


Re: SJACS - Maddie's Fund Audit Recommendations

M Wagner [REDACTED]

Thu 3/14/2024 8:36 AM

To: Tubera, Katerina <Katerina.Tubera@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District 5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District 8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District 3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

 2 attachments (351 KB)

Cameron Moore 1.16.2024.pdf; MADDIES-RESCUES.PNG;

[External Email]

SUBMITTING FOR THE CITY OF SAN JOSE PUBLIC RECORD

ATTN: Miss Dev Davis, Chairwoman, Neighborhood Services & Education Committee

TOPIC: Maddie's Fund Audit and Cameron Moore, Shelter Consultant

DATE: 3/14/2024

Dear Chairwoman Davis & Councilmembers,

On December 14th, 2023 the SJACS Management Team and City Staff presented their FY 2022 - 2023 Annual Report to the NSE Committee. During this presentation, City Staff essentially laid blame on the decision to use an operations model of warehousing animals and the overall poor performance of SJACS in which an unprecedented 534 cats "died in the care" of the shelter and the live release rate collapsed to 72.9% for calendar year 2023 on the *Maddie's Fund Audit*.

City staff claimed that the *Maddie's Fund Audit* of July 2022 had "recommended" that the shelter pivot away from using Rescues to get animals out of the shelter as soon as possible - - - given that *Maddie's Fund* had "*found the shelter to be over-reliant on rescue partners*" and "*out of balance when it came to live outcomes for a city of 1 million residents.*"

The above statement made by City Staff is 100% false.

In fact, the *statement* is confirmed to be false in a number of ways starting with the 44-page *Maddie's Fund Audit* itself, which doesn't even remotely make such a "finding" or "recommendation"; not to mention the following email dated January 16th, 2024 (see attached) from Miss Cameron Moore, the lead shelter consultant from the University of Florida and *Maddie's Fund* who conducted the audit on SJACS with her team in July 2022 and clearly states that such a "recommendation" to pivot away from Rescues **was never made**.

Sadly, the *statement above* made by City Staff in Director's positions was terribly misleading to elected city council members, stakeholders, and the public.

In fact, Page #36 of the audit (see attached) essentially says quite the opposite to this false narrative when it comes to utilizing Rescue partners *"to provide immediate live outcome placement for each animal in the shortest period of time."*

Moreover, shelter consultant Cameron Moore can confirm the same.

Miss Moore's email (see attached) was shared with Chairwoman Davis and her staff along with Deputy City Manager Angel Rios previous to this (submission to the NSE Committee) on January 23rd, 2024.

Interestingly enough, I have never received the courtesy of a reply acknowledging my "concerns" regarding the false narrative that was presented to the NSE Committee on December 14th, 2024.

I must admit, I am rather puzzled as to why the NSE Committee does not appear concerned with the false narrative that was presented to them (and misled them) on December 14th, 2023 by the SJACS management team and city staff.

The San Jose Animal Care Center is currently on pace to be a *Kill Shelter* for a third consecutive year.

Animal welfare colleagues of mine and I continue to be concerned over the lack of honesty and transparency when it comes to this management team's operations of the city animal shelter.

To date, stakeholders and the community at large have not been informed of any "updates" or progress reports given the \$2.0 million dollar increase in this current fiscal year's budget that has gone to support a proposed "night shift" with ten staff positions, restarting a full TNR program, and restarting a low cost spay/neuter program for the public. Communication by SJACS management continues to be extremely poor.

Sadly, such narratives as the one that we heard presented last December do nothing to improve the live outcomes of animals.

Sincerely,

Michael Wagner

Former board member and interim President

Kitten's First for the San Jose Animal Care Center, 2019 - 2022

Founded by Dr. Tiva Hoshizaki, SJACS Veterinarian 2017 - 2021

March 14, 2024

To: Neighborhood Services & Education Committee

RE: Animal Services Annual Report

I would like to express my concern regarding the current shelter practices and policies affecting cats within our community, with the shelter consistently denying intake for cats if they are not sick or injured, and the impact on the community, the cats, and the shelter itself. Cats are often vulnerable and denied shelter and assistance. This issue is not only concerning from an ethical standpoint but also raises significant welfare issues for these animals as well as the impact on the community.

The following are some specific concerns regarding the treatment of cats in our shelters:

1. **Consistent Turnaways:** Cats are being turned away from shelters on a regular basis, without proper assessment of their needs or consideration of their welfare. This practice is not only inhumane but also leaves these animals without access to necessary care and support.
2. **Lack of Alternatives:** In many cases, there are no alternative options provided for these cats once they are turned away from shelters. They are then abandoned on shelter grounds, or left on the streets, vulnerable to starvation, injury, and illness. abandoned on shelter grounds.
3. **Overcrowding and Resource Allocation:** While it is understood that shelters may face limitations in terms of space and resources, the systematic turning away of cats suggests a need for reassessment of current practices. Efforts should be made to accommodate as many animals as possible, ensuring their safety and well-being.
4. **Community Engagement:** There seems to be a lack of community engagement and education regarding responsible pet ownership and spay and neuter, which could help mitigate the issue of cats being abandoned or relinquished to shelters. More efforts should be made to inform and support pet owners, thereby reducing the number of animals in need of shelter.
5. **Housing:** The lack of pet-friendly housing and options for unhoused pet owners directly impacts cats, exacerbating their vulnerability and contributing to their welfare concerns. Without access to pet-friendly accommodation, homeless individuals with cats often face difficult choices, including relinquishing their beloved companions to shelters or abandoning them on the streets. This not only increases the population of stray and feral cats but also exposes these animals to various dangers, such as starvation, injury, and illness. Additionally, the stress of homelessness can negatively impact the well-being of both the cats and their owners, further highlighting the urgent need for solutions that support housing stability while preserving the bond between humans and their companions.

I urge the NSE to promptly address the treatment of cats in shelters by reviewing and revising policies to ensure fair consideration for all animals. Additionally, I recommend establishing a dedicated position within the shelter to collaborate with local animal welfare organizations and community groups. Desperate people who are faced with no options, a household of unneutered animals and no options will abandon them, which impacts the community and multiple city departments, not just Animal Services.

Some of the more recent situations that we have been made aware of in the community:

- Family being evicted from their home was denied intake of cats by the shelter. Rescue groups became aware of the situation and discovered there were 26 cats, the majority of them unfixed,

living the home. The family had less than a week to move, and no options. The rescues partnered together to get all of the cats fixed, and each rescue taking a few cats, so that no one group was overburdened.

- Cats and kittens discovered on the bank of the Guadalupe just before the the most recent storms. When contacting the shelter for guidance and support, concerned people they were told to “let nature take its course.”
- Person contacted a rescue group from the parking lot of the shelter sobbing as she was turned away when her daughter died, she was trying to get assistance with her deceased daughter's indoor-only cats. She was told to just release the cats and let them go outside.
- People impatiently waiting for dead animal pick-up have been told to just “throw the cats in the garbage.”
- People who find cats that they believe are lost or misplaced are being turned away from intake without the cats being reported/listed as found.

I believe that together, we can develop more effective solutions for managing stray and abandoned cats, and fostering a more compassionate environment for all animals in need, that reflects the values of our community.

Thank you,

Dinah Hayse