



# El Paso Animal Services

**MAYOR**

Renard U. Johnson

**CITY COUNCIL**

**District 1**

Alejandra Chávez

**District 2**

Dr. Josh Acevedo

**District 3**

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Cynthia Boyar Trejo

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Chris Canales

**CITY MANAGER**

Dionne Mack

## Animal Shelter Advisory Committee

### Minutes

April 9, 2025

#### Call to Order- Establish Quorum

A meeting of the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee was held virtually. The meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Canales at 6:02 PM.

Board Members	Present	Absent
Laura Sanchez	X	
Silvia Serna	X	
Sandra DiFrancesco	X	
Terry M. Breaux	X	
Alejandra Valdez	X	
Barbara Candelaria	X	
Mary Bardouche	X	
Elvira Stephanie Frias		X
Raquel Ellis	X	
Tess Passero	X	
Chris Canales	X	

Animal Services staff present: Terry Kebschull, Adan Parra, Maria Arciniega, Michele Anderson, Gina Ramirez, Veronica Frescas, Michael Wachsmann,

#### 1. Approval of Minutes

Discussion and action on approval of minutes for March 12, 2025

*Mary Bardouche moved to approve the March 12, 2025 minutes; Tess Passero seconded; all members voted in favor; none opposed and motion passed unanimously*

#### 2. Reports of Officers, Staff and Subcommittees

##### A. Chair Report

Chris Canales gave an update on the pet pantries project that is a collaboration between El Paso Community Foundation's Borderland Rescue Fund and El Paso Public Libraries.

Terry Kebschull- Director

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### B. El Paso Animal Services March update and statistics

Terry Kebschull presented the March statistics. Report is attached.

Silvia Serna inquired on the reason for the high numbers of euthanasia for infectious diseases. Terry explained that this is the time of year when more distemper, parvo and panleukopenia are seen which is not out of the ordinary, however there was a particularly large spike in parvo.

Alejandra Valdez asked whether a finder could get information on the condition of a stray cat. Terry explained that staff could provide that information; the finder can search the EPAS website for availability of the cat and for further information he could be reached by email. He added that the response might not be immediate.

Sandy DiFrancesco inquired on the increase in owner surrenders from February to March, what is the main reason for surrendering and what percentage went to fosters. Terry explained that the main reason for owner surrenders for cats are evictions, followed by too many animals, financial hardship, change of lifestyle and moving. The main reason for dogs is family health, followed by health of animal, evictions and behavior issues. Terry added that he currently does not have the percentages of owner surrenders being fostered, however several of them are adopted as long as they are healthy and don't have behavior issues. He will provide percentages next month. Sandra mentioned that the at-risk program is working very well and requested to continue notifying the committee about the at-risk dogs.

Tess Passero asked about the main reasons for owner surrender euthanasia and what the process is. Terry explained that the main reason is behavior and evidence such as photos, doctor notes, case reports are requested so that the behavior team can review. Other reasons are age and health, but regardless of the reason, all owner requested euthanasia goes through an assessment first, and many animals surrendered for euthanasia are not euthanized.

Laura Sanchez inquired about the Cruelty Break-the Cycle campaign and if there is education on the legalities and consequences. Terry explained that EPAS basically deals with the Class C citations and the Police Department gets involved when there is an actual crime. Gina Ramirez added that the campaign message is directed to all ages in our community to show them how to look out for signs of cruelty.

Gabriel Lucero who oversees the EPPD animal cruelty unit mentioned that he would be able to present a breakdown of cruelty and abuse levels to the committee. He added that the department is waiting on approval to work in

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marked units to promote the Animal Cruelty Unit to serve as a deterrent. He also mentioned that he got informed by Commander Lujan that the department is getting a liaison with an Assistant District Attorney to help with investigations and presenting cases.

Alejandra Valdez asked about the percentage of cruelty cases that received a plea deal, went to trial, and if the plea is associated to a fine. Gabriel Lucero mentioned that he didn't have that information, but once the cases are assigned to DA's office, most do not go to trial, many pleas for a lesser offense and/or probation. Chris mentioned that it's a case by case and typically pleading to a Class C misdemeanor and a fine up to \$1000.00.

Silva Serna inquired about the violations issued by EPAS. Terry explained that they are notices of violations and have a set charge by the court system. Mona Heydarian added that some of the questions asked for more specific information about case outcomes could go through an open records request.

Tess Passero inquired about whether EPAS could encourage owner to spay/neuter their pets before reclaiming. Terry explained that at this time the answer is no, it's not a standard practice. Tess added that she would like to start a program for the unaltered RTOs that could be enacted privately or a voucher program through the foundation. Chris added that is one of those items that could be looked at when evaluating Title 7.

### **3. ASAC Strategic Goals**

Goal #1: Support the City of El Paso's Initiative to reach and sustain a 90% or greater live-release rate by 2025

#### **A. Discussion on update of the Westside Adoption Center (WAC)**

Animal Services Operations Manager Adan Parra presented The West Side Adoption Center Update

Barbara Candelaria asked whether the Westside Adoption Center will operate as a full shelter once completed, will the capacity increase once the cats are added, are both facilities ready for summer and will mega clinic be held at that location. Adan explained that the center will now offer adoptions for cats as well dogs and will also have a medical isolation area to care for the sick. The spays and neuters will continue to be done at the Socorro Clinic, and the capacity will increase with 53 to 55 additional animals. Adan added that the facility is getting a new HVAC system, and the WAC will be different since the animals for viewing will all be indoors. Since the mega clinics require more space, the center will

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initially be able to have smaller clinics for microchips and vaccinations only.

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### B. Discussion and action on the 2024 ASAC Annual Report

Chris Canales mentioned that he made the corrections on the typos and briefly went over the report for the members that were not present at last month's meeting. The report will be presented to City Council by the end of April. He asked whether the subcommittee members or any other ASAC member would be interested in participating in presenting the report at the April 29th City Council meeting; Laura Sanchez, Tess Passero and Chris Canales will present.

*Motion was made by Mary Bardouche to adopt the 2024 ASAC Annual Report, seconded by Laura Sanchez, all members voted in favor; none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.*

### 4. Call to the Public

None

### 5. Adjournment

Silvia Serna moved to adjourn; Laura Sanchez seconded, all members voted in favor; none opposed, and motion passed unanimously; the meeting adjourned at 7:22PM.

Prepared by: Maribel Karisch & Maria Arciniega

Approved by A.S.A.C Chairman:



Chris Canales

Terry Kebschull- Director  
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