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**DATE:** January 18, 2022                    **AGENDA DATE:** January 25, 2022  
**TO:** Del Norte County Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Randy Hooper, Assistant County Administrative Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Animal Services Division Staffing Update

**RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD ACTION:**

Approve the 1. creation of an Animal Services Supervisor I/II position using Measure R Funds; 2. reclassification and range adjustment, using Measure R Funds, of the Animal Control Officer I/II classification; 3. elimination of the vacant Kennel Attendant I/II classification; and 4. direct the Human Resources Division to amend the adopted staffing chart as requested by the Agriculture Commissioner and as recommended by County Administration.

**SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:**

The Department of Agriculture and Animal Control is requesting the following staffing changes for the Animal Services Division:

1. Create and allocate one Animal Services Supervisor I/II position, Range 42/46 using Measure R Funds;
2. Revise the job description and adjust the range of the Animal Control Officer I/II classification, Range 32/36 using Measure R Funds for increased cost due to the range adjustment; and
3. Eliminate the vacant Kennel Attendant I/II classification that was previously funded using Measure R Funds.

The Animal Services Division is in need of a Supervisor position to oversee the functions of the division including assisting the Department Head in the management of the division personnel including the Animal Control Officers (ACO) and volunteers. Currently, and for quite some time, this department has had a vacancy in their Deputy Department Head position leaving the Department Head to oversee all functions of the department including animal control, agriculture, and weights & measures which has obviously been challenging. Compounding this problem on the Animal Control side is that one of two currently allocated ACO positions is now vacant and it is anticipated that recruiting will be challenging given the difficult hiring conditions being experienced across many parts of the country.

Administration has met with the Department Head to discuss how to best approach this very clear need and substantial time was subsequently invested in reviewing industry standards for this classification, including professional development and job requirements. As a result of that process it has been determined that the ACO classification should include a requirement for professional development

including participation in certification programs for ACO's offered through the National Animal Care & Control Association which would be provided by the Department upon placement and for advancement to assist with employee retention. Furthermore, these ACO positions should be supported by a supervising staff member with ACO certification and experience as well as education in management. In order to justify these higher requirements, Administration and the Department Head are proposing a salary range increase to Range 32/36 for the ACO I/II classification (was 26/30) and establishing the Supervisor I/II Range at 42/46 due to the advanced ACO certification necessary, requirement for a higher level of education, and responsibilities associated with supervising the division. It is staff's opinion that these ranges are commensurate with the expectations and requirements of them and that the ranges are comparable to other like-County positions which have unrelated but similar levels of responsibility and educational requirements.

While these ranges will have a net increase in cost of about \$33,000 according to projections provided by the Auditor-Controller, it is clear from recent animal services issues occurring in the community that the increased cost in order to improve the level of response and service to the community is much needed and well-justified. Moreover, the net increase in cost will be partially offset by the elimination of the Kennel Attendant position as well as the use of Measure R funds which were specifically established for addressing "public nuisances".

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Do not approve the staffing changes and direct staff to return with a different plan.

**SIGNATURES REQUIRED:**

None.

**FINANCING:**

County funds including Measure R.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

None.

**CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:**

This section meets 1 of the following outcome measures for children in Del Norte County:

- Children ready for and succeeding in school.**
- Children and youth are healthy and preparing for adulthood.**
- Families are economically self-sufficient.**
- Families are safe, stable and nurturing.**
- Communities are safe and provide a high quality of life.**
- No impact to Children as a result of this action.**

**ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:**

- AUDITOR:
- COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:
- ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:
- COUNTY COUNSEL:
- PERSONNEL:
- OTHER DEPARTMENT:

## **Animal Services Manager Proposal**

### **Department of Agriculture**

I am requesting that our approved kennel attendant position be upgraded to a mid-management position that will supervise our animal services division. This division includes both animal control and Del Norte County's domestic animal shelter. Both of our divisions have complex mandates that often require a timely response. Creating and filling this position would ensure we have a manager capable of giving these issues and the employees of the animal services division their full attention.

