

FINAL REPORT OF THE ANIMAL SHELTER TASK FORCE



March 22, 2016

Animal Shelter Task Force

Charles Daniels, former Assistant City Manager (Chair)

Max Dow, DVM, MPH, Texas Animal Health Commission

James Bias, SPCA of Texas

Dustin Deel, Weatherford - Parker County Animal Shelter

Patrice Randle, CPA, City Auditor (non-voting)



Assigned Tasks

From City Council Resolution No. 4538-11-2015, Adopted 11/17/15

- **Collect and analyze information** about the Animal Shelter by...
 - Touring the facility and observing operations;
 - Reviewing budgets, business plans, state inspection reports, and other pertinent documents;
 - Interviewing staff and selected stakeholders; and
 - Conducting one or more public hearings.
- **Formulate conclusions** about the Department's performance with respect to...
 - Generally accepted veterinary medical practices and
 - State standards for the operation of animal shelters.
- **Make recommendations** to the City Council and City Manager about any operational changes that might be warranted.

Assigned Tasks, Continued

- The scope shall specifically **exclude any personnel issues** that fall within the purview of the City Manager and any issues pertaining to the powers and duties of the Department and its Animal Shelter Advisory Committee.

Schedule

Date	Purpose
December 9	Meet staff, tour facility, and observe operations.
January 6	Receive briefing on budget and performance measures.
January 20	Interview Advisory Committee members, community stakeholders, and animal shelter staff.
February 1	Receive citizen comments.
February 10	Formulate findings and recommendations.
February 24	Review draft final report.
March 22	Present final report to City Council.
April 5	City Council considers resolution accepting Task Force report.

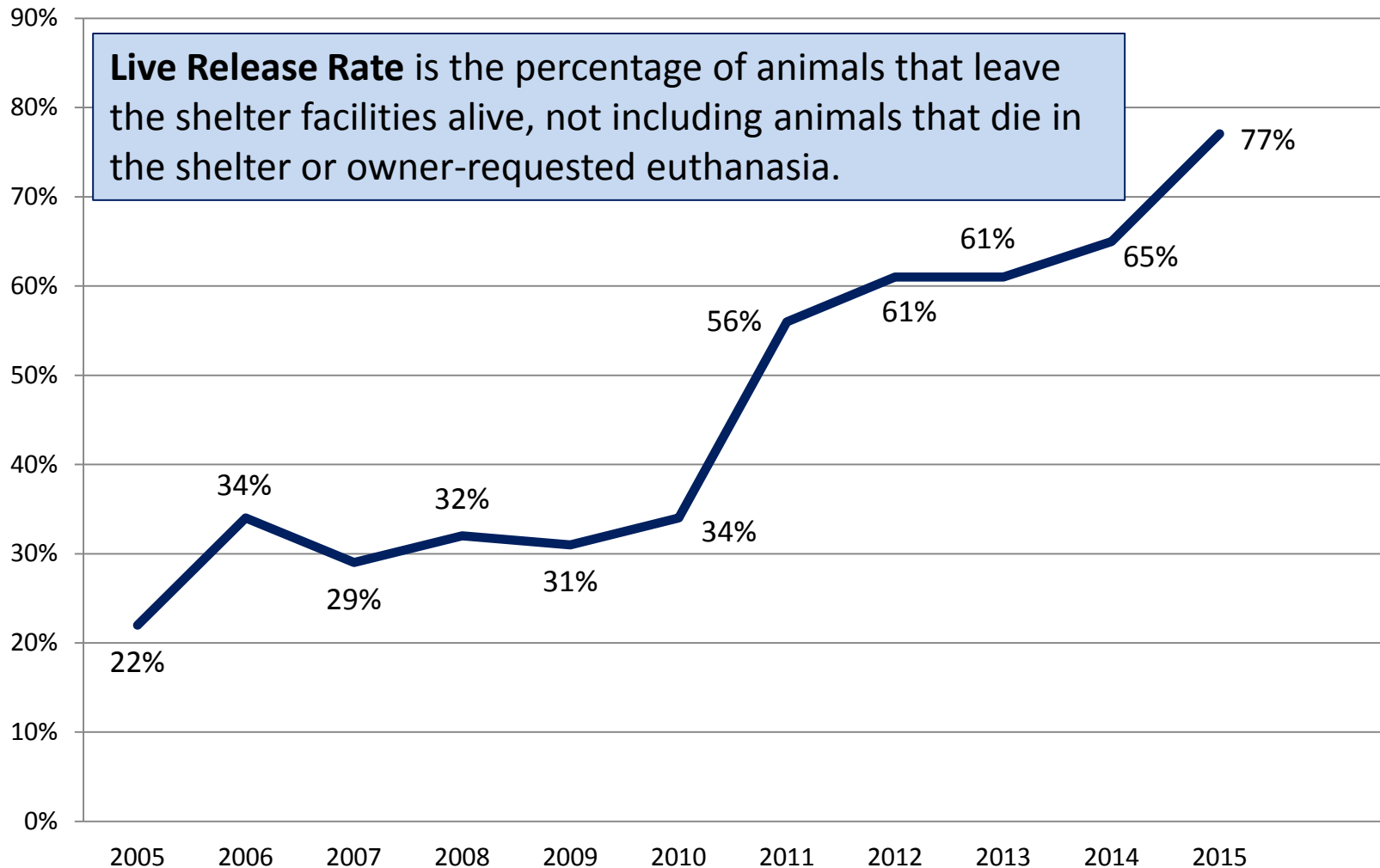
Questions

1. Is the Code Compliance Department operating the animal shelter in accordance with generally accepted **veterinary medical practices**?
2. Is the Department meeting **State of Texas health and safety standards** for the operation of animal shelters?
3. Is the animal shelter **staff** large enough and sufficiently well qualified to perform its mission?
4. Does the Department provide staff with a supportive **work environment**?
5. Does the animal shelter's **organizational structure** facilitate high performance?
6. Does the animal shelter have adequate **facilities, equipment, and supplies**?
7. Does the animal shelter provide good **customer service**?
