

## **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