



## Legislation Text

**File #:** 19-697, **Version:** 1

Accept a \$50,000 Rachael Ray: Save Them All grant funded by the Rachael Ray Foundation and administered by Best Friends Animal Society to reduce shelter deaths for the period of August 26, 2019 through September 1, 2020; Authorize the Sheriff, pending County Counsel concurrence, to execute the agreement and any amendments that remain within budgeted appropriations; and Approve an Appropriations Transfer Request (ATR) of \$50,000 to recognize unanticipated grant revenue and related appropriations associated with Animal Care Services' Hipped to be Tipped - Shelter Neuter Return project (4/5 vote required)

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒  
Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

### DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION :

The Sheriff recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Accept a \$50,000 Rachael Ray: Save Them All grant funded by the Rachael Ray Foundation and administered by Best Friends Animal Society to reduce shelter deaths for the period of August 26, 2019 through September 1, 2020;
2. Authorize the Sheriff, pending County Counsel concurrence, to execute the agreement and any amendments that remain within budgeted appropriations; and
3. Approve an Appropriations Transfer Request (ATR) of \$50,000 to recognize unanticipated grant revenue and related appropriations associated with Animal Care Services' Hipped to be Tipped - Shelter Neuter Return project (4/5 vote required).

### SUMMARY:

The Sheriff's Office Animal Care Services Division (Animal Care) entered into a partnership with Best Friends Animal Society (Best Friends) to conduct an assessment of the County's animal shelter operations. One recommendation was to increase spay/neuter funding to help solve the overpopulation issues with community cats, thereby reducing the number of cats brought in to the animal shelter. In response, Animal Care applied for a Rachael Ray: Save Them All (STA) grant funded by the Rachael Ray Foundation and administered by Best Friends. The STA grants fund projects that will reduce shelter deaths. Proposed projects must demonstrate a direct impact on saving lives and/or leading to a reduction in shelter deaths.

On August 19, 2019, Best Friends notified Animal Care that Animal Care was awarded a \$50,000 STA grant. The accepted project, Hipped to be Tipped - Shelter Neuter Return (SNR), provides spay/neuter services for up to 500 community cats from within the borders of Solano County. Community outreach efforts would encourage Solano County residents and animal organizations to bring in community cats for no-cost spay/neuter services, resulting in reduced shelter admissions and operating costs in the future. The community cats may be kept at the shelter until adopted, with the remaining returned to community areas by county residents or the animal organizations that brought them in.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT :

Solano County will receive \$50,000 in STA grant funds for the period August 26, 2019 through September 1, 2020. This grant does not include a match provision. Animal Care anticipates expending all grant funds during FY2019/20. The Appropriations Transfer Request will increase appropriations by \$50,000 to increase extra-help and overtime hours to provide services and to purchase animal care, medical, and pharmaceutical supplies. The new appropriations are entirely offset with unanticipated grant revenue. Therefore, Board approval will not have any impact to the County General Fund.

The cost associated with preparing the agenda item is nominal and absorbed by the department's FY2019/20 Working Budget.

## **DISCUSSION :**

Best Friends Animals Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation based in Kanab, Utah whose mission is *No More Homeless Pets*. Best Friends works collaboratively with animal rescue groups, city shelters and passionate individuals who are all dedicated to help end the deaths in America's animal shelters through building community programs and partnerships all across the nation. The July 2019 on-site assessment included a two day visit by Best Friends staff at the shelter to assess current procedures, operations and staff. Shelter staff provided Best Friends with statistics and information regarding intake, spay and neuter, adoptions, live release rates, and all transfer partnerships. Best Friends then provided recommendations to shelter management on increasing organizational efficiencies and life-saving capacity of animals in Solano County. Some of these recommendations included: implementing a managed intake program, which refers to any form of regulating or scheduling intake; engaging the community to help solve the overpopulation issues in cats; and work within the "Capacity for Care model" which refers to how many pets a shelter can house while still providing them with appropriate care, veterinary attention, adequate space, stress relief, and caregiver attention.

Best Friends provides grants to animal welfare organizations who are members of the Best Friends Network and are working to save animal lives by providing an unfunded or underfunded need in the area they serve. Through the Rachael Ray Foundation, a private foundation that is fully funded by the proceeds from the sale of Rachael Ray Nutrish pet food products, Best Friends sponsors and distributes grants for proposed projects that demonstrate a direct impact on saving and/or leading to a reduction in shelter deaths such as; targeted spay/neuter, adoption initiatives, trap-neuter-return or return to field projects for community cats and intake prevention programs.

Community cats (a.k.a. feral cats) live outdoors and are not considered pets. Community cats do not have owners and are generally not socialized. Best practices have demonstrated that SNR is an effective, humane method to reduce the number of community cats in an area. The term "neuter," while more commonly used to refer to the castration of male pets, can be used to describe the sterilization of either female or male pets through the removal of reproductive organs. Sterilization directly impacts the number of animals who are killed in our nation's shelters by reducing the number of pets entering shelters and freeing up homes for homeless pets who are already born. By asking the public to bring in cats to be altered and then place them back where they live, the shelter will decrease its population, therefore working more within a Capacity for Care model. When a shelter is operating at their Capacity for Care, and not operating at total available capacity only, the needs of every animal admitted to the shelter are better met and staff is able to thrive, resulting in better outcomes for the animals and ability to serve more animals.

In FY2018/19, Animal Care completed 3,224 spay/neuter procedures; 2,224 completed on surrendered or abandoned animals housed at the shelter and 1,000 completed on animals paid for by their owners at our low cost spay and neuter clinic. With the additional resources dedicated to the SNR project, Animal Care estimates completing over 3,700 spays and neuters in FY2019/20.

## **ALTERNATIVES :**

The Board can choose not to accept the grant; however, this alternative is not recommended as the SNR project will help address the overpopulation of cats within the County.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT :**

None.

**CAO RECOMMENDATION:**

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION