

Cedar Falls Animal Control Task Force

Thursday, September 5, 2024

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

City Hall – Conference Room 2

Task Force (non-voting) Chari Mayor Danny Laudick opened the meeting with the following Task Force members in attendance: Hannah Crisman (City Council At-Large), Daryl Kruse (City Council Ward 3), Dustin Ganfield (City Council Ward 5), Ron Gaines (City Administrator), Craig Berte (Public Safety Director), Mark Howard (Assistant Public Safety Director/Police Chief), John Zolondek (Assistant Public Safety Director/Fire), Kristy Gardner (Executive Director of Cedar Bend Humane Society), Nick Hendrick (CBHS Board Member), Joanne Koweil (CBHS Board Member). Absent: none. Members of the public were also present.

Mayor Laudick introduced the first item on the Task Force Agenda, Approve the Animal Control Task Force Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2024 and asked for a motion to approve. Task Force member Ganfield moved to approve the minutes and Task Force member Kruse seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Mayor Laudick introduced the next 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. Mayor Laudick stated the focus of this meeting was to provide numbers, options moving forward, and to provide a high-level overview to staff for direction. Director Berte provided an overview of the past 7-8 months including training, procedures and communication; he stated dead animal calls are handled by Public Works; and identified the busiest call hours.

Chief Howard explained the proposed plan developed for keeping services in-house. Howard proposed hiring two part-time civil personnel to be the fully trained animal control staff to work the high call-volume hours; their main function once trained will be to liaise with CBHS and train other Public Safety staff with the option to assist with other duties as appropriate; proposed starting pay, hours, and benefits offered. Howard stated there would be continuing CBHS costs as well; the chip scanner has been beneficial in animal redemption. To cover the cost of two new part-time personnel, Howard proposed cutting two Community Service Officer positions and offset that by changing the part-time office assistant position to a full-time position. Howard listed equipment they have already purchased, and intent to look for an in-house vehicle that could be utilized.

Task Force members discussed the personnel change cost offset, the difference between the CSO and PSO positions, and that the proposed new part-time animal control personnel and CSOs report to the Support Services Supervisor, a civilian position. Howard provided wild animal call numbers and that these calls are handled by

referral to outside agencies. Task Force members discussed the certification process length and cost and hours of new part-time animal control personnel and off-hours calls. Director Gardner asked what the City would require from CBHS; Howard responded: training, animal control staff would be liaisons between CBHS and the City. Task Force members discussed holding owners accountable for redemption services, yearly licensing v. a one-time registration fee upon chipping an animal, recent implementation of a recoupment fee ordinance, and repeat offenders; call tracking software; proactive things the City can be doing and the Community Engagement Lt.; creation of a job description, including experience and pay, looking at similar models; vehicle trade between Public Safety and Public Works.

Mayor Laudick requested clarification of the voting body's comfort with the proposed plan and direction for staff; Ganfield expressed approval; Crisman requested additional information from Director Gardner and Gardner responded with services CBHS could provide, very rough budget, their expertise and licensures, and court experience, but commented that the proposed plan model would also work well; night calls will go to Public Safety regardless; does the City have a procedure for loose livestock. Task Force members further discussed the relationship between CBHS and the City, CBHS willingness to help, and that a proposal to utilize CBHS for animal control services could be revisited in future. Task Force members further discussed funding options for the two proposed part-time animal control staff and changes to other Public Safety staffing.

Task Force member Ganfield recommended adjusting the charge to present at the second October meeting, and development of a job description and move forward with the City's proposed plan. City Administrator Gaines advised the job description will take time to develop. Voting Task Force Members Ganfield, Crisman, and Kruse expressed agreement with the City's proposed plan.

Mayor Laudick opened for public comment. Larissa Boeck, Cedar Falls, spoke in support of utilizing the CBHS for animal control instead of the City's proposed plan.

Task Force member Ganfield motioned to proceed to create a job description and formalize the current plan for presentation to Council at Committee of the Whole on October 21, 2024. Task Force members discussed animal wellness, potential for rescue animals at a Public Safety event, options to rework the proposal and that the process is evolving and can be revisited. Task Force member Kruse seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:19 PM.

Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Supervisor