

March 16, 2025

City Council of Sebastopol

Re: Addendum to Public Comment Submitted March 6, 2025 - Animal Control and Field Services

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to supplement the public comment I submitted on March 6, 2025, regarding animal services for the City of Sebastopol. Since that submission, the staff report has been released, and it has come to light that the Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) cannot enter into a contract with the City until the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approves the matter. That potential approval is currently scheduled for April 7, 2025, exactly 3 weeks after this meeting.

In light of this development, I wish to update my prior recommendations accordingly. I urge the City Council to contract with the Humane Society of Sonoma County now for sheltering, and prepare now to enter into contract with SCAS for field services and animal control immediately upon Board of Supervisors approval, anticipated for April 7th. There is no other adequate long-term option for animal control and field services. SCAS is the only agency with the expertise, equipment, and capacity to perform animal field work in this region, and any further delay in formalizing this relationship would be contrary to the best interests of Sebastopol residents.

For the brief period between now and April 7th, I recommend the City consider one of the following interim approaches to ensure continuity of field services:

1. As-needed, non-contract support from SCAS. This would allow field services to continue on a flexible basis while the contract awaits approval.
2. An interim arrangement with the Sebastopol Police Department, which has historically filled this role. While the Police Department is not designed or equipped for animal field work, it may be able to provide a stopgap measure for a matter of weeks until SCAS can assume its duties under contract.
3. Other temporary solutions proposed by HSSC, SCAS, and relevant qualified stakeholders.

SCAS remains the only agency adequately equipped to provide professional animal field services long term, and the City should move expeditiously to finalize that relationship.

Thank you for your continued attention to this important matter. I respectfully ask that the Council take proactive steps now so that a contract with SCAS can be executed without delay upon the Board of Supervisors' approval.

Respectfully,
Dr. Sarah Reidenbach