

## **Pike County Animal Control Five-Year Plan**

The purpose of this Animal Control Five-Year Plan is to develop feasible and reasonable efforts to implement the Pike County Animal Control program and Pike County Animal Shelter facility over a five-year development period.

### Year One: Calendar Year 2013

Identify potential and long-term Revenue sources (State Funding; Grants; County Tax; Licenses and Fees for Services – adoption, rescue, spay/neuter, vaccines; Fines and Penalties; Private Donations – individuals and corporations through cash, volunteer time, and materials; Fundraising potentials – yard sales, store sales; etc.) and potential Expenses for building and maintaining a Facility, Personnel training and scheduling, and Operations (food, care, cleaning, medical, adoptions, etc.). There should be some expense control through inter-governmental agreements with local cities and support from other groups.

Determine and officially designate property as the location for the Animal Shelter and Animal Control Department operations. A site (the borrow pit) on County Farm Road (on the right side of the Georgia State prison facility) has been identified as having a large enough ground site for the facility and a gradual slope for adequate drainage, with no anticipated site problems being known at this time. This site is conveniently located and easily accessed by visitors in the community. Cement foundations and 8-foot fencing (curved poles to keep animals in) for the exterior site security could be installed over a period of time, perhaps with the assistance of the State Corrections program to minimize costs involved and promote support from another local resource. This would be a good public relations effort with the local citizenry and local businesses. Later, signage for the facility can be provided as the program develops.

The site (part of Parcel #066 001), which already belongs to the County, could be immediately approved by the Board of Commissioners at a regular Board of Commissioners Meeting early in 2013 as dedicated and assigned to the Animal Control Department and the Animal Shelter facility. Public Works could put out site markers for a 2 ¼ acre site (300 feet by 300 feet) and identify piping requirements for electrical, water, sewer, natural gas, and such other utilities as are required for the Animal Shelter operations.

Adequate planning time during the first year will allow for good planning of the facility size, equipment, and services that will be provided by volunteers and staff. This includes medical facilities, kennel areas, dog runs, cat personalities, livestock, wild animals, clean up, isolation, adoptions, euthanasia, disposal, and many other considerations. Administrative offices being significantly separate from the animal care areas will promote quiet and concentrated work by the staff, and precautions and protections against medical illnesses passed by the animals to the staff and volunteers.

In addition to these issues, related to the facility, are the Federal and State of Georgia laws, and the Georgia Department of Agriculture Regulations. These need to be reviewed as they relate to Pike County requirements. Also, there need to be Policies and Procedures in Pike County that clearly specify and provide guidelines for what happens in a variety of business and operational circumstances. These Operational Policies and Procedures, and Volunteer Guidelines, and Medical Procedures, and Disposal Requirements are still yet to be written – during that first year. This is where a volunteer or a veterinarian can be significantly helpful in preparing the groundwork to be fine-tuned by the Staff, Department Head, County Manager, County Attorney, and Board of Commissioners. This is also where interactions with Public Works, Law Enforcement, and Planning and Zoning Officials becomes significant...another door to open in 2013.

It is imperative that strong relationships be built with Community agencies and services (FPCA – Friends of Pike County Animals, CARE – Companion Animal Rescue and Education, Coco's Cupboard, Pedigree Foods, etc.) who assist in care and adoption of animals, such as rescue, service animals, feeding, volunteer hours, etc. These groups will not only encourage support in the expanded community, but are likely to financially support the goals of the Animal Shelter with donations of time, food, towels, cleaning supplies, veterinary services, etc. The effect of this is that items will be donated which will save funds for the Animal Shelter program and reduce budget expenses for the County. Begin making contact with veterinary and other animal related services to garner their written support for the Animal Shelter and its efforts.

This will also be a good opportunity for Pike County to establish itself and the Animal Control Department, as being the primary responsible parties for training, organization, operations and management of Animal Control and the Animal Shelter in Pike County. This is to be done in meetings with a variety of groups in the County (Agri-Business, Farm Bureau, Coco's Cupboard, School Board, Library, etc.), and with good PR in the media.

To insure adequate funding for Animal Control as a new Department and new service to the citizens of Pike County, the Board of Commissioners should approve of a millage increase of one point, from 12.63 to 13.63 millage rate, to provide the necessary and adequate funding for a new service. This can be done late in 2013 for the 2014 tax calendar year. One mill has a current value of \$471,971.62, which should cover an approximate cost of operations at \$200,000 to \$250,000 the first and next couple of years of operation, based on the number of anticipated animals dropped-off during the first two years and thereafter; and still have necessary funds to cover bank loan payments for building the facility (about \$2,000,000), and a ten-year payoff (\$200,000 plus interest each year). Other departments of County government, due to the economic downturns over the past few years, have already been through severe cuts in their personnel and operating budgets that do not allow for any further downward adjustment.

It is unlikely, in the current economic crisis, that funding or grants from state and federal resources are likely to be available, but nonetheless, these should be thoroughly researched in

that first year. Private donations from individuals and businesses are more likely, particularly those who have connections with Pike County or animal protection in general. A special fund account should be opened, separate from County Government financial accounts, that will allow financial donations and sales of goods to be held specifically for the Animal Shelter operation and the care of the animals. These funds should not be mixed with other County tax funds, and this account may be managed and signed for accounting purposes by 2 of 3 individuals, such as the County Manager, County Clerk, and the Animal Control Officer. Reporting and documentation would still be to the County Finance Officer and Auditor. This avoids questions and concerns about whether the funds are directly controlled by the County Board of Commissioners, or not, and without being managed as General Fund taxes. This allows the funds (donated) to be used to benefit the Animal Shelter without being tied to facilities, personnel, or general expenses.

#### Year Two: Calendar Year 2014

Year Two should be spent building the facility and identifying and obtaining the equipment that is required. Once the actual building of the facility begins, it should be rapidly completed, as the public is likely to start dropping off animals (tethered to the fence) even before it is completed. A bank loan can be obtained through one of the local banks to provide up-front funding for the facility and necessary equipment. This loan can be paid off over a number of years with part of the tax funds millage increase set aside for the new service. Security of the facility (cameras, alarms, locks and keys, etc.) should be a significant concern in that the facility will probably not be manned twenty-four hours a day, there will be substantial equipment on site, and the protection of the public from escaping animals should be a real concern.

Use professionally trained animal care staff and trained County Employees (animal care and cleanup; catch and pick-up; intake assistants; euthanasia and disposal; adoption showing potentials). Operation of the Animal Shelter and Animal Control program should require 3-4 County employees. Department staffing and training costs will be significant at this point. After hours arrangements and weekend operations must be considered to avoid animals being tethered to the gate over the weekend, and dying due to lack of weekend care and availability - a picture on the front page of the newspaper or the nightly news could be a nightmare for the program. Operation of the Animal Shelter will also require some software programs for information management and documentation.

Marketing of the program and the Animal Shelter (the media, website, brochures, public events, etc.) will be of significant importance during this second year. Veterinary (initial medical review; rabies and other shots; spay and neuter; euthanasia), particularly if it happens to be voluntary, can promote a well-respected program to the community. Volunteer programs (animal care and cleanup; intake assistants, in-house training program) can reduce personnel costs, promote the adoption of animals, market the effort to the local community, result in significant financial and support donations, and reduce the overall costs of the program. Detention Facility inmates (animal care and cleanup) may be available to provide some services in care, clean-up, repairs, and facility maintenance, again reducing overall costs.

Shelter population control is important. Only a set number of animals can be managed at any given time. Some animals, diseased and dangerous, will have to be disposed of through euthanasia and incineration. A gruesome front-page picture of animal carcasses at the Animal Shelter or in the landfill will turn all the positive successes of the Animal Shelter to nothing in just a few days. But, successful rescue and adoptions and training of service animals can promote the real time efforts of all the persons involved and the real intent of the program - adoption. The Pike County Animal Control Department and Animal Shelter must be transparent to the General Public and to the animal welfare programs (CARE, SPCA, etc.). Their support, whether financial or word-of-mouth, will bring the community in as supporters, and adopters. If animals are adopted, they are more likely to be well-cared-for, and program costs reduced. If animals are adopted outside the County, that is even better, because it minimizes the chance that they may eventually come back to the Animal Shelter.

Be customer-oriented, that really should not need any explanation. Visit other nearby shelter operations and get familiar with how other agencies are meeting the need in their community. An appropriate vehicle will be needed by the staff for day-to-day operations. Also, as the facility is built and becomes operational, efforts should be made to consider establishing "donation boxes" throughout the County in strategic locations. These would have to be regularly checked (food, pests). These donation boxes might be more trouble than they are worth except in a couple of "exceptional" locations; in other words, 10 or 12 would probably be too many, but 3-4 might be good and serve to market and promote the Animal Shelter efforts (good PR) to the general public. An annual Silent Auction would be good to promote the Animal Shelter (again, good PR) to the community, get support from groups and individuals, and raise special and perhaps significant funds as a part of the auction of unique items (donated artwork, collectibles, special trips, etc.) to the general public.

Develop and maintain records of animals, personnel, and resources. Animals are checked physically and medically on arrival, and as they leave – with shots, spay and neutering, etc. (and euthanasia and disposal if there are no other options). Documenting volunteer hours shows the public that individuals and the community support the Animal Shelter effort. Resources and special recognition of donations (cash or materials) by individuals and businesses will promote even greater success in following years. Towels for cleanup, a washer, a dryer, a table, visitor's room chairs, padding for cat beds, dog toys, water and food pans, and on-and-on. Everything gifted to the Animal Shelter helps to hold down costs, and helps promote good care for the animals. What can't be used at the Animal Shelter, could be sold for revenue to aid the Animal Shelter program.

