incident.* During the week of July 8th, 2024, Cedar Falls Public Safety was involved in an incident in which an animal control call was significantly mishandled by City staff. A captured domestic animal was mistakenly released as a result and, at this time, has not been found.
- c. *Council Referral and Action.* At its regular meeting on July 15th, 2024, the City Council had a pressing referral discussion to review our animal control program in light of the recent incident and other previous concerns heard. Mayor Laudick proposed the creation of a Task Force to do a review of the City's current animal control procedures and to provide recommendations on the best path forward for continuing to provide quality animal control services in Cedar Falls. City Council consensus was to move forward with the Task Force.

3. **Charge.**

- a. The Task Force shall review the City's current animal control services and data collected over the last 6 months since bringing the service in-house. In reviewing the current state of animal control services, the Task Force will review if the current services are adequately meeting residents' expectations and whether or not other options may be

necessary.

- b. The Task Force shall provide the Mayor and City Council with a recommendation(s) on how to best implement animal control services in Cedar Falls going forward, including a cost-benefit analysis of the options available, whether those options are in-house, through an external partner, or combination thereof.
4. **Deliverables.** The Task Force shall provide, no later than Monday, Sept 2nd, 2024, a final report to the Mayor and City Council that identifies options and a preferred recommendation for providing animal control services in Cedar Falls going forward. The Task Force shall also make formal recommendations for follow-on action, including policy and procedure change recommendations, budgetary needs, and identification of ongoing efforts needed to provide quality animal control services in Cedar Falls.
5. **Task Force Membership and Staff Liaisons.**
 - a. *Voting Membership Selection.* The voting members shall be three members of the Cedar Falls City Council. These members will be appointed by the Mayor. The Mayor shall serve as the non-voting chair of the Task Force and appoint one of the three City Council members as vice-chair.
 - b. *Remaining Membership Selection.* The remainder of the Task Force members shall be non-voting members, appointed by the Mayor, and shall include community partners in animal control who can provide expertise and support to the discussion.
 - c. *City Staff Liaisons.* The following staff members are assigned to support the Task Force and to participate in meetings in a liaison (non-voting) role:
 - (1) Ron Gaines – *City Administrator*
 - (2) Craig Berte – *Director of Public Safety*
 - (3) Mark Howard – *Chief of Police*
 - (4) Chase Schrage – *Director of Public Works*

Other staff may be called upon to provide input and perspective as needed.
6. **Budget.** A budget has not been established for the Task Force. The Chair shall make a request to the Mayor to fund the materials, travel, education, invited speakers, and other expenses necessary for the Task Force’s success.
7. **Duration.** The Task Force will exist until the Final Report is presented to the Mayor and City Council. Once the final report has been delivered, the Task Force will only convene at the direction of the Mayor. If the Task Force needs additional time to deliver the final report, the Mayor may extend the duration of the task force.
8. **Proposed Schedule.**
 - a. Meetings will be held as needed and scheduled by the Chairperson at a time and location that is amenable to the participants.
 - b. The Task Force may change, cancel, or add meeting dates and locations as needed to effectively carry out its work.

9. **Parliamentary Procedure.** The Task Force will be guided by the basic provisions of Robert’s Rules (reference a) to deliberate and take action on the business of the day, as well as to create agendas and minutes. These agendas shall be published at least 24 hours in advance, as required by the Iowa Open Meetings Law (reference (b)). The Chair shall decide the level of formality appropriate for each meeting, and preside accordingly.
10. **Committees.** The Task Force may create committees as described in reference (a) §50: Committees to allow for greater focus on certain aspects of the Task Force’s charge. This may be advantageous for deliberating and developing plans and recommendations prior to consideration by the entire Task Force.
11. **Public Participation.** The Task Force Chair shall have the discretion to determine the degree of public participation (through public comment) at each meeting, depending on the business before the Task Force. As a working group, the Task Force must balance the democratic benefit of public participation with the reality of a limited time budget each day for carrying out the Task Force’s charge. A solution may be to invite these interested public participants to be featured speakers at relevant future meetings, with dedicated time slots to present their valuable perspectives.
12. **Compliance with State Law.** The Task Force shall comply with the provisions of both the Iowa Open Meetings Law (reference (b)) and the Iowa Open Records Law (reference (c)) in accomplishing its work.

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