8. Does the Department **communicate** effectively with the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee, animal welfare organizations, donors, volunteers, and the general public about the animal shelter's operations?

Major Conclusions

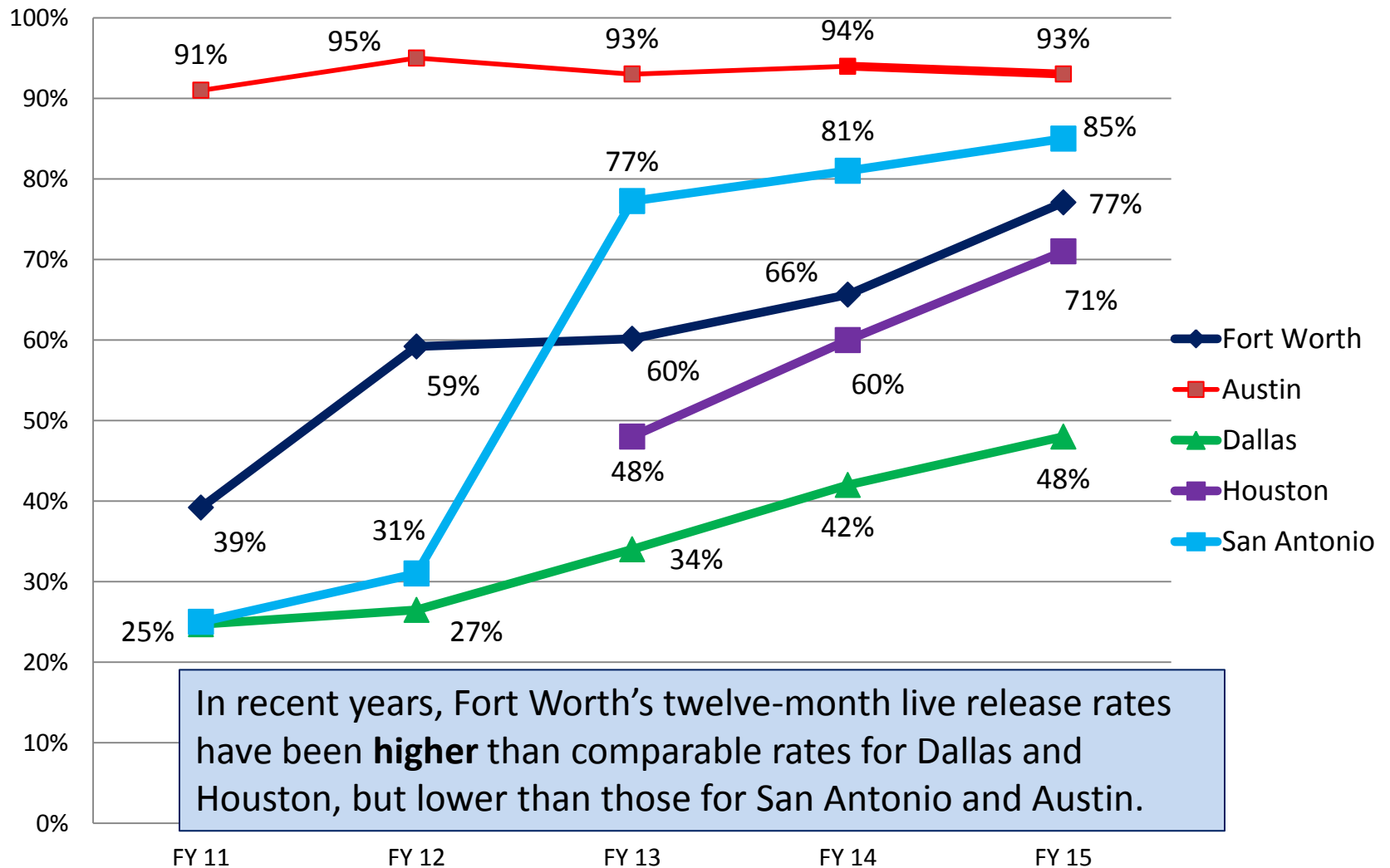
1. The animal shelter is **satisfactorily meeting** its most basic responsibilities:
 - Veterinary medical practices
 - State of Texas health and safety standards
2. The animal shelter is **performing well** and could do even better in certain areas:
 - Work environment
 - Facilities, equipment, and supplies
 - Customer service
3. The animal shelter **needs significant improvement** in these areas:
 - Staffing resources
 - Organizational structure
 - Communication

Live Release Rate

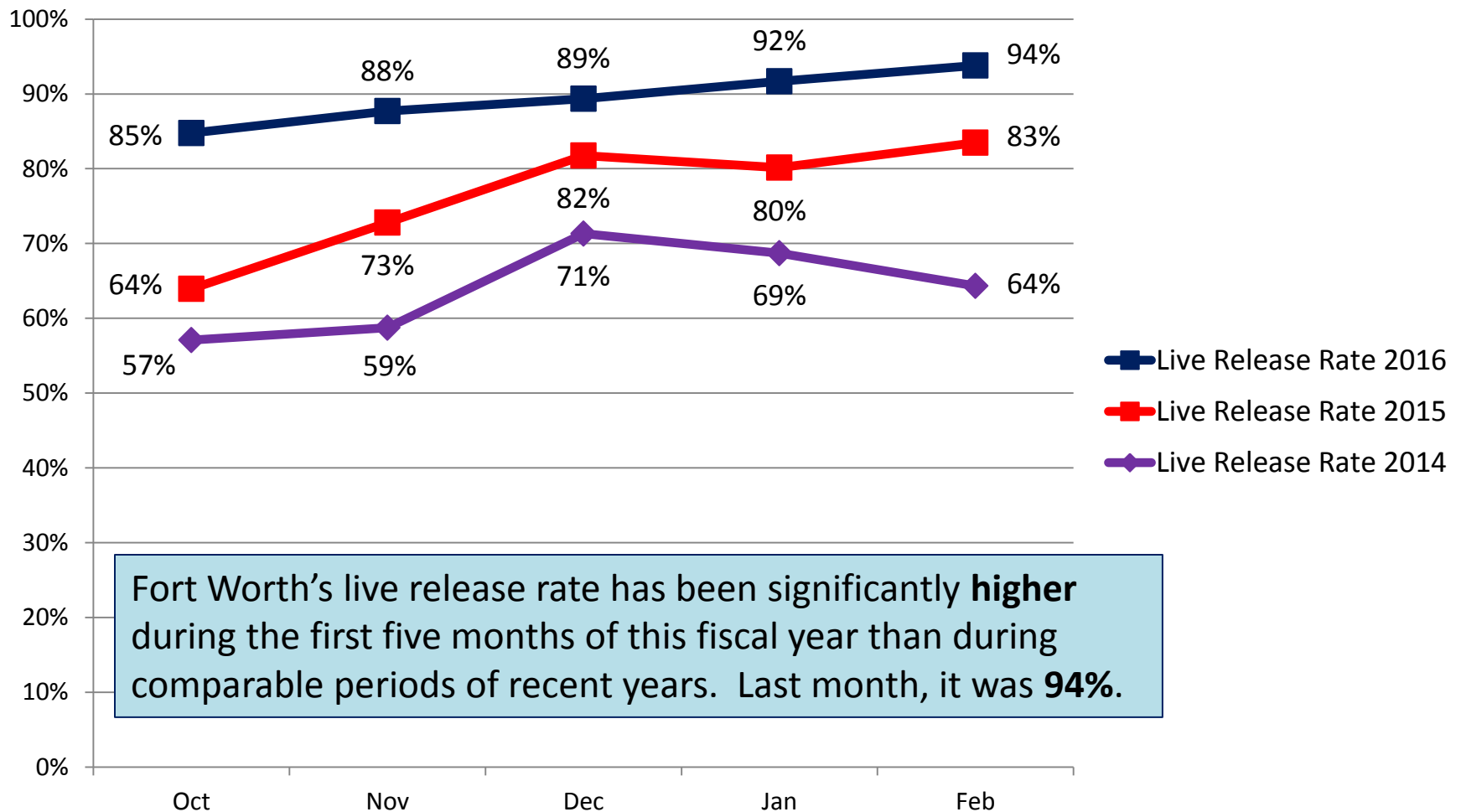


Significant **increases** in live release rate

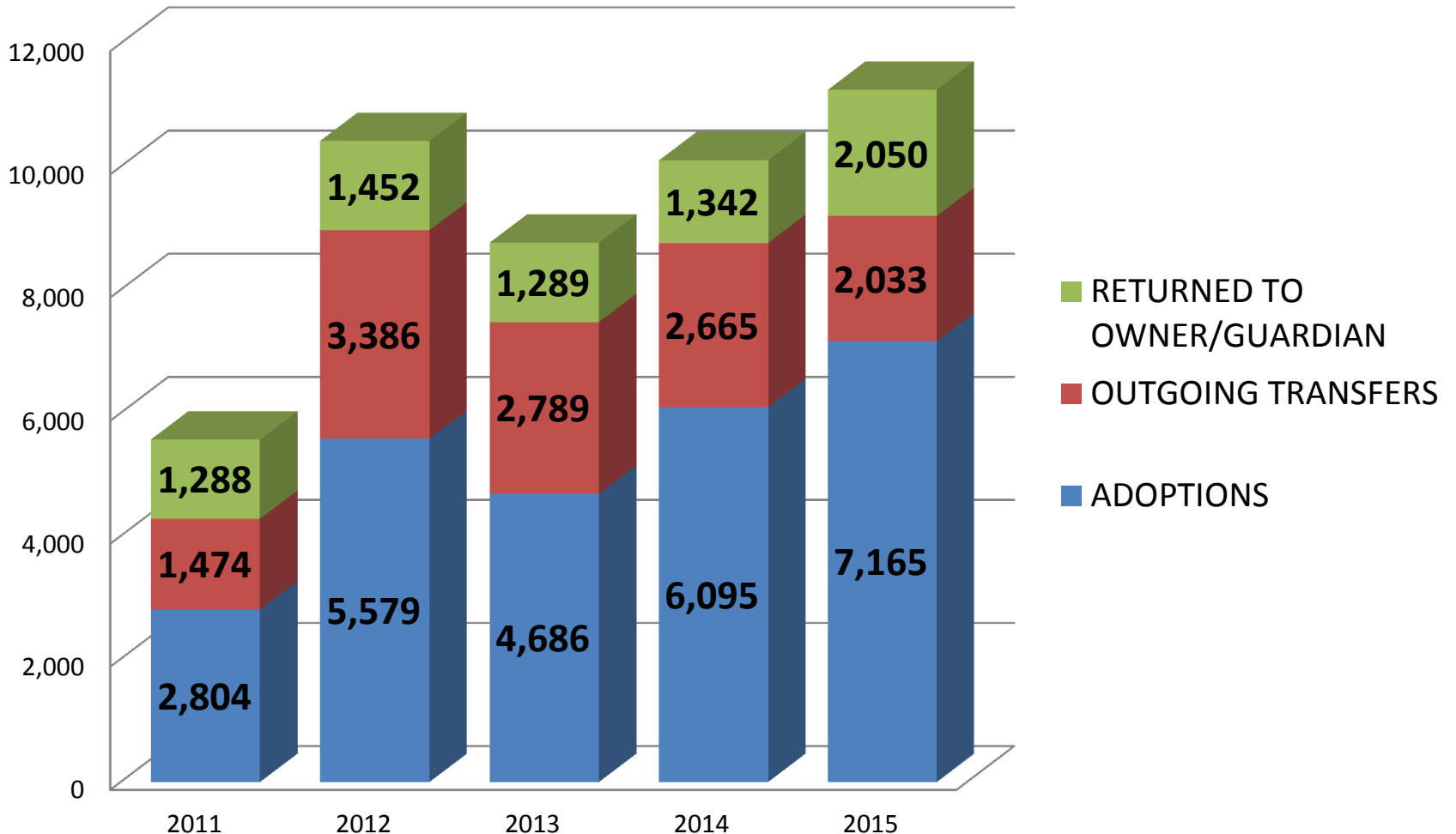
Live Release Rate Benchmarks



Comparison of Five-Month (October-February) Live Release Rates



Live Outcomes



Significant increases in live outcomes, particularly **adoptions** and **animals returned to owners**

Max Dow, DVM, MPH

Director, Region 3, Texas Animal Health Commission

Veterinary Medical Practices State Standards



Veterinary Medical Practices

Is the Code Compliance Department operating the animal shelter in accordance with generally accepted **veterinary medical practices**?

