

**Lee County Board Of County Commissioners  
Agenda Item Summary**

Blue Sheet No. 20020506

**1. REQUESTED MOTION:**

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Authorize the creation of four new full-time positions for staffing of the Mobile Spay & Neuter Clinic. Positions include one veterinarian, two veterinary technicians, and one animal control officer/driver. This action is a result of the proposal brought before the Board on May 6<sup>th</sup> at Management & Planning [see additional information attached related to the proposal].

**WHY ACTION IS NECESSARY:** The Board must authorize the creation of all new positions.

**WHAT ACTION ACCOMPLISHES:** This action is one of many steps toward implementing the mobile clinic. By authorizing the positions, Animal Services and Human Resources will develop criteria for recruiting and hiring the required (or necessary) employees so that they may receive training and obtain any required certifications and be ready to operate the vehicle when it is ready to begin operation. Funding for the positions prior to the vehicle's operation comes from reserves of license revenues generated over the past three years and any surpluses generated this fiscal year.

**2. DEPARTMENTAL CATEGORY:**

COMMISSION DISTRICT #: countywide **CL6K**

**3. MEETING DATE:**

**05-28-2002**

**4. AGENDA:**

- CONSENT
- ADMINISTRATIVE
- APPEALS
- PUBLIC
- WALK ON
- TIME REQUIRED:

**5. REQUIREMENT/PURPOSE:**  
(Specify)

- STATUTE
- ORDINANCE
- ADMIN. CODE
- OTHER

**6. REQUESTOR OF INFORMATION:**

- A. COMMISSIONER Countywide
- B. DEPARTMENT ANIMAL SERVICES
- C. DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_
- BY: SCOTT TREBATOSKI

**7. BACKGROUND:**

On May 6<sup>th</sup> the BOCC gave direction to Animal Services to proceed with a mobile spay & neuter clinic. Authorizing the positions necessary for staffing the operation will allow for sufficient time to recruit and train staff. The recruiting of a veterinarian could be a difficult task based on the lack of applications received in the past when Animal Services sought to hire an on-call veterinarian. Funding for positions shall come from annual pet registration license fees and revenues generated by the clinic (as well as from donations given for that purpose). Additional work continues on preparing specifications for the bidding/purchase process of the actual vehicle and preparation of the Animal Care Trust Fund Account documents.

**8. MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:** Authorize the creation of the positions for recruiting, hiring and training of staff so that the vehicle is ready for operation when completed. Positions will not be filled until the contract for the vehicle has been executed- with the possible exception of the veterinarian which can be utilized at the shelter if he/she is hired in advance

**9. RECOMMENDED APPROVAL:**

A Department Director	B Purchasing or Contracts	C Human Resources	D Other	E County Attorney	F Budget Services				G County Manager
<i>Stanburd, G. 5/10/02 16-5/10/02</i>	N/A	<i>George A. William 5/13/02</i>	N/A	<i>KTC 5/13/02</i>	OA <i>CA 5/14/02</i>	OM <i>MS 5/14/02</i>	Risk <i>JP 5/16</i>	GC <i>LG 5-16-02</i>	<i>WDS 5-16-02</i>

**10. COMMISSION ACTION:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED
- \_\_\_\_\_ DENIED
- \_\_\_\_\_ DEFERRED
- \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER

RECEIVED BY	PMC
COUNTY ADMIN.	
<i>5/13 430</i>	CA
COUNTY ADMIN.	
FORWARDED TO:	<i>MS</i>
<i>5/16 230</i>	

**INITIAL OPERATING BUDEGT FOR SPAY/NEUTER VEHICLE**

<b>FIRST YEAR BUDGET (May-Oct 2002)</b>		
Communications/Radio		\$0
Maintenance (Incl. Fuel)		\$0
Medical Supplies		\$24,000
Medical Equipment		\$11,000
Miscellaneous		\$1,000
Printed Materials		\$1,000
Promotion		\$2,500
ACO Training		\$1,000
Salaries		
Veterinarian		\$26,000
Vet Tech (2)		\$27,500
ACO/Driver		\$10,850
Benefits (Health & Payroll Tax)	0.3	\$19,305
FRS Retirement	0.095	\$6,113
<b>Total Budget FY01-02</b>		<b>\$130,268</b>

**FIRST FULL YEAR OF OPERATION OPERATING BUDGET**

<b>FY2002-03 (Increase by 6% for inflation &amp; merit for each year)</b>		
Communications/Radio		\$2,000
Maintenance (Incl. Fuel)		\$8,500
Medical Supplies		\$24,000
Medical Equipment		\$2,500
Miscellaneous		\$1,000
Printed Materials		\$1,000
Promotion		\$2,500
Salaries		
Veterinarian		\$64,500
Vet Tech (2)		\$68,600
ACO/Driver		\$27,000
Benefits (Health & Payroll Tax)	0.3	\$48,030
FRS Retirement	0.095	\$15,210
Contracted Relief Vet \$400/day	20	\$8,000
<b>Total Budget FY02-03</b>		<b>\$272,840</b>

**ESTIMATED OPERATIONAL REVENUES & OTHER FUNDING SOURCES**

Operations- 4 days/week 52-weeks/year		
Estimated 15 procedures per day		
Total Annual Procedures:	3120	
<b>POTENTIAL INCOME GENERATED</b>		
Cost will be based on Income/Public Assistance Criteria		
Free Procedures	2000	\$0
Reduced Rate Procedures @\$10	600	\$6,000
Reduced Rate Procedures @\$20	450	\$9,000
Procedures @ \$45	70	\$3,150
License Fees	2500	\$20,000
Vaccinations (incl. events & clinics)	5000	\$25,000
<b>Est. Operating Revenues from Mobile Unit</b>		<b>\$63,150</b>

Funding from License Fees	
60,000 license x \$8 from sale	\$480,000
Est. Differential Board & Other Fees	\$7,500
<b>Total Estimated Revenues</b>	<b>\$487,500</b>
<b>Total License &amp; Operations Revenue</b>	<b>\$550,650</b>

<b>Total Estimated Operation Cost to be Funded by License</b>	
Total Costs	\$272,840
Less: Revenue	\$550,650
Surplus Funding Balance	\$277,810

\*\*Surplus funding can be used for other programs such as voucher program

<b>Use of Voucher Money</b>	
1999	\$186,720
2000	\$231,340
2001	\$225,835

**ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE POSSIBLE SOURCES OF REVENUE**

*(Either one-time or annual funding)*

- Sponsorship of Vehicle with Logo placed on Vehicle
- Grant Money Available (May Require Trust or Not-for-Profit Status)
- Naming Rights for Vehicle @ Set \$ Cost
- Renting Vehicle to Other Counties/Agencies

<b>INITIAL PURCHASE AND REMAINING YEAR FUNDING FROM SURPLUS</b>	
Vehicle Cost	\$196,224
Set up & Operation FY01-02	\$130,268
<b>Total Costs for FY2001-02</b>	<b>\$326,492</b>
<b>Available Reserves from Surplus 1999-2001 Carryover</b>	<b>\$337,922</b>

# *Proposal for Operation of a Mobile Spay/Neuter Program*

## **Problem & Background Information**

The problem facing Lee County is no different from the problem facing every county in every state – pet overpopulation and the related issues with euthanasia for unwanted animals. There has been an alarming trend over the past two decades where animal population growth is far outpacing human population growth. Since 1990, the human population in Lee County has increased 36% while the number of animals handled by animal control (a good indicator of animal population) has increased 129% (Exhibits 1-3). One can infer that the animal population is out-pacing the human population by 3.6 times. Uncontrolled breeding, increase in ownership rates, feral populations, and tight funding have all contributed to this growing problem. Some states have taken the lead to find innovative ways to combat this problem. Fortunately, Lee County can benefit from some of their experience and proceed with a known successful program – a mobile spay/neuter vehicle.

As the explosion of animals is occurring, animal shelters have been experiencing the highest numbers of animals entering their facilities. Late in 1998, the County resumed animal control responsibilities that had previously been contracted to the Humane Society. At that time the County made a commitment to provide full-service shelter operations rather than a simple animal control lost and found facility. The result of that commitment has been more animals being adopted in Lee County (Exhibit 4). Though educational programs, special events, promotions and increase service hours Lee County Animal Services (LCAS) has seen the meteoric rise in animal control adoption soar from an estimated 205 animals in 1998 to a resounding 2219 animals in 2001 - a 1082% increase in just over three years (Exhibit 4). LCAS saw a tremendous 29% increase in 2001 figures (Exhibit 5).

These efforts are all part of a comprehensive program of animal control and adoption. At the same time the percentage of animals lost to euthanasia has dropped from almost 90% (very common nationally for animal control programs) to about 64.89% (if we exclude owner-requested euthanasia procedures) - a drop of 25% in three years. Those numbers show great progress but more can be done to limit the amount of euthanasia required to be provided.

As we approach what is often considered the ceiling figure for adoptions from animal control – 35% of total animals taken in are adopted – we must look to address the number of animals being brought in through population control. For many years the State of Florida has recognized the problem of pet overpopulation and has mandated by law that all animals adopted from shelters must be sterilized, a good first step. Animal Services has taken that one step further by providing special promotions to provide low-cost spay/neuter procedures to economically disadvantaged people, by providing a voucher program for people to get reduced prices from veterinarians for sterilization (Exhibit 8), and by working with the Affordable Spay & Neuter Clinic (a non-profit organization providing 5000 sterilization procedures a year). Most of those programs have shown some success in reaching certain segments of the population but have had little impact on some of the worst problem areas. The voucher program however has had mixed results and the Board was informed in 2001 that something should be done to improve the use of

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low-cost spay/neuter funds (Exhibit 6). The reason those programs have not worked is that the animals must be brought into the facility and some people cannot or will not do that.

The next logical step to raise the level of service to attack the overpopulation problem is to provide a mobile clinic that can pull into target neighborhoods and provide spay/neuter procedures. Several states across the country and a number of counties in Florida have already taken this step and the results have been stunning. Aggressive programs have dropped the number of stray animals, reduced numbers of animals housed, allowed more time for animals to be housed for adoption, and brought the adoption rate of those animals deemed adoptable to an astounding 70-90%. A comprehensive study by the Minnesota Legislature (The 1990 Report from the Animal Population Control Study Commission of the Minnesota Legislature) concluded that for every dollar spent on public spay/neuter programs (such as mobile spay/neuter clinics) saves taxpayers \$18.72 in future animal control expenses over the next ten years (Appendix A).

The urgency of addressing the animal overpopulation problem can't be stressed enough. It is estimated that if the growth rates seen between 1990 and 2000 continued unchecked and no new aggressive programs to end pet overpopulation, Lee County Animal Services will handle almost 45,000 per year by 2020 (Exhibits 4 & 17). It is obvious that if those numbers panned out the burden would be too great on the community, and far too many animals would be euthanized.

This proposal if accepted would provide another piece of the puzzle. It would provide another tool to combat the problems of pet overpopulation, unwanted animals, and too many adoptable animals being euthanized while also relieving the burden on the taxpayers of the county and ultimately saving animal lives. It is for those reasons that the proposal is being brought to the Board of County Commissioners.

### **The Proposal**

Lee County Animal Services is looking for the approval of the Board of County Commissioners to begin competitive negotiations with the limited number of available providers of mobile spay/neuter vehicles. It is estimated that the vehicle will cost in the neighborhood of \$196,000 for the initial purchase (Exhibits 9 & 10) and take 200-240 days after contract execution for the vehicle to be road-ready. In addition to the vehicle start-up costs for staff, training, equipment, promotion, and planning will cost about \$130,000 for the remainder of FY2001-02 (Exhibit 13). That comes to an approximate total of \$336,000.

Funding for the initial purchase of the vehicle and the initial operating budget for FY2001-02 is currently available in retained reserved funds (requested for carryover) totaling nearly \$328,000 provided by license sales from 1999-2001 (Exhibits 20 & 14). These funds have been designated for use in low-cost spay/neuter programs. LCAS anticipates that additional funding may also be available from private donations, corporate sponsorship, grants, and innovative fee structures. There is no ad valorem tax impact created by this proposal since all monies come from user fees and licensing.

# *Proposal for Operation of a Mobile Spay/Neuter Program*

## **The Proposed Clinic**

The most productive and best programs (including almost all programs in Florida) use a large self-contained clinic vehicle. These vehicles range from 28'-32' and are either constructed as mobile clinics from a chassis base or are modifications from a bus shell. It has been determined with the assistance of Lee County Fleet Management that the vehicle should be diesel to maximize road time and vehicle longevity (Exhibit 11). Estimates of the two major providers are included in this proposal document (See Tab 4).