#### **Fiscal Justification**

Our department's staffing situation, especially at the management level, is preventing us from capturing significant amounts of gas tax revenue, state contracts, state grants and federal grants. This revenue could be utilized to provide additional agricultural services to the public, assistance to industry and protection to the ecology of Del Norte County. Unclaimed gas tax is a significant source of funding for our department. Disbursement of these funds is based on actual time/money spent on qualifying agricultural activities that aren't funded by other non-County revenue. Many contracts or grants don't fully cover the cost of work performed and any overages are partially reimbursed by gas tax. Other examples of departmental activities that are partially funded by gas tax are our Tansy Ragwort control program, pest/disease identification services to the public, inspection of incoming plant shipments and many administrative functions of the agricultural division. Increases in gasoline tax rates have also increased the reimbursement rate for this time. Data gathered by members of the California Agricultural Commissioner's and Sealer's Association has shown that since the increased gas tax this funding is now in the range of 50 to 60 cents on the dollar, depending on the year. When there are staffing issues in our animal services division agricultural staff consistently spends more time than is budgeted on animal services issues. This extra time spent reduces our gas tax revenue by a corresponding amount. Diverting agricultural division staff for emergency coverage also inhibits our ability to take on additional contracts/grants and complete mandated work.

Local tribal entities have indicated interest in an animal services MOU. With our department's current resources we cannot take on this additional work successfully. Entering into MOUs with any interested tribes would both represent an additional source of revenue and an opportunity for more uniform enforcement of animal law in the County.

Dog licensing compliance has dropped steadily for the past 50+ years. This represents a significant amount of available revenue. We are in the process of acquiring upgraded licensing software to make the collection of this revenue more efficient for the department and will give the public more convenient options for payment. Increased licensing enhances public safety through improving our rabies control program and improving the chances we will know where

problem dogs are coming from. Our animal services manager would give the department an important new resource to work on improving licensing compliance.

### **Legal Justification**

While animal law is not as expansive as agricultural or weights & measures law it often requires prompt and specific actions. Failure to take these actions or provide required due process can result in losing the case and/or exposing the county to liability. Our department needs to develop proficiency in the public nuisance process and taking potentially dangerous cases to Superior court. We are often able to get compliance without utilizing these measures but there are cases that will require these time consuming processes. We should have a manager with the bandwidth to track these issues carefully, supervise/support field staff and coordinate with other departments/agencies. Our department head or assistant can fill much of this role on a relief basis but do not have the bandwidth to give these issues the attention they need on a daily basis.

### **Organizational and Operational Justification**

Our department has employed only one manager for approximately 8 years. We have staff on the grounds for approximately 55 hours per week. Assuming our sole manager utilizes leave at the rate of accrual and does not have to perform any functions off site this leaves the department without a manager on site for 20.4 hours per week. It also forces our sole manager to be on call 55+ hours per week with no option for relief, which is not a sustainable expectation. Having only one manager often means choosing between completing administrative duties in a timely fashion or dealing with the urgent issues of the divisions. This puts strain on staff who are inadequately supported and costs reputation capital with the public, who expect there is always somebody available to quickly deal with their concern. Lack of resources to provide adequate management support has put strain on all levels of our department and is having a negative impact on morale.

Our animal services division needs to draft and develop proficiency in a set of policies and procedures consistent with modern animal care and control practices. This will be an extensive process and it will require the expertise that this manager will have/acquire in animal services best practices. We have developed a number of excellent animal care practices that work well for our shelter but they need to be more formally codified into written procedures to ensure they will survive turnover.

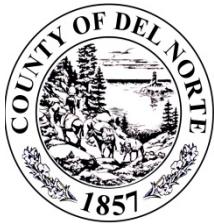
We have been working together with administration to identify a number of training and equipment needs for the department. Lack of management bandwidth has made this a slow process. We have lost institutional knowledge in a number of areas such as livestock care and large animal handling. We need to research training opportunities in these areas and have enough staff to cover operations while some attend. We need to research products to solve

equipment/logistical issues and put together budget proposals to address them. A number of potential improvements/solutions have been identified but having a manager available to focus on these issues is necessary for many of them to move forward in a timely manner.

We are one of only three California Counties where the Department of Agriculture oversees animal control. Unless our Agricultural Commissioner and Deputy Agricultural are promoted from within our County or worked in one of the other two counties they will not come to us with animal services experience. Agricultural and standards professionals are the only people qualified to fill these jobs because of the state issued licenses that are required. Many agricultural and standards professionals are older and/or have physical limitations by the time they work at this level. These professionals are not normally required to be able to physically handle dangerous dogs or protect others from them, and it is not a reasonable expectation to place on a career scientist. It is important to have somebody supervising animal control who is trained in, and who can perform these duties alongside field staff. Our officers need timely and extensive support.

We are a public safety agency that has long lacked the resources to properly carry out its mandates. Del Norte County has a high rate of dog ownership. Properties here tend to be at least 7000 square feet, making them cost prohibitive to fence. These factors combine to create more domestic animal issues than might be expected given our population.

