

Performance Audit

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Bureau of Animal Control**

Report by the
Office of City Controller

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March 9, 2010

To the Honorables: Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and
Members of Pittsburgh City Council:

The Office of City Controller is pleased to present this Performance Audit of Department of Public Safety Bureau of Animal Control, conducted pursuant to the Controller's powers under Section 404(c) of the Pittsburgh Home Rule Charter.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bureau of Animal Control pursues violations of the City's Animal Control ordinances such as nuisance animals, dogs running at large, license and rabies vaccination non-compliance and harboring dangerous dogs. Animal Control rents traps for capturing stray/feral cats and wildlife and impounds cats and dogs. This audit evaluates Bureau effectiveness, compliance with contractual obligations and animal control best practices.

Findings and Recommendations

Call Prioritizing, Dispatch and Recording

According to AC personnel, dispatches are prioritized and calls involving animals in distress or animal bite incidents are given priority.

Finding: Service requests that require dispatching an agent are logged in but information requests are not. Failure to log in the numerous information calls does not present a true picture of the Bureau's total call volume.

Recommendation: Animal Control should record the number of information requests it receives. A simple slash system organized by day could be used. This would present a truer picture of the call volume into the Animal Control office and provide more accurate documentation for assessing Bureau performance and staffing.

Citation Data Analysis

From 11/12/2008 to 8/19/2009 Animal Control Officers issued 433 citations.

Finding: The most citations, almost 70%, were written for dogs at large. City Code requires all dogs that are off the owner's property to be leashed and under the owner's control.

Finding: The database does not identify the City neighborhood or geographic section of the City where the incidents occur. This lack of geographic detail limits analysis to City wide incidents.

Recommendation: Animal Control should use a neighborhood code or similar geographic code in its citation spreadsheet to better identify the locations of Code violations. This would help identify problem neighborhoods that could benefit from educational outreach efforts by the Bureau or local animal organizations.

Bureau Performance Reports

Finding: Animal Control provided a spreadsheet of performance data from January through November 2008. Information fields included data about the number of animals picked up and impounded each month, the number of complaints received and the number of citations issued. No similar database was available for any part of 2009.

Finding: Attempts to build a database from the Bureau's 2009 Daily Activity Reports summary sheet found entry inconsistencies. The auditors found reports with missing information fields and reports with no data at all.

Recommendation: The Animal Control Bureau must ensure greater accuracy and consistency when reporting performance data. The Department of Public Safety should consider hiring another clerk to assist with answering phone calls and clerical tasks.

Performance Data Comparison

Using Animal Control daily activity summary sheets the auditors constructed a database for January to August 2009. Selected performance data with was compared with the same eight months in 2008.

Finding: Over the comparative time periods, total calls to the Animal Control Office declined by 12.56 %. However, total citations written increased by 133.52 % and licenses sold increased by 60.40 %. The total dead animal pick up was essentially unchanged and wildlife euthanasia declined by 22.7%.

Animal Rescue League Contract

Since 1977, the Animal Rescue League (ARL), a non-profit animal shelter located in the City's East End, has been providing shelter, veterinary care, adoption and euthanasia services for the animals taken into custody by City Animal Control.

Finding: Impound fees collected by the ARL are not credited according to contract. The ARL collects all impound fees by check or money order made out to City of Pittsburgh. The checks are sent to the Animal Control Office and then taken to the City Treasurer for deposit into the General Fund.

Recommendation: The procedure for having the ARL collect and forward impound fees is effective but does not comply with the current contract. The current contract expires February 28, 2010. Future contracts should be written to include the current fee collection procedure.

Finding: City Animal Control does not report data about the number of impound fees waived or the reason for waiver.

Recommendation: City Animal Control should maintain data about any impound fee waivers and the reason for waiver.

Finding: City Animal Control does not report data about the number of reclaimed impounded animals. Because one dog owner can be cited for multiple offenses, data regarding the number of reclaim citations does correlate with the number of dogs reclaimed.

Finding: The percent of impounded dogs reclaimed by owners is small. Even counting each reclaim citation as involving one dog, the percent of impounded dogs reclaimed from January through August 2009 was 19.5%. If the 120 reclaim citations were for multiple violations, the percent of reclaimed impounded animals is even smaller.

Finding: Once the prescribed detention period expires, all unclaimed impounded animals become the responsibility of the ARL. The ARL does not distinguish animals impounded by City Animal Control in its adoption or euthanasia statistics.

Recommendation: Future contracts should require ARL to keep separate disposition data on the animals impounded by City Animal Control.

Finding: Invoices submitted by the ARL indicate that 1,545 animals (703 dogs/pups and 842 cats/kittens) were impounded in 2008 at a cost of \$354,824.00 to the City. Invoices for January through August 2009 show 613 animals (350 dogs/pups and 263 cats/kittens) impounded at a cost of \$191,586.00.

Finding: The ARL provides impounded animals care and services not offered by most local animal control services. All impounded animals receive veterinary care and unclaimed animals can be put up for adoption.

Recommendation: The City should renew its contract with the Animal Rescue League but try to negotiate a more advantageous price for the next contract term.

Municipal Animal Facility

The alternative to contracting out animal impounding would be City operation of a Municipal Animal Shelter. Municipal animal control and shelter services run the gamut in services and funding structure. The City of Chicago Commission on Animal Care and Control (CACC) is a city department that provides extensive animal control and rescue services. Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control is supported by tax and donations to specific program funds.

Finding: In addition to the 14 currently employed at Pittsburgh Animal Control, operating a municipal animal shelter would require more staff and increased operating and capital costs.

Recommendation: The City should explore various models of municipal animal shelters and determine the cost-effectiveness of setting up a municipal shelter.

Intergovernmental Animal Control

Finding: Pursuing animal control intergovernmental cooperation agreements with neighboring municipalities is not feasible at this time because the City does not have a facility for impounding animals.

Recommendation: Any study investigating the feasibility of setting up a municipal animal shelter should consider the cost-benefit of providing inter-municipal animal control services to other municipalities.

Spay/Neuter Animal Control

In an attempt to reduce feral and unwanted animal overpopulation, many municipalities offer spay/neuter assistance programs. These spay/neuter programs are provided directly by the municipality or in conjunction with local non-profit animal shelters. In 2009, a pilot TNR program in the City's Spring Hill neighborhood was funded with a \$2,000.00 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Finding: Trap, Neuter and Release programs effectively reduce feral cat populations and municipal animal control costs. Organizations such as the all volunteer Homeless Cat Management Team regularly employ TNR throughout the Pittsburgh area.

Finding: The ARL contract obligates City Animal Control to “assist in the ARL Feral Cat Program by transporting feral to the ARL, at the ARL’s request.” However, according to the AC Supervisor, the ARL has never requested the City’s assistance with transporting feral cats.

Recommendation: Animal Control and City Administration should seriously consider expanding City funded TNR to other city neighborhoods. The program could be set up with minimal personnel costs because volunteers could trap and transport cats with assistance from City Animal Control. CDBG or other funds would pay for the surgeries.

Pittsburgh Animal Controller Training Requirements

Finding: The City Department of Personnel and Civil Service and the Animal Rescue League require all Animal Controllers receive animal control training. The latest City job description for Animal Controller requires successful completion of Animal Control Training and/or an Animal Control Seminar. The ARL requires training from the National Animal Control Association or an equivalent organization.

Finding: Contract language indicates ARL concerns about City Animal Control training and competence. In addition to requiring training from a specified provider (or equivalent) the contract requires establishment of a procedure “whereby each party may report to the other any incidents involving inappropriate treatment of animals in the performance of this contract”.

Recommendation: Training from a competent provider will help ensure that City Animal Controllers use humane animal handling and control techniques.

Finding: City Animal Control provided ACA training certificates for four (31%) of the Bureau’s 13 current animal control officers and training evidence for the Supervisor.

Finding: Two of the animal controllers completed training within 10 months of being hired. One controller was certified 14 years post hire and the other was certified 7 years after hire.

Finding: City Animal Control did not provide professional training certification for nine animal controllers or 69% of the animal control force. Five of these animal controllers have been on the job for more than 28 years each.

Recommendation: All Animal Controllers, regardless of length of employment, must obtain training certification from NACA or an equivalent provider. Training in proper animal handling techniques helps ensure safe and humane animal control. Professional credentials also enhance the Bureau’s reputation and standing in the community.

Finding: In 2009, the Animal Control Supervisor scheduled four in house training sessions for Animal Control Officers. Sessions were held on paper work review, the 311 system, euthanasia and wildlife and zoonotic diseases. The last two sessions were conducted by a veterinarian and specialist from the Pittsburgh Zoo.

Recommendation: In-house training is a cost-effective means of enhancing employee professionalism. The Bureau should continue to provide in-house training on topical animal control issues.

Community Outreach

Finding: In 2009, the Animal Control Supervisor spoke about animal control ordinances at 12 community meetings on the North Side, in Lawrenceville, Hill District, Hazelwood/Greenfield and the South Hills. Pamphlets describing City ordinances and City animal control services were distributed.

Recommendation: Community outreach is a good educational tool and should be extended to all areas of the City. Areas such as the West End, Homewood and Garfield where presentations have not yet been given should have priority.

