



County of Del Norte Board of Supervisors

Board Report

AGENDA DATE: December 13, 2022

TO: Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Neal Lopez, County Administrative Officer, Garrett Scott, Sheriff-Coroner,
Justin Riggs, Agricultural Commissioner
Administration
981 H Street, Suite 210. Crescent City, CA 95531

SUBJECT: Transfer of Animal Services to the Sheriff's Office

RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD ACTION:

Approve and authorize the transfer of all processes associated with the administration of the Animal Services Division from the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner to the Sheriff's Office, as directed by the Board of Supervisors and presented by the County Administrative Officer.**

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

The Animal Services Division (ASD) is currently administered by the County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures. The ASD is composed of two functional programs, (1) the animal shelter program and (2) the animal control program. On July 12th, the Board of Supervisors directed Administration to examine alternative options for the administration of the ASD. On August 23rd, Administration presented findings from that research demonstrating that the majority of local governments provide animal services through their local law enforcement agencies, presumably due to the close relationship between law enforcement and animal control functions, as well as other findings supporting the transfer of the ASD to the Sheriff's Office. At that meeting, the Board accepted Administration's recommendation that the division should be transferred to the DNSO, a recommendation which was supported by Sheriff Scott, and since that time Administration has been engaged in numerous conversations with the Sheriff and the Agricultural Commissioner and ASD staff, with the goal of creating as smooth of a transition as possible.

Since the August meeting, the Board has authorized several staffing changes to the ASD in order to ensure that the division has the appropriate staffing to support operations once the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner and the associated support staff are separated from division. Currently ASD functions are supported by the Agricultural Commissioner, the Agricultural Administrative Secretary and other Agricultural Department staff, however once those positions are transferred to their new location (anticipated to occur before the end of the month) the ASD would not have the same capacity it currently does without additional

staffing to replace the support lost with the transfer. As such, on October 25th, the Board took action to create a fulltime Administrative Secretary position as well as a fulltime Kennel Attendant position to augment the ASD staffing in order to have necessary staffing to support the division. As noted in previous reports to the Board, all parties agree that a key element in this transition being successful is the clean separation of the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner from the Animal Services Division, however, as noted, a consequence of that separation of the two operations is the removal of support staff from Animal Services. By the Board approving these two additional positions the Sheriff and current ASD staff have indicated that service levels should be able to remain consistent and will, actually, hopefully be improved upon due to the singular focus on the functions of animal services. It is also worth noting the Board's investment in budget for the procurement of a case tracking software system, Shelter Pro, is expected to dramatically improve efficiency.

In order to implement the Board direction for the Sheriff to assume administration of the ASD a number of mechanical processes will need to be changed over from the Agricultural Commissioner to the Sheriff. These include matters such as proper signature authorities on budget and payroll documents, personnel actions, and a number of other procedures. By the Board taking action today, a Board Order will be generated by the Clerk of the Board that will be provided to the various County offices involved in these administrative processes such as the Auditor-Controller, Information Technology, County Counsel, Human Resources/Risk Management, etc. Additionally, there are several sections of the County Code that will need to be updated to reference the Sheriff. The Office of County Counsel has been, over the past several months, engaged in updating ordinances to this effect and to align with the Municipal City Code to align procedures between the City and County areas for animal control.

As the Board has previously directed, a plan is hereby presented for the Board's consideration detailing the broad strokes of how and when this transition is proposed to occur. The Sheriff has indicated that he anticipates being able to assume full administrative, fiscal, and operational control beginning on January 1st. At this time, it is recommended that the Board approve and authorize the transfer of all processes associated with the administration of the Animal Services Division from the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner to the Sheriff's Office effective January 1, 2023. This timeline and implementation plan have been shared with County Counsel for coordination of updates that will be necessary to the County Code as a result of this transition. However, it is understood that the transition may occur prior to any such ordinances taking final effect from an administrative perspective.

ALTERNATIVES:

Provide alternative direction.

FINANCING:

General Fund.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVMENT:

CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:

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

- Communities are safe and provide a high quality of life.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2022-12 Animal Services Implementation Plan Final

APPROVALS:

Neal Lopez, County Administrative Officer
Kylie Goughnour , Clerk of the Board

Approved - 12/5/2022
Final Approval - 12/6/2022