

CITY OF ALBANY
MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 22, 2010

TO: Judy Lieberman, Assistant City Administrator

FROM: Angelina Harrison, Project Analyst

SUBJECT: Background on Animal Control Services

1) Comparison of animal control services costs

Contra Costa County provides Animal Control services for most municipalities in the county, and charges a per capita fee of \$5.36 per year. Based on an Albany population of 17,000, costs would be approximately \$91,000 per year. Contra Costa County has not offered their services to municipalities outside the county.

Emeryville, like Albany, has neither a shelter nor animal control officers and contracts all of its animal control services out to Piedmont for an annual total of \$85,000. Piedmont employs two animal control officers and contracts with Berkeley for shelter services for a total cost of \$180,505 per year. Total animal control officer salary and benefits expenditure is \$163,000 per year for two officers and shelter services cost \$17,505. In 1993, the City had their own animal control officer, at a cost of \$55,000 per year, plus additional costs for use of the Berkeley Animal Shelter.

2) Comparison of other city dog license fees and revenues

With the exception of Emeryville, Albany's dog license fees for un-neutered dogs are the lowest in the area.

Regular	Alameda	Albany	Albany Senior	Berkeley	Contra Costa County	Emeryville	Oakland	Oakland Senior	Piedmont
1 year	\$25.00	\$16.00	\$3.20	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$5.00	\$100.00	\$50.00	\$32.00
2 year	\$32.00	\$30.70	\$6.35	n/a	\$74.00	n/a	\$150.00	\$60.00	\$53.00
3 year	\$40.00	\$38.25	\$9.60	n/a	\$110.00	\$10.00	\$175.00	\$75.00	\$75.00
Spayed/ Neutered									
1 year	\$10.00	\$8.00	\$1.60	\$7.50	\$20.00	\$5.00	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$17.00
2 year	\$16.00	\$15.35	\$3.15	n/a	\$37.00	n/a	\$15.00	\$7.50	\$27.00
3 year	\$21.00	\$19.00	\$4.80	\$18.00	\$55.00	\$10.00	\$25.00	\$12.50	\$37.00

Additionally, annual revenues from dog licensing in Albany are relatively low, ranging from just under \$1,000 to just over \$2,000. Using average license fees and annual revenues, the figures suggest that Albany’s rate of dog ownership is significantly less than the national average. More likely, there are many dogs in the city that have never been licensed, or whose licenses have lapsed.

Animal License Fees Account 100-43001-0108	
Fiscal Year	Receipts
2000-01	2,214.85
2001-02	1,495.10
2002-03	1,942.80
2003-04	1,881.10
2004-05	2,254.51
2005-06	1,626.68
2006-07	1,177.00
2007-08	1,413.15
2008-09	1,338.45
2009-10	957.40

3) Licensing Improvements

Consistency and ease of licensing can be improved for both the city and for the pet guardian. One option is to turn the licensing system over to the City of Berkeley. The current Albany system would need to be upgraded to generate renewal letters based on vaccination dates on a monthly basis. The City’s Finance department has identified the manual pressing of tags as an area of operational concern. Albany dog license tags have an expiration date manually pressed into them, requiring a new tag be created every one to three years. One benefit of having the City of Berkeley provide licensing services is that they are open on the weekends. Also, if an unlicensed pet is picked up at the Berkeley Animal Shelter, they can be licensed on the spot, and released at the lower fee level. This would be both more efficient and cheaper for the pet guardian.

If the City of Berkeley does not assume licensing responsibilities, the City should consider a ‘forever’ tag that has only the license number on it, as used by Contra Costa County. When a license is renewed, that fact is updated in the computer system but a new tag is not generated. Although Berkeley uses the same type of tags as Albany but has no objection to Albany switching to a “forever” tag. This switch could limit the operational issues for finance and ultimately cut down on material costs. In any case, licensing of dogs should be encouraged via public information on the web site and through existing city print publications (such as the newsletter or Recreation brochure). The pet license page on the city website should be updated and should redesigned to be easier to find and more accommodating to the user.

Materials should be developed, discussing the requirements and benefits of licensing. For example, city ordinance specifies that the fees to recover an unlicensed dog from the pound are three times greater than for a dog that is licensed. Additionally, an animal can be returned to its owner more quickly if it is licensed. Applications should also be available on line, so that residents can bring in the completed application. Ultimately, it would be useful to have license renewal, including payment of fees, available on-line.

4) AMC Section X

According to the Albany Municipal Code, Section 10, the City of Albany, or a contractor operating on its behalf, must provide the following animal control services:

- 10-2.4 Approve trapping/corralling of wild animals within city limits
- 10-3.3 City authorized veterinarian or other authority must supervise removal of diseased animals from the premises of guardian/owner
- 10-3.4d Impoundment of at-large animals during rabies quarantine
- 10-3.5 Provide for disposal of dead animals
- 10-4.2a Impoundment of animals at-large
- 10-4.3 Determine adequacy of enclosure of vicious dogs and assessment of fees and classification as dangerous animal in the case of biting
- 10-4.5b Notification of owner/guardian in case of impoundment
- 10-4.5c Provision by impounding officer of animal description, date time and place of pick-up to be made available for public inquiry for at least 5 days
- 10-4.5d Provision of food and water to impounded animals
- 10-4.5g Deeming of impounded animals as sick or contagious and disposal of such animals by euthanasia
- 10-7.2a If a vicious dog has escaped or attacks someone, City is notified
- 10-7.2b Also notified if such dog is sold, transferred or permanently removed and of info on new owner

5) Current services included in the contract with City of Berkeley:

Animal Control Services

- Investigate, quarantine and report biting animals
- Impound stray domestic animals, at large or confined
- Rescue and seek veterinary treatment for injured animals
- Collect and dispose of deceased animals
- Investigate, quarantine and report upon vicious animals endangering the public or causing a traffic hazard
- Issue citations upon observation of violations to the Albany Municipal Code, Chapter X, Sections 10-4.2 (animals at-large), 10-4.3 (vicious animals) and 10-5.4 (dog license)

Shelter Services

- Veterinary attention when needed
- Euthanasia when needed
- Disposal of deceased animals

6) Dog walking licensing:

The East Bay Regional Park district policy charges a permit fee for people who walk more than three dogs at a time and also for professional dog walkers walking any number of dogs with the maximum allowable of six in either case. Their fees are as follows: (annual unless otherwise specified):

- Private or Non-Profit Dog Walker (Individual): \$25
- Private or Non-Profit Dog Walker (Household): \$40
- Professional Dog Walker (Annual): \$250
- Professional Dog Walker (Semi-Annual): \$125
- Supplemental Permit (Annual): \$100
- Supplemental Permit (Semi-Annual): \$50
- Duplicate Permit (Requires additional photograph of applicants): \$15

Source: <http://www.ebparks.org/node/84#dog>