Correspondence and conversations with Animal Control administration indicates that many of our recommendations already have been adopted and that the Bureau is setting up a spay/neuter program for City residents with local animal shelters.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Lamb
City Controller

INTRODUCTION

This performance audit of the Department of Public Safety Bureau of Animal Control was conducted pursuant to section 404(c) of the Pittsburgh Home Rule Charter. The last performance audit of Animal Control was released in 1990.

OVERVIEW

The City's Bureau of Animal Control was a division of the Bureau of Environmental Services until May 2008 when it was moved to the Department of Public Safety. This move was done in large part to better reflect the duties and responsibilities of Animal Control. The Bureau's major responsibility is pursuing violations of the City's Animal Control ordinances such as nuisance animals, dogs running at large, license and rabies vaccination non-compliance and dangerous dogs.

The ordinances' primary objective is to uphold the public health and safety from animals threatening humans and other animals, spreading disease, damaging property and disturbing the peace. However, §633.10 is an animal welfare provision requiring proper shelter for outside animals and proper tethering for dogs. Animal abuse and cruelty are prohibited by the State Crimes Code but those laws are not enforced by municipal animal control authorities. State anti-cruelty statutes are enforced by local police and Humane Society Police Officers.

In 2009 the Bureau employed one supervisor, 12 animal controllers (animal control officers), one clerk to answer phones and other duties and 2 truck drivers who pick up dead animals on the night shift. The Bureau is headquartered in the Strip district.

According to the supervisor, it is necessary for the animal controllers to work in pairs. The City is divided into four sections: North, East, South and Central. Depending on available staff, 3 or 4 trucks patrol Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. If eight ACOs are available, one truck patrols each section. If an odd number of ACOs are available, one will stay in the office to help with phone calls. One truck with 2 ACOs is available for the entire City on the weekday 3-11 p.m. shift. Two ACOs man the dead animal truck during the daylight shift. One truck is available 9-5 p.m. weekends and holidays. The auditors were told by the supervisor that he is on call 11-7 a.m.

In addition to enforcing the City animal control ordinances, Animal Control picks up dead animals from the Zoo, Aviary, Humane Society and Animal Rescue League, rents traps for stray and feral cats and wildlife and impounds cats and dogs. The City does not have a municipal 'dog pound' and contracts with the Animal Rescue League to take in cats and dogs picked up by Animal Control. By law, cats and dogs without collars or other identification must be held for 72 hours; cats and dogs with identification are held a minimum of 10 days after notification to the owner. Wildlife such as groundhogs, raccoons, skunks and foxes that are picked up are euthanized by ACOs in

the Strip District. Non-vector wildlife such as snakes and opossums can be relocated to park areas.

SCOPE

Audit scope is January 2008 through December 2009.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess compliance with national animal control standards and best practices.
2. To evaluate Bureau performance and effectiveness.
3. To evaluate compliance with contractual obligations.
4. To make recommendations for improvement.

METHODOLOGY

The auditors met with the Bureau Supervisor to discuss Bureau organization, performance reporting, call prioritizing and dispatching and animal control officer training. The auditors also met with the Executive Director of the Animal Rescue League. Documentation reviewed included a spreadsheet of statistical data for 2008 produced by the Bureau of Animal Control. This included monthly data on such items as types of animals picked up, dogs, cats etc.; animals not impounded; citations issued; licenses sold; Office complaints; 911 calls; dogbites, animal euthanasia. Also included were the number of dead animals picked up from the Animal Rescue League, the Humane Society and from House/Property.

The auditors obtained from the Animal Control Bureau an excel spreadsheet showing information on citations from 11/12/2008 to 8/19/2009. This data was prepared from a database prepared by the Department of Public Safety. There were a total of 433 citations written by Animal Control Officers during this time. The auditors created a frequency distribution of types of complaints during this period of time.

The auditors also obtained the daily activity summary reports for January through August 2009. The auditors performed a comparison study of years 2008 and 2009. The auditors were able to obtain from the Animal Control Bureau an Excel spreadsheet containing statistical data for 2008. However, statistical data for 2009 was not available in a summary Excel spreadsheet. Therefore, a database was constructed using the daily activity summary sheets for January to August 2009. Daily summary sheets were entered into Excel and totaled to produce monthly totals. Monthly totals were summed to create totals for the period January to August 2009. The auditors then created a table showing a comparative study of select data from January to August 2008 and January to August 2009 with percent change. Complaint data from the Mayor 311 Response Center was also reviewed.

The auditors also compared the current city contract with the Animal Rescue League with the prior contract. The National Animal Control Association training guide was reviewed for best animal control practices. Internet research on other cities' animal control programs was conducted.

Findings and Recommendations

Call Prioritizing, Dispatch and Recording

The Animal Control office answers calls weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The office has three phones but the Division's clerk is usually the only person available to answer calls and dispatch ACOs. The Supervisor helps with incoming calls when he is in the office. Call rates vary but can average every three to five minutes on busy days. Other requests are received via email from the Mayor's 311 Service Center and from 911.