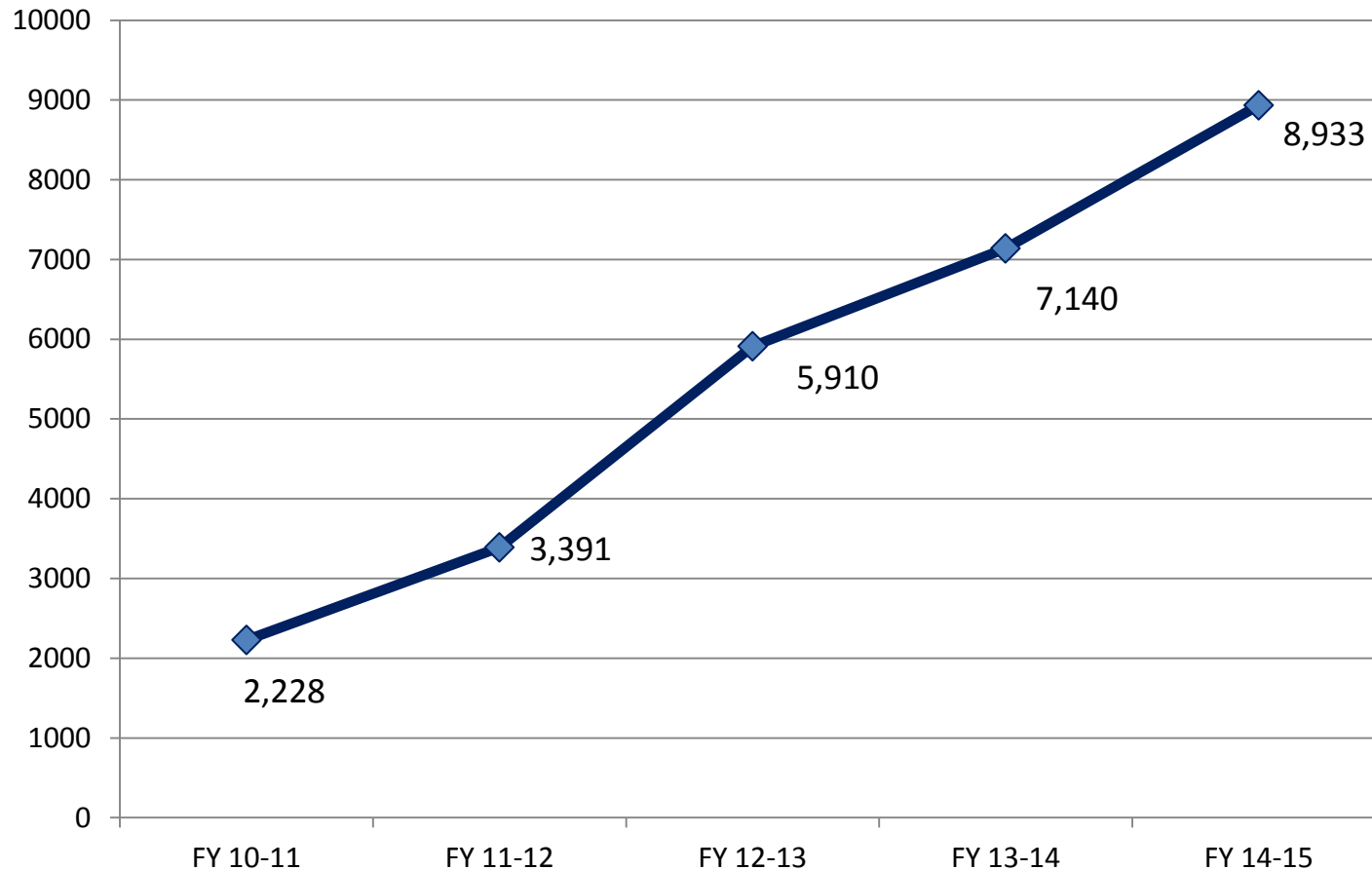
Summary of Comments

- Shelter operations comply with generally accepted veterinary medical practices
- Standard of care is acceptable for spay/neuter surgeries
- Quality of anesthetic monitoring equipment is superior
- Task Force acknowledges some citizen concerns that cats may be spayed/neutered too young and returned too early

Supporting Evidence

- Passing State inspections
- Conversations with concerned parties
- Supporting protocols from national organizations:
 - ✓ American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)
 - ✓ American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
 - ✓ Association of Shelter Veterinarians

Spay and Neuter Surgeries



Significant **increase** in spay/neuter surgeries to control overpopulation and unwanted pets, but without commensurate increases in staff

Veterinary Medical Practices, Continued

Recommendations

- Continue providing high-quality veterinary service on a consistent basis.
- Adopt a policy that requires the use of audible alarms for anesthetic monitoring equipment and consider the use of audible respiratory monitors.
- Reevaluate the Trap-Neuter-Release protocols in regard to age of release.
- Continue using Texas A&M for necropsy services whenever there is an unexplained death at the shelter.
- Move from exclusive contractor-provided veterinarian services to a hybrid of staff veterinarians supplemented by contractors.

State Standards

Is the Department meeting **State of Texas health and safety standards** for the operation of animal shelters?

Summary of Comments

- Shelter operates under generally accepted veterinary medical practices
- No breach witnessed in applicable standards for animal shelters

Supporting Evidence

- Passing State inspections
- Section 823.003 of Texas Health and Safety Code, “Standards for Animal Shelters”

State Standards, Continued

Recommendations

- Continue providing high-quality shelter practices on a consistent basis.
- Develop written protocols regarding the use of temporary holding kennels.

Dustin Deel

Director, Weatherford – Parker County Animal Shelter

*Work Environment
Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies
Customer Service*



Work Environment

Does the Department provide staff with a supportive **work environment**?

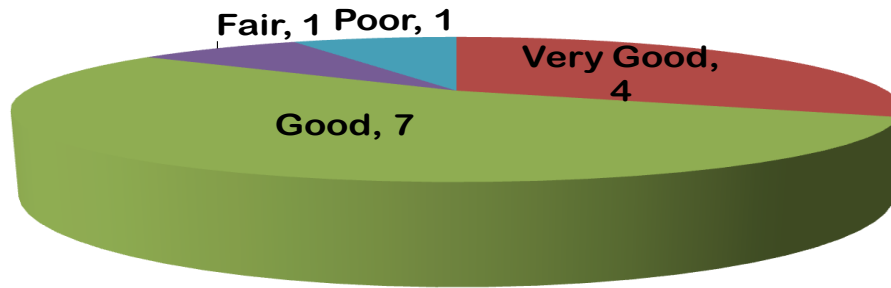
Summary of Comments

- Staff indicates that they receive support from the Department
- Some rescue groups exhibit emotional attachment to a former shelter manager
- At times, staff members feel under attack by citizens with limited knowledge of shelter operations
- Task Force did not specifically address personnel issues