Having an animal services manager should help prevent some of the issues that eventually lead to losing staff. New staff in the division will receive better support and training, resulting in better animal care and field services being provided. We will finally be putting the department on a sustainable footing where it can survive a vacancy or absence without operations being highly compromised.



## COUNTY OF DEL NORTE

### CLASSIFICATION DESCRIPTION

#### **JOB TITLE: Animal Services Supervisor I/II**

**Salary Range:** 42/46

**Bargaining Unit:** DNCEA/SEIU Miscellaneous

**FLSA Status:** Non Exempt

**EEO Class:** 4

#### **Description of Basic Function:**

Under general direction from the Agricultural Commissioner, supervises, directs, trains and evaluates the work of the Animal Services Division personnel; Applies extensive knowledge in the day to day supervision of the activities of the division. Employees in this classification exercises supervisory responsibility without direct supervision except as new or unusual circumstances require. This classification is designated as DNCEA/SEIU Miscellaneous for benefit purposes.

**Essential Duties:** Essential job duties may include any of the following tasks, knowledge, skills and other characteristics. The list that follows is not intended as a comprehensive list; it is intended to provide a representative summary of the major duties and responsibilities. Incumbent(s) may not be required to perform all duties listed, and may be required to perform additional, position-specific tasks.

- Assist in the preparation and implementation of the Animal Services Division budget.
- Represents the division at meetings and public functions; coordinates division activities with other departments, agencies and organizations.
- Select, direct, supervise, motivate, discipline and evaluate the performance of Animal Services Division staff.
- Assists the Department Head with coordinating, directing and supervising volunteers for the Animal Services Division.
- Administers the County's rabies control and dog bite quarantine program.
- Responds to citizen, law enforcement, health department, veterinary or humane organization inquiries and complaints; conducting or overseeing investigations as required.
- Prepares criminal complaints for violations of County ordinance; prepares cases for prosecution and testifies in court as necessary.
- Oversees the Animal Services Division's humane enforcement program including; obtaining warrants, issuing administrative citations, seizure of animals, attending post-seizure hearings and preparing cases for referral to the district attorney's office.

Animal Services Supervisor I/II (continued)

- Participates in the process of evaluating the temperament of dogs and determining their adoptability.
- Oversees the vaccination, administration of medications of impounded animals; evaluating their overall health and obtains veterinary care as appropriate.
- Assists subordinate staff with duties as necessary.
- Operates and trains staff in the proper use of animal control or care equipment and tools; oversees the inventory, maintenance and acquisition of division equipment.
- Assists in developing and implementing division policies and procedures.
- Assists in the oversight of animal shelter operations, including the impounding and redemption of animals, animal adoptions and transfers to other shelters; ensures all such activities are in accordance with County ordinance and State and Federal law.
- Prepares or oversees the preparation of Animal Services Division reports regarding departmental activities.
- Together with the Department Head, ensures that the Animal Services Division is in compliance with all applicable local, State and Federal laws and regulations.
- Attends training sessions; oversees the identification of training needs of the Animal Services division and arranges for staff to receive training.
- Assists with emergency and disaster preparedness, response and recovery in the Animal Services Division
- Completes special projects as assigned by the Agricultural Commissioner.

**Job Requirements, Qualifications and Working Conditions:**

Knowledge of:

- County, State, and Federal laws relating to the licensing, impounding, bite quarantine, care and treatment of domestic animals, and other laws pertaining to animal control operations.
- Methods of conducting inspections and investigations as they pertain to the Animal Services Division.
- Animal care principles including diseases, anatomy, feeding, temperament, training, methods of containment and appropriate disposition.
- Budget and statistical methods and analysis of program effectiveness and efficiency.
- Computer applications, particularly as relating to statistical analysis, the preparation of evidence, animal services, recordkeeping and report writing.

Ability to:

- Plan, organize and supervise assigned programs and staff.
- Ability to respond to routine to difficult inquiries, complaints and requests for service and determine appropriate resolutions and/or enforcement actions, often in stressful situations.

Animal Services Supervisor I/II (continued)

- Interpret, explain and apply applicable laws, rules, regulations and department policies and procedures.
- Ability to gather, analyze and process information and evidence for investigative purposes while ensuring confidentiality when appropriate.
- Operate a computer, using word processing and other software as appropriate, including departmental software for case tracking, dog licensing and shelter management.
- Develop and implement goals, objectives, policies, procedures and work practices.
- Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with staff, volunteers, clients, community groups and the general public.
- Assist in the preparation and oversight of the animal services budget.
- Hire, train, supervise, evaluate and discipline staff.
- Set division priorities and schedule available staff appropriately, including determining the most effective use of volunteer resources.
- Ability to effectively communicate, both verbally and in writing, with a wide variety of community individuals, groups and/or officials.
- Ability to prepare and maintain clear, concise and accurate record and reports.
- Represent the division at meetings and events, establish and maintain partnerships with stakeholders and make presentations.
- Ability to obtain certification from the National Animal Control Association.
- Work weekends, holidays and irregular hours as needed.

**Minimum Qualifications:** Any combination of education, training and experience which would likely provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities may be considered qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required knowledge and abilities would be:

**Education:** Equivalent to Associate's degree in animal husbandry, animal science, criminal justice, public administration, or other field applicable to the position. (Directly related experience may be substituted for the required education on a year-for-year basis).

Must have successful completion of an accredited animal control training academy (such as the National Animal Control Association) within the first 12 months of employment.

**Experience:** Three (3) years of work experience in animal care and/or animal control and at least two (2) years of lead worker experience.

**Animal Control Supervisor II:**

In addition to the above, at least two (2) years of progressively responsible supervisory experience in animal control or similar position.

**Desirable Qualifications:** Experience in a governmental agency is highly preferred.

**Special Requirements:** Must possess and maintain a valid Driver's license.

All County of Del Norte employees are designated Disaster Service Workers through State law (California Government Code Section 3100-3109). Employment with the

Animal Services Supervisor I/II (continued)

County of Del Norte requires the affirmation of a loyalty oath to this effect. Employees are required to complete all Disaster Service Work related training as assigned, and to return to work as ordered in the event of an emergency.

**Typical Working Conditions:** Work is performed in a variety of environments, including but not limited to an office environment under both quiet and noisy conditions, a noisy dog kennel building, the grounds of the agricultural department and in the field while working on animal control calls/cases. Travel within Del Norte County and the State of California is required if necessary and job related.

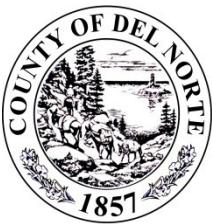
This position involves exposure to injured or ill animals, animal neglect, animal abuse and working with animals that may need to be euthanized. Work involves potential exposure to dangerous and/or diseased animals, animals known to cause allergies, animal bites and animal waste. A variety of emotionally stressful situations can occur while carrying out the duties of this position.

**Typical Physical Requirements:** The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with a disability to perform the essential functions.

Sit for extended periods; frequently stand and walk; physical ability to climb stairs, stoop, bend and crouch on occasion; frequently reach with hands and arms; frequently lift and/or move up to 50 pounds without assistance; normal manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination for regular and ongoing use of office equipment including computers, telephones, calculators, copiers and FAX; corrected hearing and vision to normal range for regular and ongoing use of office equipment; Use hands and fingers to handle or feel objects, tools, and/or controls; Must have the ability to safely drive a vehicle on a regular basis including, out of the area for trainings, conferences or other job related reasons. Must have strength and agility sufficient to handle or evade large aggressive dogs; control a dog while on slippery and/or uneven surfaces; load large dogs and to assist in the handling of large livestock.

Established Date: 1/2022

Revision Dates: n/a



**COUNTY OF DEL NORTE**  
**CLASSIFICATION DESCRIPTION**

**JOB TITLE: ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER I/II**

**Salary Range: 32/36**

**Bargaining Unit: DNCEA/SEIU Miscellaneous**

**FLSA Status: Non-Exempt**

**EEO Class: 4**

**DESCRIPTION OF BASIC FUNCTION:**

Enforces a variety of animal control regulations for the County; collects, transports and cares for impounded animals; and performs various duties related to animal control and dog licensing. This classification consists of responsible technical duties at a journey-level. This classification is designated as DNCEA/SEIU Miscellaneous for benefit purposes.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES:**

Essential job duties may include any of the following tasks, knowledge, skills and other characteristics. The list that follows is not intended as a comprehensive list; it is intended to provide a representative summary of the major duties and responsibilities. Incumbent(s) may not be required to perform all duties listed and may be required to perform additional, position-specific tasks.

