



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
2000 MAIN STREET, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA 92648-2702

TONY STRICKLAND
MAYOR

September 13, 2023

Honorable Maria Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Orange County Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive, West
Santa Ana, Ca. 92701

Re: City of Huntington Beach Response
2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report
Gimme Shelter and a Pound of Advice

Honorable Presiding Judge Hernandez:

The City of Huntington Beach received and reviewed the referenced Grand Jury Report, and in accordance with the Grand Jury's request, approved the following responses to the report.

Responses and Findings:

F4:

Based upon industry standards and best practices, Orange County Animal Care kennel attendants are understaffed to meet the needs of animals under care.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F6:

The Orange County Animal Care Volunteer program was stopped during COVID-19 and restarting the program has been slow, resulting in decreased animal socialization and enrichment.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F7:

Orange County Animal Care's Behavior Evaluation Committee evaluates dogs for euthanasia without written guidelines, policies, or procedures, resulting in inconsistent outcomes over time. Behavior evaluated euthanasia outcomes are dependent on the experience and personal considerations of the individual committee members and management rather than written objective standards.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F8:

The rate of behavioral euthanasia of dogs has increased significantly over the last 2 years.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F9:

Orange County Animal Care does not employ a professional or trained and certified animal behaviorist to oversee the shelter's dog enrichment program, resulting in dogs with declining behavior being placed at greater risk of being euthanized.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F10:

While many county and city animal shelters throughout the state have active Trap, Neuter, and Return programs, Orange County Animal Care stopped its Trap, Neuter, and Return program, reportedly on the basis of the County Counsel's legal opinion that the program violates a California statute related to willful animal abandonment.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F11:

The termination of the Trap, Neuter, and Return program is correlated with an increase in adult cat euthanasia rate at the shelter.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F12:

There have been public concerns and requests expressed over the years for public programs to include a spay/neuter program by Orange County Animal Care.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F13:

The current adoption appointment system restricts public access to the dog kennels, thereby limiting potential adopters' access to all available animals.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F15:

Internal and community engagement does not adequately communicate the shelter's mission and operating strategy.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

F16:

The information currently on the Orange County Animal Care website for low-cost spay/neuter is not up to date with regard to referrals and prices for spay/neuter procedures.

Response:

Reviews specific to operations of the Orange County Animal Shelter have not been conducted by the City of Huntington Beach.

R6:

By June 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors should evaluate the strategic option of creating a Joint Powers Authority for the County and fourteen contract Cities to take ownership and shared responsibility for the financial and operating policies and practices of OCAC.

Response:

The City of Huntington Beach agrees with this finding.

Respectfully,

Tony Strickland
Mayor

Cc:
Al Zelinka, City Manager
Eric Parra, Chief of Police