Incoming calls are of two general types: service requests or information requests. Service requests that will result in ACO dispatch are written on the Daily Log sheet. Daily Log sheet fields include time call received, dispatch time, dispatched truck number, citizen name, address, phone number and incident detail. Service requests received from the Mayor 311 center that require dispatch are also entered onto the Daily Log sheet. Information requests are not recorded or logged in.

Finding: Failure to log in the numerous information calls received by Animal Control does not present a true picture of the Bureau's total call volume.

Recommendation No. 1:

Animal Control should record the number of information requests it receives. A simple slash system organized by day could be used. This would present a truer picture of the call volume into the Animal Control office and provide more accurate documentation for assessing Bureau performance and staffing.

According to AC personnel, dispatches are prioritized. Calls involving animals in distress or animal bite incidents are given priority. Animal Control Officers investigate complaints about owned animals as time allows. These complaints usually concern nuisance behavior such as cats defecating in gardens and dogs barking excessively.

Animal Control Bureau Performance Reports

The Bureau utilizes a number of reports to document Animal Control activity. The Daily Activity Reports summarize the number of calls received, animals taken to the Animal Rescue League, citations issued, licensed, animal bite incidents, privately owned animals picked up for euthanasia, advises (warnings) issued.

Sources for this data include ACO daily activity reports. These reports identify the type of assignment or detail by officer, AC vehicle, work shift, date and geographic district. Other reports used for performance data include animal trap rental and return forms, animal euthanasia surrender forms and citations.

Performance Data Analysis

The auditors were told that Animal Control has become more aggressive in issuing citations under the new Supervisor. Citations are issued for violations of the City Code. First time violators are given a warning and a time frame in which to have the problem abated. If the problem remains unabated, a citation is issued. Citations are processed through Municipal Courts Housing Court. The AC clerk enters all citation information into a web citations database. Public Safety includes this information in its disruptive property database along with complaint data from the Police, Fire and Building Inspection bureaus. The database identifies disruptive properties whose owners are targeted by the City for remedial action. Properties are considered disruptive if the City receives three or more complaints regarding the property in one month.

Citation database Analysis

The auditors obtained from the Animal Control Bureau an excel spreadsheet showing information on citations from 11/12/2008 to 8/19/2009. There were a total of 433 citations written by Animal Control Officers during this time. The following table shows the different types of citations written during this time period.

Citation	Freq.	%
633.02 Dog License Required Exemption and Term	41	9.47
633.05 Rabies Vaccination	53	12.24
633.06 License fee; Exceptions	1	0.23
633.08 Dogs at large prohibited	290	66.97
633.09 Harboring a Nuisance; Exceptions	32	7.39
633.12 Number of Pets permitted in City limits; Exceptions	1	0.23
633.20 Dangerous dogs	15	3.46
Total	433	100.00

Finding: The most citations, almost 70%, were written for dogs at large. City Code requires all dogs that are off the owner's property to be leashed and under the owner's control.

Finding: The database does not identify the City neighborhood or geographic section of the City where the incidents occur. This lack of geographic detail limits analysis to City wide incidents.

Recommendation No. 2:

Animal Control should use a neighborhood code or similar geographic code in its spreadsheet to better identify the locations of Code violations. This would help identify problem neighborhoods that could benefit from educational outreach efforts by the Bureau or local animal organizations.

Data Analysis

The auditors were provided a spreadsheet analysis of information regarding the Animal Control Bureau for 2008 except for data for December 2008 which was not included. Information fields included performance data such as the number of animals picked up and impounded each month, the number of complaints received and the number of citations issued. This information showed that the total number of pickups was 4,245 through November 2008. This ranged from a high of 630 in July to a low of 148 in January.

The total number of complaints in 2008 was 19,055 and ranged from a high of 2470 in July to a low of 1339 in January.

The Animal Control Bureau also picks up dead animals from a wide range of sources. These include the Animal Rescue League, the Humane Society, the street (road kill) and personal residences. In 2008 the Bureau picked up 12,715 dead animals.

Finding: No similar database was available for any part of 2009.

The auditors decided to build a database of comparable information for 2009. The Using the Daily Activity summary sheets the auditors created a database in Excel. This shows the monthly totals and the totals for 2009 up to July.

Finding: Performance data reporting on the Bureau's Daily Activity Reports summary sheet is inconsistent. The auditors found reports with missing information fields, reports with no "extra calls," and reports with no data at all.

Finding: The "total calls" field on the Daily Activity Reports does not accurately capture all calls received and responded to. To try to account for the information calls not logged in, the Supervisor stated that an "extra" 10 calls added to each daily report. However, these 10 "extra calls" were not included on all reports.