Supporting Evidence

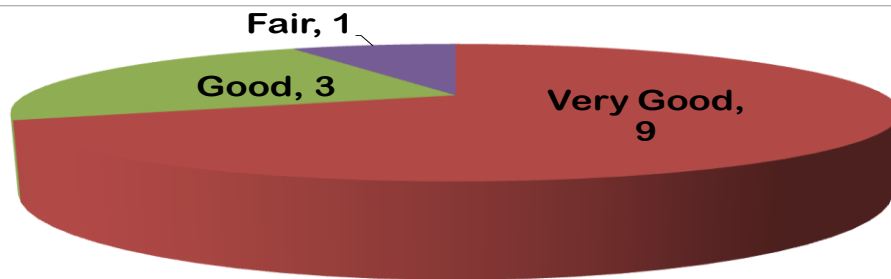
- Interviews with a sample of six staff members
- Report from Human Resources Department
- Comments from focus group and public hearing

Human Resources Survey of 13 Animal Shelter Employees as Recommended by a Former Employee, 11/19/15



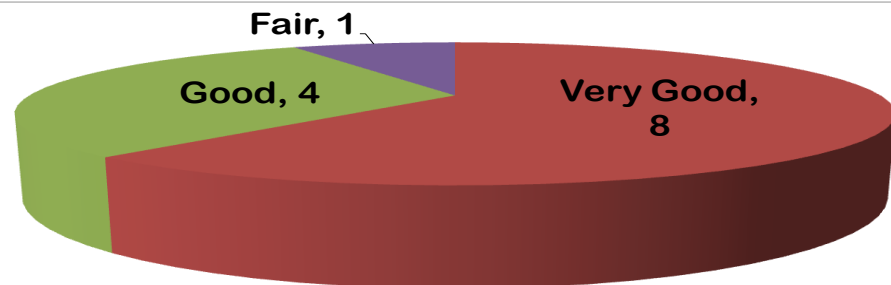
How would you describe the overall conditions in your work environment?

➤ **11 Very Good/Good**



How would you describe working relationships on your shift?

➤ **12 Very Good/Good**



How would you describe working relationships with others not on your shift?

➤ **12 Very Good/Good**

Work Environment, Continued

Recommendations

- Continue to support staff and acknowledge their efforts publicly.
- Continue to counsel staff with annual performance evaluations.
- In addition to the City's anonymous tip line, conduct an anonymous employee survey using a third-party consultant.

Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies

Does the animal shelter have adequate **facilities, equipment, and supplies**?

Summary of Comments

- Shelter facilities, equipment and supplies are generally adequate
- Anesthetic monitoring equipment is superior
- Emergency management response trailer is impressive
- Shelter design lacks emphasis on adoptions
- No inside meet-and-greet room

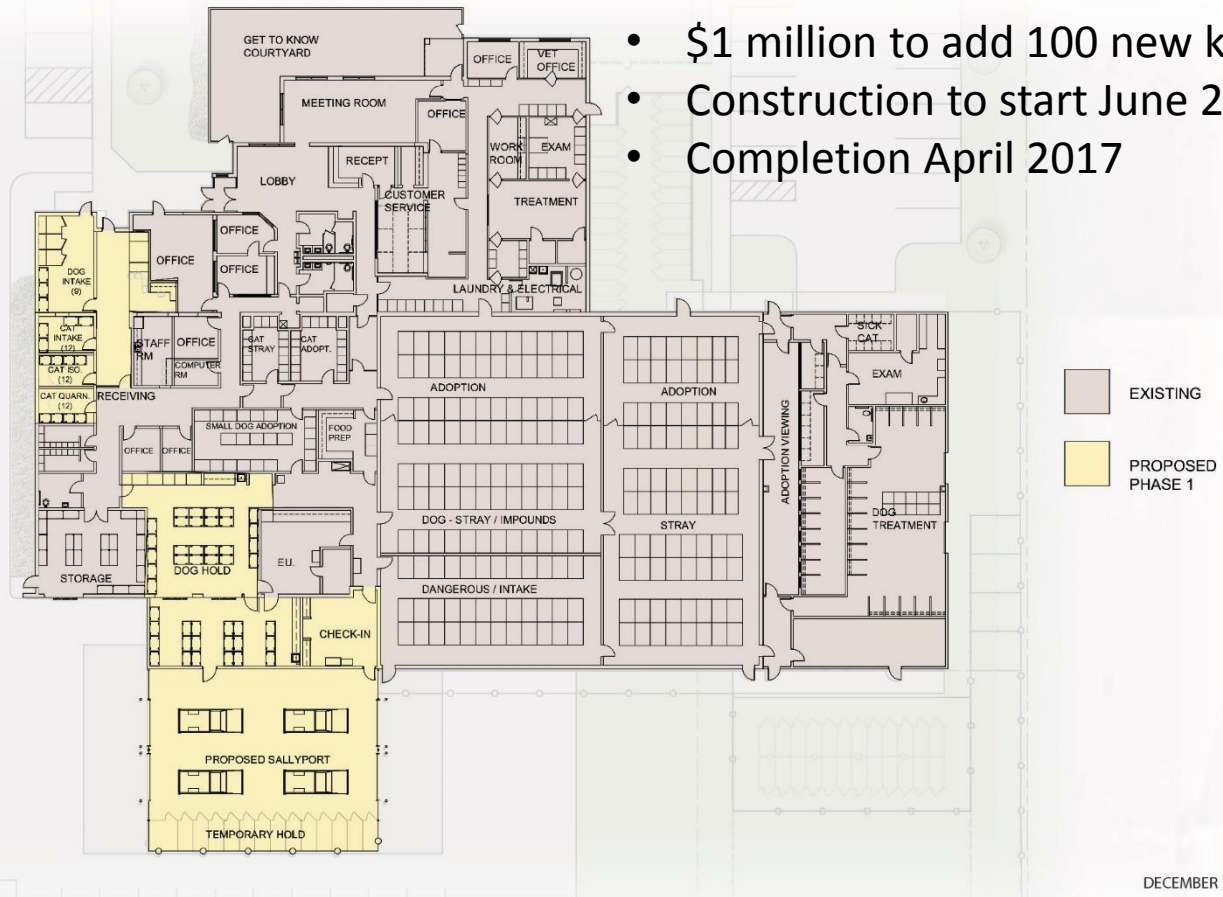
Supporting Evidence

- Shelter tour
- Discussions with staff



2014 Bond Package Expansion

- \$1 million to add 100 new kennels
- Construction to start June 2016
- Completion April 2017



Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies; Continued

Recommendations

- Conduct facility needs assessment.
- Develop shelter master plan and design new north shelter accordingly.
- Support continued use of the outdoor meet-and-greet area and develop an inside area as part of the shelter expansion in early 2017.

Customer Service

Does the animal shelter provide good **customer service**?

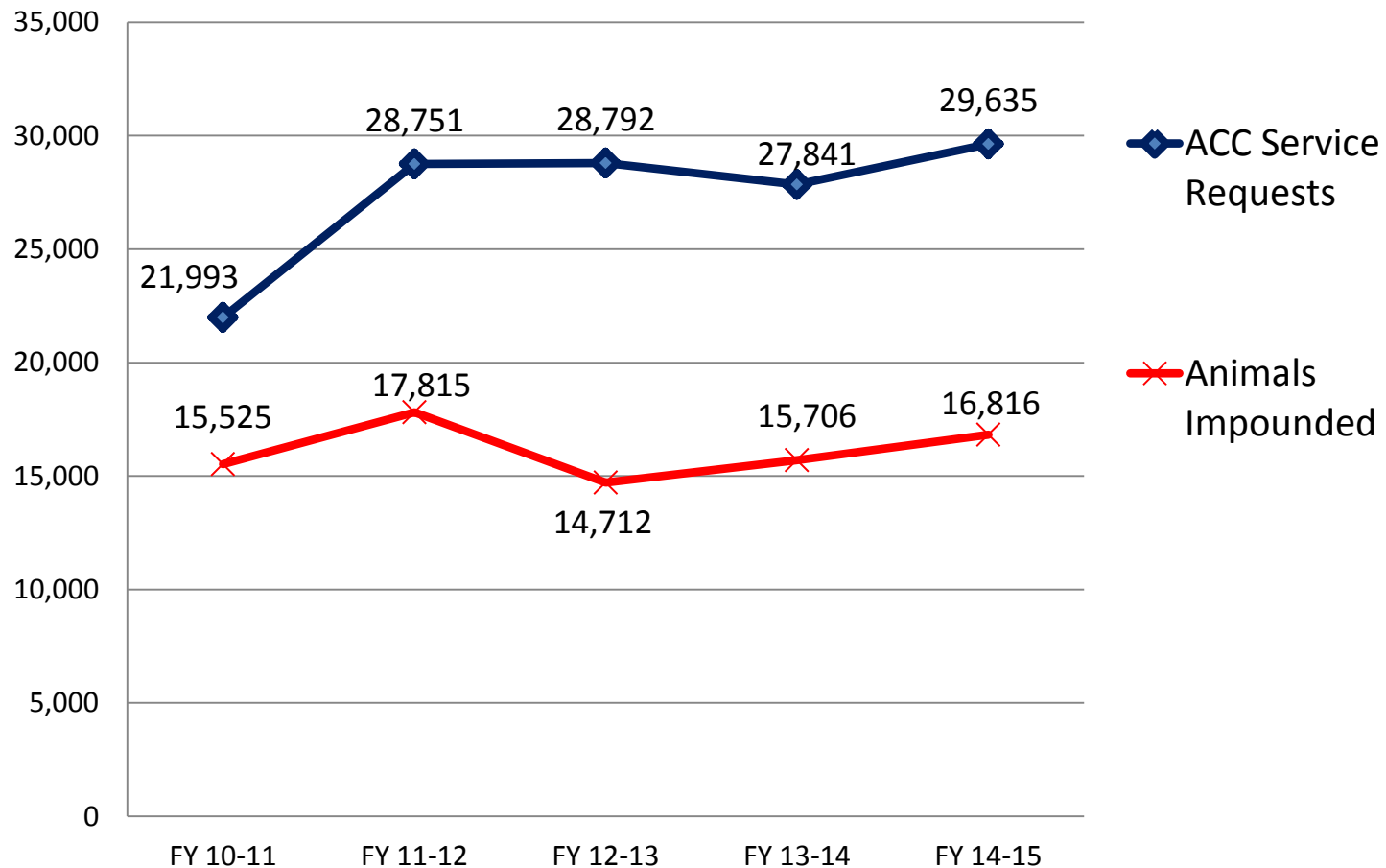
Summary of Comments

- Staff provides a good customer experience most of the time
- Due to the high volume of work, there appear to be occasional lapses in customer service

Supporting Evidence

- Comments from customers and donors
- Comments from Advisory Committee
- Personal call to the Call Center
- Third party and secret shopper survey results

Service Request and Impoundment Trends



Volume of service requests and number of impoundments are **high** in relation to staff resources.