The City of Zebulon has offered a double-wide office trailer for \$1.00, but the County would be responsible for the costs of moving the unit and setup and utility connections. These set-up costs could be managed through funds In Contingency, since there are no Department allocations to Animal Control in the current year's budget. Locating this mobile unit off to the side or back of the property will allow for future expansion of the facility and other use of the mobile office unit later. Initially, this building could serve as office space for Animal Control and

support meeting room space for CARE and FPCA interactions and other group meetings. It could also serve as a donation drop-off point for items and funds from the general public and business community. As an appropriate Office Facility and Animal Shelter is built later, the mobile office space could be used as storage of equipment and supplies (bedding, trap cages, catch sticks, etc.) for the facility. Planning and Development and Public Works are looking into the projected costs to move and set-up that office trailer unit. It is very conceivable that the public will donate tens-of-thousands of dollars worth of equipment and supplies during the first couple of years to help get the program started. These items will need to be safely stored, and protected from pests and human intruders.

It should be noted at this point, that outside functional areas will be required at or near this time for outdoor kennels in good weather, dog runs, livestock impounded, and other unusual circumstances. These could be built with the cooperation of volunteers and donating businesses, at a significant savings to the Animal Control program.

### Year Three: Calendar Year 2015

Year Three will be a time for completing the physical building for the offices and shelter, and equipping of the Animal Shelter facility, and looking back and evaluating what has been done and what still yet needs to be done to meet the Animal Control needs of the community. Determining the most logical weekday and weekend operating hours and some degree of 24-hour availability will be necessary. Website information requirements will step up to be significant during Year Three. The information in the Business Plan 2012 will offer good suggestions to be considered that will improve the facility, and having the facility up and operating will allow the County to recognize other issues that need to be dealt with.

By the end of Year Three, most of the strays and dangerous animals should have been eliminated from the countryside and from the Animal Shelter system, as large numbers of stray animals would have been, and will be, turned in and captured during the first two operating years of the Animal Shelter. It is likely that well over 1,000 animals will have been euthanized and carcasses incinerated during the first two years of actual operation. This will require significant veterinary and natural gas expenses. It is noteworthy that the incinerator would allow Public Works to dispose, in a better manner, of dead animals found on the side of the road. Some attention should be spotlighted on private businesses who indirectly support the Animal Control program such as wildlife removal services and pest control businesses. They serve as valuable resources in the community and may be able to better provide some services than the Animal Control program can (capture and removal of wildlife and pests). Again, this saves the County some expense.

During this year, there should be an intense effort to work with community groups and outside resources to promote adoption, rescue programs, and working with other agencies to develop service animals for the different special-needs programs. The more adoptions, the shorter the stays in the Animal Shelter, and the less support expenses will be required. Transparency of the costs and good record-keeping will prove to the community how the Animal Control program

and the Animal Shelter operations have been successful. This will also support acknowledging the support of the community in volunteering hours to help out at the Animal Shelter and clinics; and recognition of the donations of money, materials, and equipment received in support of the overall program. The storage and documentation of old records can be managed on data files in the computer, to minimize the thousands of animal records which would have to be kept for reference.

#### Year Four: Calendar Year 2016

Year Four should have the facility up and running. This will be the time for upgrading and adding services available to the public. This may include spay and neutering clinics, veterinary clinics for rabies and other shots, civic training on animal care and welfare, interactions with neighboring counties, etc. These could be either fee-based or free; fee-based brings in some income but will likely reduce the number of animals addressed during the year, while free clinics are likely to attend to more animals, reducing the long-term animal population, but at an expense for medical supplies and manpower.

#### Year Five: Calendar Year 2017

Year Five should see the program fully up-and-running with only minimal upgrading and improvements needed. Some repairs due to wear-and-tear are likely to become more apparent during this third year of actual operation. The program should also see changes in new laws and regulations probably at a higher cost to the County. It is also likely that there will be a significant and positive change in the local perspective about Animal Control and Animal Shelters in general which might ease the budgeting pressures of paying for the service.

#### Special Concerns:

Previous information has been shared in the Pike County Animal Shelter Business and Operations Plan 2012. A small amount of that information has been repeated in this Five-Year Plan, but it would be good to refer to that document for additional ideas and comments. This Five-Year Plan is a "To-Do" for five years; the Business Plan offers some special and different considerations. There appears to be significant work done in the first two years of planning and building the facility, and that is true; the better the planning and the more adequate the building, the better the long-term service to the community in the following years.

This Five-Year Plan involves heavy "planning" of policies in the first year, then facility building requirements and providing for equipment needs in the second year, and finally building popular support for a new service to the community thereafter. The second phase is the physical "building" of the facility and equipment, and the developing of interactive relationships with various public and private entities (donations), as a means of holding costs at an appropriate level. The third and last phase of the effort is to improve services and "evaluating" the overall program, and "maintaining" the forward moving effort for Animal Control in Pike County. These "phases" are not start-to-finish, but more overlapping in when and how they are

accomplished. Currently, this is only a “plan”, but at least it is a starting point, so now we need to get started.

Comments and Notes: