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Department of Public Works

DATE: January 17, 2023

TO: Elizabeth Barfield, Internal Auditor

THRU: Lisa Goodwin, Deputy CM

FROM: Drale Short, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Response to Animal Control Audit/August 15, 2022

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Audit Authorization – no comments

Background – no comments

Page 1 - General Audit Process

1. “The audit began with an entrance conference on August 15, 2022 with Interim Director, Contreanna Pearson, Field Operations Supervisor, Lt. Paul Syck, Shelter Supervisor, Sara Welsh, and Forensic Auditor, Elizabeth Barfield.”

Correction: Interim Director should be Interim Division Manager.

Page 1 & 2 - Field Operations

Clarification of Shifts Worked

Normal Shifts/Before Staffing shortages:

- Sunday – Saturday
- 1st Shift – 6:00 am. – 2:00 p.m.
- 2nd Shift – 2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
- 3rd Shift – 10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.

Due to shortages the hours of operation are as follows:

Monday – Friday

1st Shift – 6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

2nd Shift – 2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

3rd Shift – ON CALL for Emergencies Only/No Patrols

Saturday – Sunday

1st Shift – On Call

2nd Shift – On Call

3rd Shift – On Call

On Call Services are Emergency calls only pertaining to Injured Animals, Animal Cruelty/Neglect. CPD/Sheriff Dept requested support.

Under normal circumstances “Each shift, has additional coverage; except the midnight shift, by having a City-Wide Officer. With the shortages coverage is down to either one officer covering the entire city or One ACO in the north and the other ACO handling the South. Coverage is solely dependent on the availability of ACO’s.

Page 2 Findings & Recommendations

Low staffing levels have result in:

3) Discontent among staff. Please include low staffing levels have also resulted in “Compassion Fatigue for staff as well as increased stress levels.

“When speaking with the Department of Health, incomplete bite reports being filed and inconsistent processes among staff were identified.”

Incomplete Bite Reports – During the time that these few reports were observed and reported as incomplete. The Field Supervisor was out due to illness in which he was out of work for several weeks. To preclude this from happening in the future, the Division Manager and or Shelter Supervisor will check these reports for accuracy and completeness and once completed they will be forwarded to the Department Health for processing. This process has been corrected.

Page 2 & 3 - Shelter Operations

Findings & Recommendations

“Shelter Operations also has two employees that have been borrowed from other areas in Public Works; they have been at ACCC for approximately 4 months and ae not reflected on ACCC’s payroll.”

Position 1 – Personnel action of moving a long-term troubled Maintenance Worker from Stormwater workforce to ACC to save a long-term employee from termination. He has been assigned to this area to assist with cleaning the shelter and has been in place for the last four (4) months.

Position 2 – A Waste Equipment Worker position that has been funded in the Integrated Waste budget; but reports to and supervised by the Shelter Supervisor. This position is responsible for collecting all the deceased animals found on the road, at homes etc. This position has been handled in this way since the State turned over Animal Control duties to the City.

Page 5 - Shelter Operations (Cont.)

Crates

“In July 2022, ACCC began using crates to house impounded dogs; this is not a best practice. At one point during the audit, 14 crates were occupied”.

Please include this statement “, but upwards of 21 crates have been used to prevent euthanasia. The challenges of cleaning and caring for these additional animals with three (3) shelter staff often required staff to work overtime to ensure all were cleaned properly to ensure cleanliness for the next occupant.”

Since this audit the use of crates has been reduced due to State Law which only allows an animal to be crated for 24 hrs.

Medical

“An inventory of the medications housed at ACCC found 18 different medications on hand.”

Inventory of the medications at this facility showed some medication to be outdated based on the terms on the bottle, but under the direction of our veterinarian who would often advise us to continue using due to the potency (several months) than what is printed on the labels, i.e. Vitamin B. Other outdated medications were disposed of as should have been done initially.

“It should be noted, in the state of Georgia, animals are considered the “Property of its owner. If an owner requests their animal be euthanized, even if healthy, ACC must comply.”

Also please add those totals affect the live release rate in our reporting.

Page 5 - Equipment

“Currently ACCC has 2 washing machines (1 of those is donated) 1 works, 3 clothes dryers (2 of those are donated) 1 works, 2 dishwashers (1 of those is donated) 1 works.....”

Concerned that the way this first paragraph is worded that it implies we don't replace appliances. We do replace them when the need arises, but fortunately, we've received several donations of appliances. Some last and some don't, but once they stop working they dispose of these appliances at the landfill, but must be taken separately from the deceased animals.

We receive inquiries monthly on the donations of old appliances.

Page 6 - Shelter Documentation

“It should be noted that zip code information is not consistently recorded or entered in the system”.

We recognize the importance of “Zip Code” information and our current system accepts only Muscogee County Zip Codes, but we don't always have a person who lives in Muscogee County calling us to pick up an animal from a location within Muscogee County.

To ensure all zip codes are encoded, staff has been instructed to use the zip code where the officer was dispatched to identify the location on the impoundment record. Example: If it's someone who found an animal in the Wal-Mart parking lot, they are to use the Wal-Mart address and zip code for the Impoundment Record.

Currently, the ACC is using a Lotus Notes “in house” designed database system to handle all records pertaining to the ACC. ACC has requested funding to purchase an appropriate Animal Shelter/Field Officer Software that will handle Impoundment Information as well as Dispatch Records and all other functions of Animal Control.

Page 8 – Findings & Recommendations

The ACC Website is being upgraded by the IT Department and these improvements have been ongoing with IT for the last 2 years. We understand the staffing shortages that have interfered with the completion of this upgrade. They are actively working to upgrade this site and have it published soon.

All recommendations will be considered and implemented where appropriate. Some recommendations or changes can only be implemented with increase in staffing.

However, we really felt the Mapping Tool would be a tool that our residents can use to match animals to find lost and found animals. This tool is in process and we are hopeful on line and being used by the end of this month.

Page 9 - Budget

“In the past, ACCC utilized 3 inmates. This was discontinued due to increased security measures put into place y the new Warden”

In the past ACC has had the ability to obtain 1-3 Blue Card Inmates, but due to the shortage of trustees, they have not had any since Covid. MCP is aware of our needs and is diligently working to place blue card inmates at the ACC.

A Red Card inmate possess a higher security requirement (Correctional Detail Officer). ACC does not have any Correctional Detail Officers budgeted. To obtain a position of this nature, it would have to be funded under the Public Safety Pay Plan, the individual would have to obtain his/her Post Certification to supervise inmates with this security level. Blue Card inmates don't require this amount of security, but there is a shortage of these inmates.

If we had a Post Certified Officer, it would be easier for MCP to fulfill our inmate needs.

Page 10 – Budget Cont.

“During the month of November, a dog in the holding area was able to jump on top of the run fencing (appx 6') and walk along the top of the fencing of the other runs.”

Coyote-Rollers, we will be ordering one set to use and install in one run to ensure it will work within our facility. If successful we will outfit all runs with this roller to stop animals from being able to escape their runs.

Page 11 - Animal Control Advisory Board

“3) a donation of 400 microchips”

Only 250 microchips have been received from the donation.