When looking at investing in this type of asset, LCAS has tried to look at utility and function. It has been determined that this mobile clinic should not only be available to provide low-cost spay/neuter procedures but it also should be able to serve as a supplement to existing clinic space and be able to serve as a post-disaster mobile triage and field clinic. Given those parameters it has been determined that the initial investment should include full-service functionality and include equipment such as x-ray facilities that the County currently does not have. This will allow the County to save money currently spent taking animals to private practices for certain diagnostic procedures and x-rays saving crucial funds to be used elsewhere.

Competitive negotiation appears the best approach in this venture to get the best vehicle at the lowest cost. Since the number of suppliers of these vehicles is small and the equipment/layout often varies greatly, the County through competitive negotiations will be able to get the vehicle exactly as needed for the best possible price.

## **Annual Operation**

The estimated budget for the first full year of operation of the mobile clinic is approximately \$272,000 (Exhibit 13). Money for the operations budget shall be provided primarily from two sources – actual revenues taken in by the clinic and fees (tags, etc). Conservative estimates show that the vehicle will bring in at least \$63,000 (Exhibit 14) in income with the majority (about 70%) of the services provided at no charge to low-income households (Exhibit 12). These figures may actually be higher for revenues because LCAS has always taken a conservative approach in estimating revenues and thus has been able to operate on less funding than anticipated by the memorandum of understanding and has returned money to the general fund each year. A large part of the annual funding from this vehicle comes from annual animal registration (license tag sales). In order to provide money to this program and other important programs it is also proposed that the County raise its annual registration fee. The increase will provide that current programs can continue while new programs are added. The County is charging far below the Florida average (Exhibit 21). Depending on the fee level chosen the County could charge the same fee across the board or it could consider offering a discounted annual registration to reward those responsible cat and dog owners that have had their animals spayed/neutered. This structure has been very successful in many areas (including 27 of 34 Florida Counties that have animal licensing programs – Exhibit 21) and is growing in popularity each year as another tool to eliminate potential contributors to the growing pet over population problem.

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It is possible that small grants and other donations may provide funds that can be used for the annual operation, especially as it relates to low- and no-cost procedures for the economically disadvantaged. However, this proposal is being made from a conservative point of view that does not rely on the varying nature of grants and donations. Any funds provided by grants or donations will simply allow the County to have reserves or funds for other programs or services that are not used by this proposed funding scenario.

### **Long-term Outlook**

If the current rate of animal population growth continues over the next two decades without additional programs to reduce that population Lee County may be faced with the monumental task of handling almost 45,000 animals a year by 2020 (Exhibits 4 & 17). However, if the County undertakes an aggressive program of targeting specific areas with a mobile spay/neuter clinic those numbers drop dramatically. Estimates, using nationally recognized results from programs over the past two decades, would have the number of animals handled by Animal Services in 2020 at just over 21,000 animals (Exhibit 4). Those numbers are profound. The difference in the number of animals handled directly translates into costs of services provided and facilities needed to house the animals.

Modeling of future costs and needs based upon these population estimates show that without progressive programs to reduce animal population the County would likely expend a total of \$145 million over the next twenty years for animal control services and sheltering (Exhibits 15 & 17). With the progressive programs in place that number drops to about \$85 million. The reduction is over 40% saved. Even when you factor in the cost of operating the programs for those twenty years the net savings come to about \$51 million. In projecting costs less revenues and dollars expended, the mobile spay/neuter program could provide a return on investment of \$2.41 per dollar spent by 2010 and a resounding \$7.12 return for every dollar spent over the twenty year projection (Exhibit 18) – and none of the money spent on this program would come from ad valorem tax.

### **Effects on Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Programs (Vouchers)**

By increasing annual pet registration fees none of the money currently used for programs would be affected. The higher fees will provide money not only to fund the mobile clinic needs but will also provide additional money for other affordable spay/neuter programs (Exhibit 16). Therefore, the County will be able to provide enhanced incentives for affordable spay/neuter programs. Such programs can include vouchers, rebates, prepaid procedure certificates or any innovative program that can be developed. For every dollar of license revenue estimated to be used by the mobile clinic more than \$1.75 will be available for additional spay/neuter programs (Exhibit 16). Therefore, a comprehensive system of differential licensing and a mobile spay/neuter clinic will actually enhance current programs like the voucher program – keeping all programs working together to chip away at the pet overpopulation problem.