



DU PAGE COUNTY

Animal Services Committee

Final Summary

421 N. COUNTY FARM ROAD
WHEATON, IL 60187
www.dupagecounty.gov

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

7:30 AM

Room 3500A

1. CALL TO ORDER

7:30 AM meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Dawn DeSart at 7:32 AM.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:	Cynthia Cronin Cahill, District 5 Dawn DeSart, Grant Eckhoff, Paula Garcia and Sheila Rutledge
ABSENT:	Krajewski

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS - VICE CHAIR DESART

Vice Chair DeSart stated that in the absence of Chair Krajewski she will be filling in. Vice Chair DeSart shared that not enough appropriate bids for shelter renovation services were received to award contracts. Thus, contracts are going back out for bid with a new bid opening date of July 1st. RWE will work closely with DuPage County Procurement to ensure the bids get as much interest as possible. The groundbreaking ceremony for the new shelter is now scheduled to take place sometime in July. In the meantime, Facilities is working with the City of Wheaton to secure permits, moving fiber optic lines, and moving forward with retention plans for the project.

5. MINUTES APPROVAL

PRESENT:	Cynthia Cronin Cahill, District 5 Dawn DeSart, Grant Eckhoff, Paula Garcia and Sheila Rutledge
ABSENT:	Krajewski

5.A. [23-1510](#)

Animal Services Committee - Regular Meeting - Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Attachments: [Minutes Animal Services Committee 23-03-21 Summary](#)

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Sheila Rutledge
SECONDER:	Cynthia Cronin Cahill

6. PROCUREMENT REQUISITIONS

6.A. [23-1743](#)

Recommendation for the approval of a contract with Hill's Pet Nutrition Sales, Inc., to provide canine and feline pet food for Animal Services, for the period June 22, 2023 through June 21, 2024, for a contract total amount not to exceed \$23,000; per lowest responsible quote.

- Attachments:** [Hills Pet Nutrition - Procurement Review Comprehensive Checklist \(PRCC\)](#)
[Hills Pet Nutrition - Price List](#)
[Shelter Pet Food Bid Tabulation](#)
[Vendor Ethics Placeholder](#)

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Dawn DeSart
SECONDER:	Cynthia Cronin Cahill

7. **BUDGET TRANSFERS**

7.A. [23-1799](#)

Transfer of funds from account nos. 5000-1310-52200 (Operating Supplies & Materials), 5000-1310-53610 (Instruction & Schooling), and 5000-1310-52320 (Medical/Dental/Lab Supplies) to account nos. 5000-1310-53500 (Mileage Expense), 5000-1310-53510 (Travel Expense) and 5000-1310-53090 (Other Professional Services) in the amount of \$3,835.00 needed to cover the cost of Humane Education Coordinator travel to APHE Conference and increased cost of high-volume spay/neuter veterinary services funded by DuPage Animal Friends grant. (Animal Services)

- Attachments:** [BT - Animal Services FY23 DAF Grant](#)

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Dawn DeSart
SECONDER:	Paula Garcia

8. **SHELTER RENOVATION UPDATE**

Laura shared exterior and interior renderings of the current new shelter design. Feedback on the design, including from the City of Wheaton, has been very positive. Laura thanked the Facilities team, especially Tim and Geoff, for working closely with Animal Services staff to ensure we have what we need to continue serving the community for years to come.

The exterior is designed to be warm and inviting with a berm that will continue to provide a tasteful barrier between the shelter and its resident neighbors. The main lobby is designed to be spacious and open. The lobby will also feature photos of DCAS animals selected by staff and volunteers. A separate entrance has been designated for intakes. The building design features

ample natural lighting for people and animals. Care is currently being taken to select finishes that will hold up to the wear and tear of housing animals and daily cleaning/sanitizing.

Cats represent the largest animal population served at DCAS. The new shelter will feature larger cat spaces with large enclosures, walls of windows with a butterfly garden outside, a dedicated cat adoption counseling room, and a cat gym.

DCAS is currently caring for 14 rabbits and 13 guinea pigs housed in every nook and cranny. Small animals will finally have their own dedicated space in the new shelter. Dr. Brown was consulted to ensure appropriate design/layout for small animals and rabbits.