- Enforces County Animal Control ordinances governing the licensing, impounding, and disposal of animals.
- Patrols areas for which our department is responsible to locate, capture, and impound small and large animals.
- Promotes responsible pet ownership by explaining local laws, codes and ordinances relating to the care and control of animals, filing of complaints and policies of the shelter to the public.
- Issues notices of violation and citations to owners of animals in violation of County codes.
- Testifies in court regarding citations, potentially dangerous or vicious dog declarations, humane services, and the disposition of complaints.
- Performs various kennel care duties such as feeding impounded animals and cleaning cages.
- Collects fees for and issues dog licenses, maintains records of licensing and impounding of dogs.
- Releases impounded animals to owners and processes adoption by new owners.
- Investigates complaints of animal bites, verifying rabies vaccination and enforcing dog bite quarantines as needed.
- Identifies symptoms of common animal diseases and recommends veterinary care, isolation or other appropriate care.

**Animal Control Officer I/II (continued)**

- Investigates complaints regarding inhumane treatment of animals, conducts the seizure of neglected and/or abused animals when necessary.
- Maintains records and prepares daily reports of work performed.
- Collects injured, diseased, or dead animals, obtaining veterinary care for injured animals as required.
- Investigates and takes appropriate action on complaints of livestock straying on roads or private property.
- Assists in the assessment of animal temperament.
- Provide basic medical care to animals such as administering medications, changing dressings and treating minor injuries that do not require veterinary attention.
- Performs related duties as needed.

**JOB REQUIREMENTS, QUALIFICATIONS, AND DIFFICULTY OF WORK:**

**Knowledge of:**

- The laws and regulations governing the licensing, humane treatment, quarantine, and impounding of small animals.
- Symptoms of rabies and other common diseases affecting small animals.
- Basic species and breed identification of a variety of domestic and common wild animals.
- Safe work practices.
- Methods of conducting inspections and investigations as they pertain to the Animal Services Division.

**Ability to:**

- To control and care for small animals effectively and humanely.
- To interact with the public in an effective and tactful manner, often under stressful conditions and dealing with hostile or irate citizens.
- To respond to routine to difficult inquiries, complaints and requests for service and determine appropriate resolutions and/or enforcement actions, often in stressful situations.
- To gather, analyze and process information and evidence for investigative purposes while ensuring confidentiality when appropriate.
- To effectively communicate, both verbally and in writing, with a wide variety of community individuals, groups and/or officials.
- To obtain certification from the National Animal Control Association.
- To work weekends, holidays and irregular hours as needed.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

Any combination of education, training and experience which would likely provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities may be considered qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required knowledge and abilities would be:

**Education:**

- High School graduate or equivalent.
- Successful completion of a basic Animal Control Officer training certification program such as the National Animal Care & Control Association (e.g. ACO I

Animal Control Officer I/II (continued)

certificate), or equivalent, within the first 12-months of employment.

**Animal Control Officer II:**

In addition to the above:

- At least two (2) years of experience as an Animal Control Officer I or similar position.
- Successful completion of an advanced Animal Control Officer training certification program such as the National Animal Care & Control Association (e.g. ACO II certificate) within the first 12-months of placement at Step II.

**Desirable Qualifications:**

- AA/AS degree or higher in animal husbandry, animal science, criminal justice, public administration, or other field applicable to the position.
- Prior experience as an Animal Control Officer or related position with a governmental agency.

**Special Requirements:** Must possess and maintain a valid Driver's license.

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**Typical Working Conditions:** Work is performed in a variety of environments, including but not limited to an office environment under both quiet and noisy conditions, a noisy dog kennel building, the grounds of the agricultural department and in the field while working on animal control calls/cases. Travel within Del Norte County and the State of California is required if necessary and job related.

This position involves exposure to injured or ill animals, animal neglect, animal abuse and working with animals that may need to be euthanized. Work involves potential exposure to dangerous and/or diseased animals, animals known to cause allergies, animal bites and animal waste. A variety of emotionally stressful situations can occur while carrying out the duties of this position.

**Typical Physical Requirements:** The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with a disability to perform the essential functions.

Sit for extended periods; frequently stand and walk; physical ability to climb stairs, stoop, bend and crouch on occasion; frequently reach with hands and arms; frequently lift and/or move up to 50 pounds without assistance; normal manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination for regular and ongoing use of office equipment including computers, telephones, calculators, copiers and FAX; corrected hearing and vision to normal range for regular and ongoing use of office equipment; Use hands and fingers to handle or feel objects, tools, and/or controls; Must have the ability to safely drive a vehicle on a regular basis including, out of the area for trainings, conferences or other job related reasons. Must have strength and agility sufficient to handle or evade large aggressive dogs; control a dog while on slippery

Animal Control Officer I/II (continued)  
and/or uneven surfaces; load large dogs and to assist in the handling of large livestock.

Revision Dates: 6/2001; 7/2021; 1/2022