

July 27, 2004

Honorable Clifford R. Anderson, III  
Presiding Judge, Santa Barbara Superior Court  
P.O. Box 21107  
Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1107

Subject: Board of Supervisors Response to the 2003-04 Grand Jury Report titled:  
Animal Shelter Donations— "Wait a Doggone Minute"

Dear Judge Anderson and Grand Jury Members:

On July 27, 2004, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following response, as its response to the Finding and Recommendation contained in the 2003-04 Grand Jury Report titled Animal Shelter Donations— "Wait a Doggone Minute". The Board of Supervisors is the governing body of the Public Health Department, Animal Services (Health and Regulations) Division. The Board's adopted responses are consistent with the responses of the Public Health Department and the County Auditor-Controller.

**Finding 1: Donations made directly to the animal shelters in Santa Barbara County go to a Special Revenue Fund in the County's budget, and the funds cannot be re-directed for specific shelter uses.**

**Recommendation 1: The County should proceed with the posting of a sign at each shelter clarifying that money donated to the shelters goes to the County's budget for shelter general operating expenses if not written to a charitable or volunteer organization.**

**Response to Finding and Recommendation 1:**

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Grand Jury's finding and has implemented the recommendation. In December 2003, the Auditor-Controller issued a memo recommending the Public Health Department 1) provide staff training regarding the use of shelter donations, and 2) post signage at each of the County's shelters to inform the public that shelter donations are used to fund the general operation of the shelters and may not be designated for a specific purpose. The Public Health Department Animal Services Division has posted signs at each of the County's animal shelters (copy attached). In addition, on June 18, 2004, the Animal Services Division issued policy number 3.46, titled: Acceptance of Donation at the Animal Shelters (copy attached)

which directs staff to provide information to the public on how shelter donations are used, requires a sign posted in the main office at each shelter, and provides a more detailed explanation of how donation to the shelter are accepted, processed, and used.

**Grand Jury Finding 2: The shelters are not self-sustaining and run at a considerable cost to the County. Volunteer organizations contribute funding and hours which help offset these costs. Given current county deficits, care for the animals can be improved only as to the extent volunteer organizations can raise money.**

**Grand Jury Recommendation 2: To meet specific needs at the shelter, donations should be made to such organizations as SAVE, CAPA, ASAP, BUNS, or K-9 PALS, or the shelters' Animal Care Foundation. They will help provide the volunteer staff, the supplies, the medical care, and even housing to make it possible for stray and unwanted animals to survive and live better.**

**Response to Finding and Recommendation 2:**

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Grand Jury's Finding and Recommendation. The County's animal shelters are not self-sustaining. They require County General Fund support, and are the fortunate beneficiary of the many members of the community who very generously contribute their time, money, and other resources to the program. As noted by the Public Health Department in their response to the Grand Jury, the County's Animal Services Division is assisted by hours of dedicated services, enhancement of the adoption and lost and found programs, funding for the medical needs for impounded animals, capital improvements at the animal shelters, etc. Contributions to the County and to the many volunteer organizations assist the County Animal Services program and benefit the overall welfare of animals in Santa Barbara County.

The Board of Supervisors thanks the Grand Jury for its interest and the report on this important subject matter.

Sincerely,

Joseph Centeno, Chair  
Board of Supervisors