DCAS is experiencing a growing number of large intake cases involving dogs, cats, farm animals and small animals. So far this year DCAS has seen single intakes of 28 roosters, 15 large breed dogs and a sheep, 45 cats, and staff are currently working on more cases involving owners with large numbers of animals. The key to the new shelter design is adaptable spaces. As animal populations rapidly change and public programs and services evolve, our shelter must also have the ability to adapt quickly.

Member Cahill inquired about the use of solar panels in the new design. Tim explained that Facilities does have pricing, but whether solar panels are installed will depend on when the existing building's roof, which is close to but not past its life expectancy, is replaced.

Facilities will email design renderings to committee members and share samples of exterior finishes when they become available.

Laura explained that while the number of cages in the new shelter will not differ greatly from the current shelter, what will be different is the size and the quality of the space. Capacity for care is always balanced with quality of care. For example, while there are currently 80 dog runs at DCAS, capacity for housing dogs is much less than that because your average dog requires both a living/sleeping space and a potty space. This makes it necessary to dedicate 2 runs per dog when housing for any length of time. The new shelter has been designed to meet the physical and emotional needs of the animals housed there. Hence there is less focus on quantity of cages and more focus on features that enhance quality of care such as: species separation, access to natural light, exercise/enrichment areas, size of spaces, foot traffic control, etc.

Animals that demonstrate kennel stress often decline rapidly. They often self-harm, become increasingly difficult for staff & volunteers to exercise and socialize, and are sometimes too anxious to "interview" well with potential adopters. All are factors that further delay adoption, extend their time in the shelter, and increase shelter stress. By maintaining a focus on quality of care, the new shelter design aims to provide an environment that hopefully prevents, and at minimum delays, the onset of kennel stress. Additionally, the design provides spaces that allow staff to work more closely with members of the community to provide education and identify services that will help keep pets in their homes and out of the shelter.

Member Garcia applauded the inclusion of separate spaces for medical treatment and recovery in the new shelter design, something that the existing building does not allow for. She also inquired after the slow-down in adoption rates. Laura shared that she has taken part in conversations on this topic as part of the Chicagoland Humane Coalition. Theories include the poor economy, the increased cost of owning a pet and the number of pets adopted during the pandemic tying up homes. DCAS has taken in more than 500 owner surrendered pets since January 1st, more than the number of strays during the same time.

Member DeSart asked how construction will impact operations. Construction is expected to last 18-20 months. The first phase of construction will have a limited impact on operations. The second phase will affect medical and dog holding spaces which will have a significant impact on animal intake and veterinary care. Tim reminded the committee that Animal Services successfully navigated a relocation during construction in 2015 while improvements were made to the kennel areas.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Laura wanted to discuss humane euthanasia as it is a subject that has recently been mentioned publicly as Animal Services asks for the community's help in preventing euthanasia in the face of critical animal populations. Most euthanasia is limited to health and/or behavior. However, very recently staff have been faced with the risk of having to make euthanasia decisions based on a lack of space. Staff have and continue to follow our policy of maintaining transparency when faced with these challenges, even though it does often result in our agency and staff facing backlash.

The live release rate for DCAS has been 89% for the last two years. To be considered "no-kill" an organization must have a live release rate of 90% or better. We have had many conversations about what it means for DCAS if/when we reach the 90% goal. Our goal is not to be labeled as no-kill. Rather, because the language around no-kill can be misleading, it is our priority to do right by every individual animal that walks through our door - whether it negatively impacts our live release rate or not.

The conversation should instead center around open admission versus limited admission shelters. DCAS is an open admission shelter which means we intake animals regardless of health, behavior, species, age, or where they come from. Limited admission or limited intake facilities have the ability to turn away animals that are not easily adoptable, have medical or behavioral issues, or when their cages and foster homes are full. Maintaining a no-kill label is much easier when you can pick and choose the animals you allow into your facility, and when you can say "no" when your shelter is full. DCAS does not have that luxury. Even if our shelter experiences a space crisis, we still have a commitment to our municipal partners to take their strays. However, we also will not euthanize adoptable animals without first giving the community the opportunity to step up and do their part in saving animals' lives.

And we keep this commitment to our community and its animals with limited resources. Fees should be a barrier to a pet owner doing the right thing for their animal, thus intake fees are kept low.

10. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

11. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.