



CITY of CYPRESS

5275 Orange Avenue, Cypress, California 90630

Phone 714-229-6700 www.cypressca.org

August 14, 2023

Honorable Maria D. Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: "Gimme Shelter and a Pound of Advice" Grand Jury Response

Dear Judge Hernandez:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, please find the City of Cypress response to the "Gimme Shelter and a Pound of Advice" Grand Jury report.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (714) 229-6680.

Sincerely,

Peter Grant
City Manager

Attachment: City of Cypress Responses to Findings and Recommendations

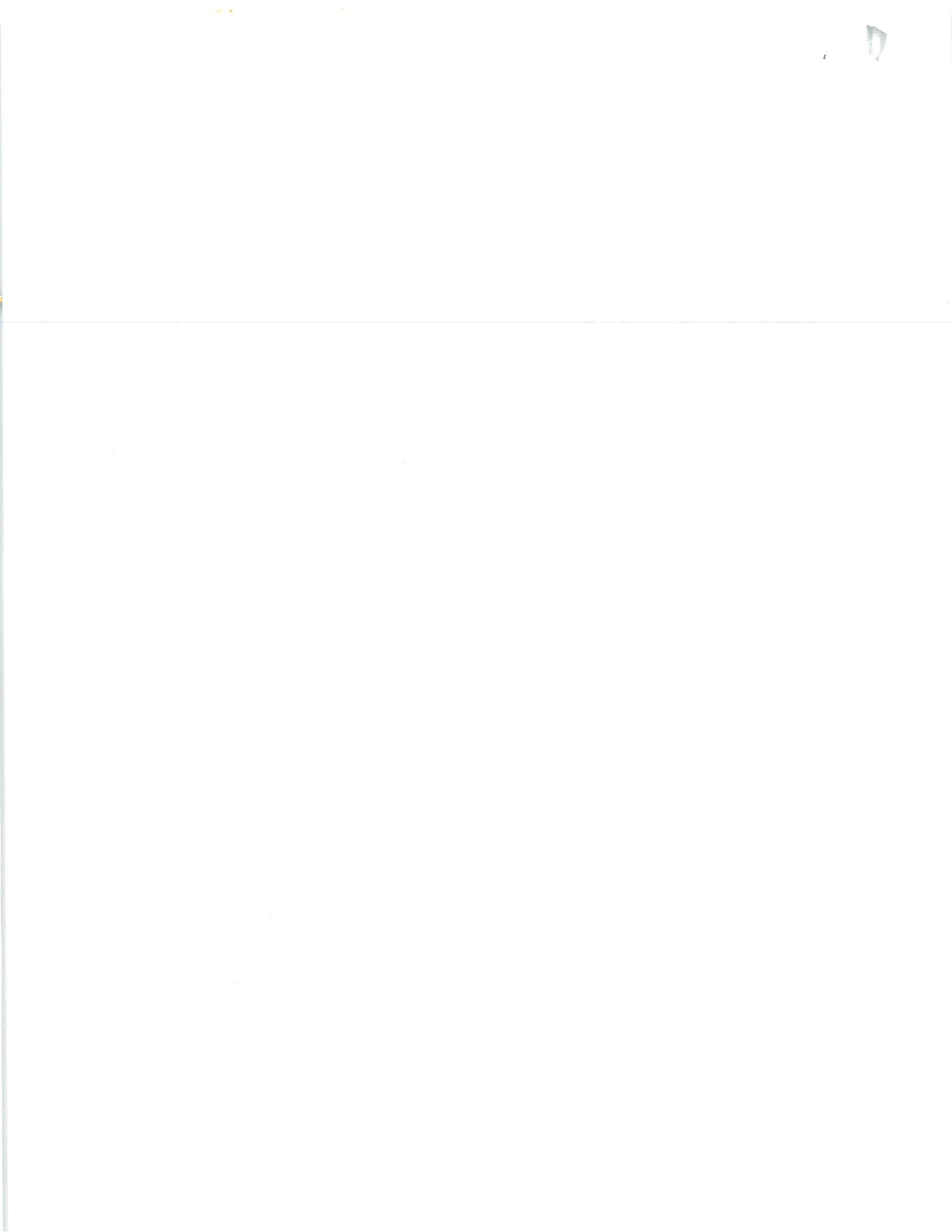
Anne Mallari, Mayor

Scott Minikus, Mayor Pro Tem

David Burke, Council Member

Frances Marquez, Ph.D., Council Member

Bonnie Peat, Council Member





Responses to Findings and Recommendations

2022-23 Grand Jury Report:

"Gimme Shelter and a Pound of Advice"

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

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: Disagrees partially with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. Orange County Animal Care (OCAC) indicates they prioritize meeting the needs of animals in their care to meet or exceed industry standards and legal requirements.

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: Disagrees wholly with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. The COVID-19 State of Emergency in California did not end until February 23, 2023. OCAC indicated they did suspend volunteer recruitment during the State of Emergency but in the past year, have hosted monthly volunteer trainings to recruit and train new recruits.

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: Disagrees partially with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. OCAC indicates the Behavioral Evaluation Committee evaluates dogs per

euthanasia guidelines to ensure consistency in the decision evaluation process.

F8. The rate of behavioral euthanasia of dogs has increased significantly over the last 2 years.

Response: Disagrees partially with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. OCAC indicates the dog save rate has remained stable and well above 90%. They also indicate the overall increase in behavioral euthanasia can be correlated to the significant increase in the population of unsocialized dogs with behavior/aggression issues that have been abandoned or surrendered by their owners in the last year in the wake of the pandemic.

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: Disagrees wholly with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. OCAC indicates all employees working with animals are hired based on their experience and training, and ongoing training and certifications are a critical part of employee development and provide consistent evaluation of animals at the shelter.

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: The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. The City of Cypress cannot comment on the County Counsel's legal opinion.

F11. The termination of the Trap, Neuter, and Return program is correlated with an increase in adult cat euthanasia rate at the shelter.

Response: Disagrees wholly with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental

laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. OCAC indicates that no direct correlation has been established between Trap, Neuter, and Return and adult cat euthanasia at OCAC.

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: Disagrees with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. OCAC partners with HEART (Healthcare & Emergency Animal Rescue Team) for a low cost spay/neuter clinic once per month.

F13. The current adoption appointment system restricts public access to the dog kennels, thereby limiting potential adopters' access to all available animals.

Response: Disagrees wholly with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. OCAC indicates the adoption model has restricted unescorted access, but all adoptable animals have always been accessible to the public through online viewing and in-person visits.

F15. Internal and community engagement does not adequately communicate the shelter's mission and operating strategy.

Response: Disagrees wholly with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. In October 2022, OCAC hired a full-time Public Information Officer to focus on external communication. OCAC also indicated that it is their goal to participate in at least 200 community events in 2023, whether it be adoption events or public outreach.

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: Disagrees wholly with the finding.

The City of Cypress contracts with the County of Orange for animal care services. The County agrees to comply with all applicable governmental laws, regulations, and requirements related to animal care services. OCAC indicates prices have never been posted on the OCAC website as

they are set by independent practices and are outside the purview of OCAC. The low cost spay/neuter information posted on the OCAC website is supplied solely for informational purposes, and OCAC has no responsibility or obligation to provide this content.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

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. (F1 thru F16)

Response: Requires further analysis.

The City of Cypress has contracted with the County for animal care services since 1961, with the current contract expiring on May 30, 2026. The City pays the County the net cost of all animal care services provided within the City's jurisdiction. Any changes to the current operational model will need to be evaluated in advance of the expiration of the contract to determine the need for resources.