

TO: Andrew P. Powers, City Manager

FROM: Kelvin Parker, Community Development Director

DATE: June 18, 2024

SUBJECT: Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control Contract

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve and authorize the City Manager to execute a five-year Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement between the County of Los Angeles and the City of Thousand Oaks relating to Animal Care and Control Services (Agreement).
2. Authorize expenditure in the amount of \$500,500 for FY 2024-25 from A/C #001-4020-624-5710 (General Fund – Payment to Other Agencies).
3. Find that this action is not a project as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act.

LEVINE ACT ITEM: No

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

No Additional Funding Requested. \$500,500 is included in the Adopted FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget for animal control services. Funds for the remaining term of the contract will be requested during the upcoming biennial budget process.

BACKGROUND:

State law requires local government to enforce numerous laws addressing a wide range of animal-related issues, ranging from animal cruelty, rabies control, dangerous animals, etc., to protect animals from harm and ensure their welfare. The City first contracted with LA County Animal Care and Control in 1992 to provide these required services among others. Prior to 1992, animal control services were provided by the County of Ventura. This change took place because the cost of services was more economical and the LA County Agoura Hills Animal Control facility is closer to Thousand Oaks residents, making it more accessible. The Agoura Hills facility is 5.6 miles from City Hall versus 17.5 miles from the

Camarillo facility. City Council approved the current agreement with LA County on June 25, 2019. It is set to expire on June 30, 2024.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Per the LA County Estimated Service Levels Schedule (Attachment #1), charges for the next three years are projected to be \$465,028 in FY 2024-25, \$483,139 in FY 2025-26, and \$501,249 in FY 2026-27 which is an estimated increase in total City costs each year of approximately 3 percent.

The County Auditor-Controller conducts a staffing and overhead analysis each year to determine the hourly rates for officers, costs for animal impounds, and the per capita fee. The increase shown in the Estimated Service Levels is a projection of these estimated costs to continue to provide the high-quality level of services they currently provide to the City's residents.

These costs are offset by license/penalty fees and other fees collected from residents. There is no change to the projection of fees collected; therefore, the total City net cost increase varies and in FY 2024-25 is 4.0 percent, in FY 2025-26 is 3.9 percent, and in FY 2026-27 is 4.4 percent. The City establishes its own licensing fees but historically uses the LA County licensing fees.

Changes in the Proposed Agreement

The proposed Agreement, which runs through FY 2028-29, is substantially similar to previous agreements with LA County for animal control services. Primarily, the changes relate to non-substantive language and terminology revisions outlined in the attached letter from LA Animal Care & Control dated February 12, 2024 (Attachment #2). However, there is one substantive change to the Agreement. The proposed Agreement includes a refined description of the Alternatives to Care Center Admissions in Attachment A – Description of Services of the Agreement. This program provides services to residents to help keep pets out of care services and in homes and healthy environments. This includes counseling pet owners and connecting them with resources such as free pet food and supplies, medical vouchers, temporary housing, access to a medical helpline, and other critical resources intended to help keep pets with their families.

Comparison of Cost of Services

Staff revisited the cost of LA County's services compared to comparable cities that receive services from Ventura County, and the table on the following page shows the per-capita cost comparison.

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City	Population	FY 2023-24 Animal Control Adopted Budget	Cost per resident
Thousand Oaks	122,643*	\$455,000 LA County	\$3.71
Simi Valley	124,174	\$923,500	\$7.44
Ventura	110,572	\$807,810	\$7.31

*Source: California Department of Finance

This information shows contracting with LA County for animal services continues to be the more cost-effective option for the City.

Staff is not aware of any additional services or benefits that would be received from the additional cost for Ventura County animal control services.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets the following City Council goal:

B. Provide municipal government leadership which is open and responsive to residents, and is characterized by ethical behavior, stability, promoting public trust, transparency, confidence in the future, and cooperative interaction among civic leaders, residents, business representatives, and staff, while recognizing and respecting legitimate differences of opinion on critical issues facing the City.

PREPARED BY: Cathy Jansen, Community Development Analyst

Attachments:

Attachment #1 – Estimated Service Levels Schedule

Attachment #2 – Letter from LA County Animal Care & Control

Attachment #3 – Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement