



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2008 NOV 14 A 10: 06

CORRESPONDENCE NO. 4  
Page 1 of 2



November 14, 2008

Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 6700  
Modesto, CA 95354

Dear Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors:

Recently, the cities of Ceres and Modesto contracted with Citygate Associates, LLC to review and provide recommendations regarding animal control services in Stanislaus County. The report was recently completed and shared with members of our City Councils.

The study concluded that the "most cost-effective model for providing animal control services to a community is to form the largest possible agency to provide this service." Citygate's analysis recommends to the Councils of Modesto and Ceres that participation in the County's efforts to upgrade the existing animal shelter facility is the preferred option. However, the study also raises areas of concern related to overall management of the animal control program relative to field service delivery, significant staff turnover, the inability to fill the director's position, inadequate spay/neuter and public education efforts, continued high euthanasia rates and the lack of long range planning. It is our understanding that the County shares these same concerns and is committed to resolve them.

We believe these issues must be addressed as part of any negotiations regarding a long-term partnership. The County has stated they have plans for, or are implementing measures, to address these concerns. To fully understand the County's operational plans and cost sharing methodology, we have directed our staffs to begin a comprehensive review of the animal services budget. It is critical to us that we understand the proposed methodology whereby County residents who live in incorporated areas are being asked to pay both City taxes and County taxes towards this shelter. It is only fair that County residents who live in our cities know that we fully researched how funds are spent and what the financial challenges are now and in the future. The first meeting with staff members from the County, and the two Cities was held the week of October 27, 2008. One additional budget meeting is planned for November 13, after which we expect to begin negotiating contract terms.

Among the items we anticipate discussing during negotiations are these:

- Alternative funding methodologies to those proposed by the County's Chief Executive Office.
- Enhancements to spay/neuter and public education efforts.
- Strategies for dealing with staff turnover and retention.
- Possible formation of a joint powers authority.

This effort cannot be accomplished effectively with the threat of discontinuation of service clouding the discussion. Respectfully, we request that the County Board of Supervisors consider the following actions:

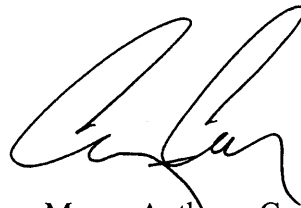
- Direct County staff to enter into a collaborative discussion with the participating municipalities in an effort to devise not only the best long-term financial strategy but also one that ensures the best service for all county residents.
- Extend the current contractual agreements for animal services and sheltering costs through June 30, 2009 so these discussions can be conducted in a spirit of cooperation and partnership.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and remain committed to participating in this project. We look forward to working with you and County staff to determine the best way to proceed in this partnership.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jim Ridenour  
City of Modesto



Mayor Anthony Cannella  
City of Ceres