Finding: Seven out of the daily summary sheets for 2009 from January to August were totally blank with no data. Only the date at the top of the page was filled in.

Recommendation No. 3:

The Animal Control Bureau must ensure greater accuracy and consistency when reporting performance data. The Department of Public Safety should consider the feasibility of hiring another clerk to assist with answering phone calls and clerical tasks.

Comparison of Data for 2008 and 2009

The auditors performed a comparison study of years 2008 and 2009. The auditors were able to obtain from the Animal Control Bureau an Excel spreadsheet containing statistical data for 2008. However, statistical data for 2009 was not available in a summary Excel spreadsheet.

Therefore, a database was constructed using Animal Control daily activity summary sheets for January to August 2009. Daily summary sheets were entered into Excel and totaled to produce monthly totals. Monthly totals were summed to create totals for the period January to August 2009. The following table shows a comparative study of select data from January to August 2008 and January to August 2009 with percent change.

Bureau of Animal Control Comparative Performance Data
January-August 2008 and 2009

	2008	2009	% Change
Total Calls to AC Office	14,900	13,028	-12.56%
Total Citations	358	836	+133.52%
Licenses Sold	101	162	+60.40%
Animals not Impounded*	1,987	2,113	6.34
Total Dogs and Cats to ARL	1174	1,208	
Reclaim Citations	Not Available	120	
Total Dead animals	8,049	8,250	2.50
Euthanasia*	1,760	1,360	-22.73

*Wildlife

Finding: Over the comparative time periods, total calls to the Animal Control Office declined by 12.56 %. However, total citations written increased by 133.52 % and licenses sold increased by 60.40 %. The total dead animal pick up was essentially unchanged and wildlife euthanasia declined by 22.7%.

Mayor 311 Response Center Requests

- As stated previously, Animal Control responds to requests received by the Mayor's 311 Response Center. Data supplied by the Response Center indicate that the highest percentage of calls concerned dead animals, followed by animal feces, barking dog and loose dog complaints. These four complaint categories comprised 67.1 % of complaints received in 2008 and 71 % of complaints through July 31, 2009.

Animal Rescue League Contract

Since 1977, the Animal Rescue League (ARL), a non-profit animal shelter located in the City's East End, has been providing shelter, veterinary care, adoption and euthanasia services for the animals taken into custody by City Animal Control. The current contract is effective March 1, 2007 through February 28, 2010 at a cost not to exceed \$1,140,000.00 for the contract term. The average appropriation for contract year is \$380,000.00.

Animal Detention Periods

By law, cats without collars or other identification must be held for 72 hours; cats and dogs with identification are held a minimum of 10 days after notification to the owner. At the ARL's discretion, animals not reclaimed and animals without identification can be placed for adoption or euthanized.

Animals with ID that have bitten humans must be detained 10 days unless the owner signs a release for ARL to perform euthanasia so rabies testing can be performed. Unlicensed animals that have bitten may be euthanized 72 hours after pickup and similarly tested. At a minimum, the ARL must be able to hold 40 dogs, 20 cats and 10 other animals such as puppies delivered by the City.

Release of Impounded Animals to Owners

The ARL will release impounded animals after appropriate impound fees and holding fees have been paid or waived. Impound fees are the costs and charges due to the City pursuant to City code section 633.14 and apply to dogs or cats picked up the City. The current impound fee is \$48.00 for dogs and \$38.00 for cats.

The contract states the fee can be paid at the ARL which will then credit the City with the amount collected. The contract also allows pet owners to pay the fee at Animal Control and bring a release form to the ARL indicating that the costs have been paid directly to the City.

Finding: Impound fees collected by the ARL are not credited according to contract. The ARL collects all impound fees by check or money order made out to City of Pittsburgh. The checks are sent to the Animal Control Office and then taken to the City Treasurer for deposit into the General Fund.

Recommendation No. 4:

The procedure for having the ARL collect and forward impound fees is effective but does not comply with the current contract. The current contract expires February 28, 2010. Future contracts should be written to include the current fee collection procedure.

Animals Taken to ARL by City Animal Control

	January-November 2008	January-August 2008	January-August 2009
Unlicensed Dogs	711	522	548
Licensed Dogs	0	0	65
Cats	942	652	607
Total Impounds	1653	1174	1220
Reclaim Citations	Not available	Not available	120

The City contract with the ARL states that animals can be released if “the fees are waived with the consent of the City’s Animals Control Services”. The AC Supervisor stated that he sometimes waives or reduces impound fees on a ‘case by case basis’.

Finding: City Animal Control does not report data about the number of impound fees waived or the reason for waiver.

Recommendation No. 5:

City Animal Control should maintain data about any impound fee waivers and the reason for waiver.

According to the AC Supervisor, owners of reclaimed animals can be subject to up to three Citations. In addition to Dog Running at Large, dog owners may be cited for no current City dog license and rabies vaccination. The City has no leash law or licensing requirement for cats.

City Code §633.05 requires owned cats to have current rabies vaccination and §633.03 requires roaming cats to have identification. Identification must be in the form of a collar or tag that clearly shows the owner name, address and telephone number. Cat owners can be cited for violations of these two code sections.

Finding: City Animal Control does not report data about the number of reclaimed impounded animals. Because one dog owner can be cited for multiple offenses, data regarding the number of reclaim citations does correlate with the number of dogs reclaimed.

Finding: The percent of impounded dogs reclaimed by owners is small. Even counting each reclaim citation as involving one dog, the percent of impounded dogs reclaimed from January through August 2009 was 19.5%. If the 120 reclaim citations were for multiple violations, the percent of reclaimed impounded animals is even smaller.

Finding: Once the prescribed detention period expires, all unclaimed impounded animals become the responsibility of the ARL. The ARL does not distinguish animals impounded by City Animal Control in its adoption or euthanasia statistics.

Recommendation No. 6:

Future contracts should require ARL to keep separate disposition data on the animals impounded by City Animal Control.

Wildlife Euthanasia Exclusion

Prior to the current contract, the ARL provided euthanasia for the wildlife brought in by City Animal Control. Wildlife euthanasia services are excluded from the current contract.

Finding: Although the contract did not include euthanasia services for wild animals, the ARL continued to euthanize wildlife June through December 2007. This allowed time for City Animal Control to set up its own wildlife euthanasia program. Animal Control performs its own wildlife euthanasia under the authority of a licensed veterinarian.

Holding Fees

In addition to City impound fees, the cat and dog owners can be assessed a holding fee payable to ARL before the animal is released. Holding fees help reimburse the ARL for vaccination and care expenses. The current fee is \$30 for dogs and cats, but the League will often reduce or waive the fee to encourage people to quickly claim their animals.

Contract Cost to City

Finding: The current ARL contract is at a significant cost increase to the City. However, the ARL provides animal care and services not available at other animal control kennels.

The previous contract term was five years from March 1, 2002 to February 28, 2007. ARL charged the City separate fees for holding and euthanizing animals. The City was charged a \$40.00 holding fee per dog, \$42.00 holding fee per litter of puppies, \$30.00 per cat and \$42.00 per litter of kittens. No holding fee was charged for impounded animals that were subsequently adopted. Euthanasia fees were \$23.00 per dog, \$21.00 per cat and \$16.00 per wildlife.

Under the current contract, the City is charged a flat fee per animal. The fee for contract year 1 was \$182.00 per animal, year 2 was \$190.00 per animal and the year 3 charge was \$197.00 per animal. There is no additional fee for euthanasia.

Finding: Invoices submitted by the ARL indicate that 1,545 animals (703 dogs/pups and 842 cats/kittens) were impounded in 2008 at a cost of \$354,824.00 to the City. Invoices for January through August 2009 show 613 animals (350 dogs/pups and 263 cats/kittens) impounded at a cost of \$191,586.00.

Many private area animal control kennels do not provide veterinary care or offer adoption services and euthanize all unclaimed animals. These kennels have contracts with multiple municipalities. The closest private animal control kennel to the City occasionally places animals with the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society or Animal Friends but euthanizes most unclaimed animals.

Finding: The ARL provides impounded animals care and services not offered by most local animal control services. All impounded animals receive veterinary care and unclaimed animals can be put up for adoption.

Recommendation No. 7:

The City should renew its contract with the Animal Rescue League but try to negotiate a more advantageous price for the next contract term.

Municipal Animal Facility

The alternative to contracting out animal impounding would be City operation of a Municipal Animal Shelter. Municipal animal control and shelter services run the gamut in services and funding structure.

Chicago

The City of Chicago Commission on Animal Care and Control (CAC) is a city department that provides extensive animal control and rescue services. CCAC maintains an animal shelter that provides veterinary care for all shelter animals and for the Chicago Police Canine Unit. In addition, CCAC conducts cruelty to animal investigations and offers low cost spay/neutering services. Persons residing in designated city zip codes can get a cat or dog spayed or neutered for \$25.00 at the CCAC mobile spay/neuter clinic van or at one of the City's private humane agencies. According to its website, the CCAC shelter takes in over 24,000 animals each year from impounds and private surrenders.

The 2009 operating budget for CCAC was \$4,696,088.00. Personnel costs of \$3,902,885.00 comprised the largest appropriations category followed by commodities and materials and contractual services. Seventy five positions were appropriated for FY 2009. Commission positions include an Executive and Deputy Directors, clerks, animal control officers and supervisors, animal care aides and supervisors, veterinarians and veterinary assistants and anti-cruelty inspectors.

Fort Wayne

The City of Fort Wayne Indiana Animal Care and Control considers itself a national leader in government based animal services. Its mission is "...to ensure public health and safety as well as prevent pet overpopulation, animal neglect and animal cruelty through education, rescue and law enforcement". This city department also provides impound services for Allen County and impounded 13,000 animals in 2008. Volunteers augment paid staff.

Fort Wayne's Animal Care and Control is not solely supported by tax dollars. Donations to specific program funds such as the adoption, medical, education, field services, spay/neuter and special needs funds are encouraged and accepted. The department's Volunteer Coordinator is fully grant funded.

The city's Spay Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP) is funded entirely by private donations. Through SNAP, low income residents pay \$15 to \$20 for a spay or neuter at participating veterinarians. Essentially free neutering of cats is done two days each year through the city's Neuter for a Nickel program. Male cats over eight weeks old can be neutered at the city shelter for five cents per cat.

The 2009 operating budget for Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control was \$2,556,849.00. Personnel costs (including benefits) of \$2,041,337 comprised the largest budget category. Animal Care and Control's 37 staff include a director, office supervisor, 2 animal care supervisors, an enforcement officer, lead officer, community

relations and education specialist, volunteer coordinator, 11 animal control officers, 8 animal care specialists, 6 clerk typists, a maintenance person and 3 part time employees.

Finding: In addition to the 14 currently employed at Pittsburgh Animal Control, operating a municipal animal shelter would require more staff and increased operating and capital costs.

Recommendation No. 8:

The City should explore various models of municipal animal shelters and determine the cost-effectiveness of setting up a municipal shelter.

Intergovernmental Animal Control

Intergovernmental cooperation can bring efficiency and cost savings. The City currently collects a portion of the Borough of Wilkinsburg's municipal waste. The refuse collection Agreement is of mutual benefit to the City and the adjacent Borough of Wilkinsburg. City Environmental Services provides efficient and cost effective refuse collection services for the Borough while generating an income source for the City. The City Animal Control Supervisor would like to provide animal control services for other municipalities.

The Township of Upper St. Clair participates in a joint Animal Control program with Castle Shannon, Dormont, Greentree, Heidleberg, Mt. Lebanon, Scott, and Whitehall.

Finding: Pursuing animal control intergovernmental cooperation agreements with neighboring municipalities is not feasible at this time because the City does not have a facility for impounding animals.

Recommendation No. 9:

Any study investigating the feasibility of setting up a municipal animal shelter should consider the cost-benefit of providing inter-municipal animal control services to other municipalities.

Spay/Neuter Animal Control

In an attempt to reduce feral and unwanted animal overpopulation, many municipalities offer spay/neuter assistance programs. These spay/neuter programs are provided directly by the municipality or in conjunction with local non-profit animal shelters. The Chicago and Fort Wayne spay/neuter programs discussed previously are

examples of city sponsored spay/neuter programs. Other examples of city sponsored spay/neuter programs are as follows.

Eugene Oregon

The City of Eugene operates a Spay & Neuter Clinic which provides low cost spays and neuters and vaccinations for cats and dogs. According to the city webpage, the Clinic is a successful prevention strategy in helping to control Eugene's overall pet population.

San Jose California

The City of San José offers a low-cost spay/neuter clinic for cats at its San Jose Animal Care Center. The clinic operates by appointment only. City residents pay \$15 to \$20 and non-residents pay \$50 to \$60. Feral cats are accepted for surgery on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday on a walk-in basis.

Seattle Washington

Seattle's low cost spay/neuter clinic was started by an initiative approved by the voters of the City. Prices range from \$55 for a cat neuter to \$125 for spay/neuter for dogs weighing over 80 pounds. Residents can donate to a Pet Population Control fund that provides spay/neuter services to low income persons.

Some municipal spay/neuter programs are restricted to low income persons. For example, Fayetteville (Arkansas) Animal Services, a municipal facility, offers \$10.00 spay/neuter to qualified low-income applicants.
Arkansas

City of Pittsburgh Spay Neuter Program

The City spay/neuter voucher program was eliminated in 2004 at the 'recommendation' of the City Act 47 overseer. City residents could obtain 'vouchers' to defray the cost of spay/neuter at a participating veterinarian. The program was never funded more than \$75,000.

Feral Cat Trap Neuter Return Programs

Feral cats are domestic cats which have been born in the wild or have reverted to the wild and are not tame. Feral cats usually congregate in groups or colonies. A colony of unneutered/unspayed cats can grow exponentially. Communities with a large

unneutered feral cat population can experience higher animal control costs associated with trapping, caring for and euthanizing feral cats.

Many cities such as Washington DC have government funded feral cat Trap Neuter and Return (TNR) programs. TNR is considered the most humane and effective method of reducing feral cat populations. Cats are trapped, neutered, vaccinated then returned to the colony. Volunteer colony caregivers feed and monitor the cats. The result is less foraging for food, howling and other nuisance behavior. In time, the colony dies off naturally.

Cities such as Baltimore, Bloomington, Chicago and Indianapolis have ordinances authorizing Trap Neuter Return as a viable animal control measure.

Spring Hill Pilot TNR Program

In 2009, a pilot TNR program in the City's Spring Hill neighborhood was funded with a \$2,000.00 Community Development Block Grant. Volunteers trap the cats and take them to local animal shelter clinics for spay/neutering. CDBG funds pay for the surgeries which average \$25 per cat. The District 1 Councilwoman responsible for the grant is spearheading an effort to institute a citywide feral cat TNR program.

Finding: Trap, Neuter and Release programs effectively reduce feral cat populations and municipal animal control costs. Organizations such as the all volunteer Homeless Cat Management Team regularly employ TNR throughout the Pittsburgh area.

Finding: The ARL contract obligates City Animal Control to "assist in the ARL Feral Cat Program by transporting feral to the ARL, at the ARL's request." However, according to the AC Supervisor, the ARL has never requested the City's assistance with transporting feral cats.

Recommendation No. 10:

Animal Control and City Administration should seriously consider expanding City funded TNR to other city neighborhoods. The program could be set up with minimal personnel costs because volunteers could trap and transport cats with assistance from City Animal Control. CDBG or other funds would pay for the surgeries.

Pittsburgh Animal Controller Training Requirements

Finding: The City Department of Personnel and Civil Service and the Animal Rescue League require all Animal Controllers receive animal control training.

The latest City job description for Animal Controller requires successful completion of Animal Control Training and/or an Animal Control Seminar. The ARL

requires training from a specified provider, the National Animal Control Association or an equivalent organization.

The National Animal Control Association (NACA) is an organization whose “mission is to define and promote professionalism in the animal protection care and humane law enforcement field by providing quality services, education, training, and support”.

According to its website, NACA “was formed in 1978 for the express purpose of assisting its members in performing their duties in a professional manner. One method of accomplishing this goal is to make personnel training programs available. This training must be designed to prepare animal control personnel for the challenges of solving the animal/people problems in today's world”. In addition to training municipal and private Animal Control Officers, NACA provides state mandated training for Pennsylvania Humane Police Officers.

The contract also requires that “In instances where records are retrievable, the City will provide documentation of compliance..”

Finding: Contract language indicates ARL concerns about City Animal Control training and competence. In addition to requiring training from a specified provider (or equivalent) the contract requires establishment of a procedure “whereby each party may report to the other any incidents involving inappropriate treatment of animals in the performance of this contract”.

Recommendation No. 11:

Training from a competent provider will help ensure that City Animal Controllers use humane animal handling and control techniques.

Training Certification

The auditors requested NACA or other training certification for each current Animal Controller as well as the date of hire for each animal controller. The date of hire was needed to determine how soon after hire training was provided.

Finding: City Animal Control provided ACA training certificates for four (31%) of the Bureau’s 13 current animal control officers and training evidence for the Supervisor.

Finding: Two of the animal controllers completed training within 10 months of being hired. One controller was certified 14 years post hire and the other was certified 7 years after hire.

Finding: City Animal Control did not provide professional training certification for nine animal controllers or 69% of the animal control force. Five of these animal controllers have been on the job for more than 28 years each.

Recommendation No. 12:

All animal controllers, regardless of length of employment, must obtain training certification from NACA or an equivalent provider. Training in proper animal handling techniques helps ensure safe and humane animal control. Professional credentials also enhance the Bureau's reputation and standing in the community.

In-House Training

Finding: In 2009, the Animal Control Supervisor scheduled four in house training sessions for Animal Control Officers. Sessions were held on paper work review, the 311 system, euthanasia and wildlife and zoonotic diseases. The last two sessions were conducted by a veterinarian and specialist from the Pittsburgh Zoo.

Recommendation No. 13:

In-house training is a cost-effective means of enhancing employee professionalism. The Bureau should continue to provide in-house training on topical animal control issues.

Community Outreach

Finding: In 2009, the Animal Control Supervisor spoke about animal control ordinances at 12 community meetings on the North Side, in Lawrenceville, Hill District, Hazelwood/Greenfield and the South Hills. Pamphlets describing City ordinances and City animal control services were distributed.

Recommendation No. 14:

Community outreach is a good educational tool and should be extended to all areas of the City. Areas such as the West End, Homewood and Garfield where presentations have not yet been given should have priority.