Customer Service, Continued

Recommendations

- Continue providing regular customer service training.
- Seek specific training for handling stress and difficult customers.
- In performance evaluations, hold employees accountable for providing excellent customer service.
- Improve the City's website to display volunteer opportunities before requiring viewers to login.
- Post hours of operation more prominently on the City's website.
- Expand hours to seven days a week as staff resources permit.

James Bias

President, SPCA of Texas

Staffing Resources Organizational Structure Communication



Staffing Resources

Is the animal shelter **staff** large enough and sufficiently well qualified to perform its mission?

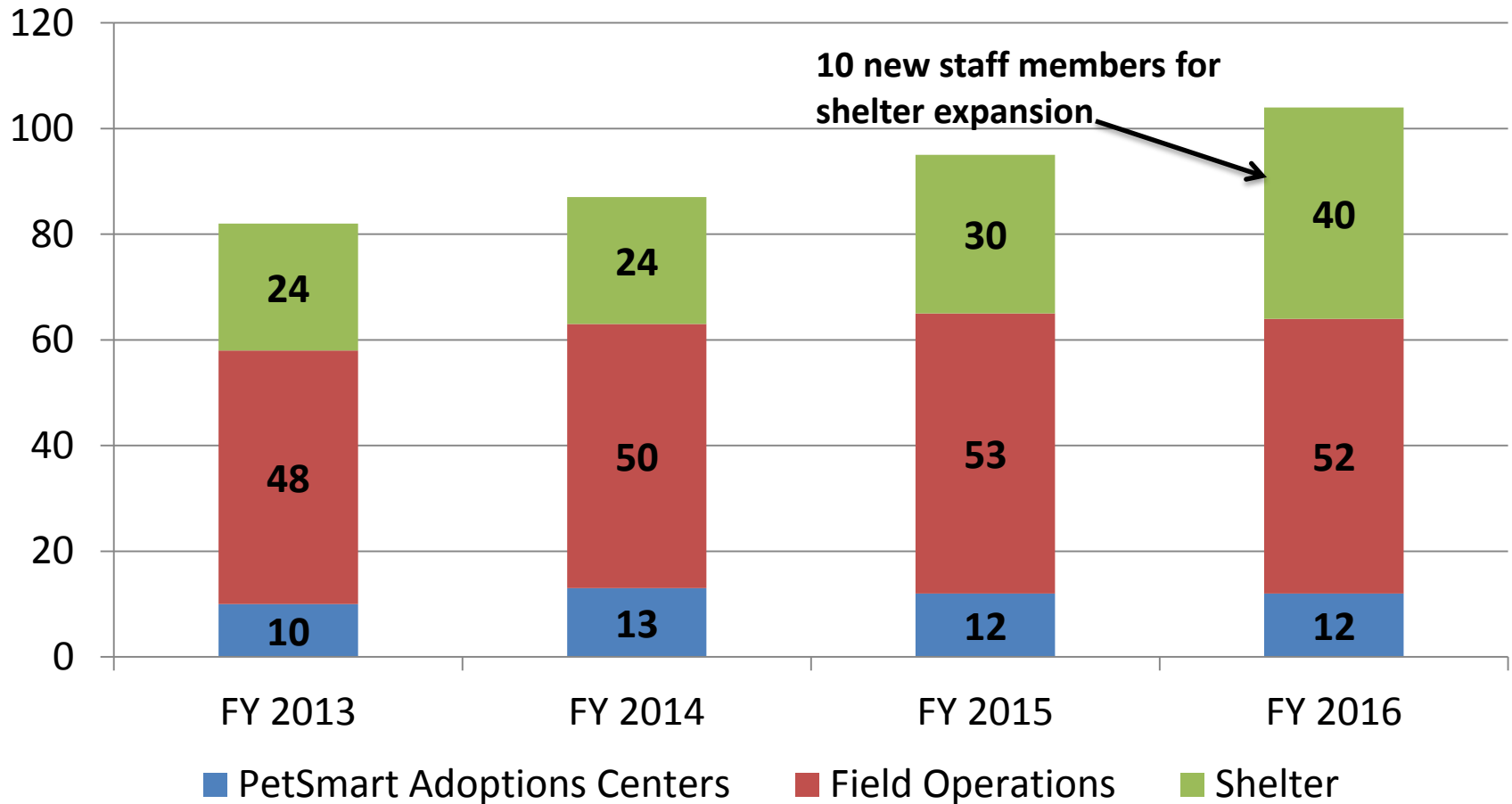
Summary of Comments

- Staff overwhelmed by large number of animals
- Span of control for supervisors is greater than commonly accepted standards
- Not enough officers to answer all service calls in a timely way
- Not enough veterinarians

Supporting Evidence

- Staff reports
- Interview with Advisory Committee veterinarian
- Organization chart
- Public comments

General Staffing Trends



Municipal Benchmarking

City	Population	Shelter Techs	Vet Techs	Total	Population per Tech Staff
Austin	912,791	30	18	48	19,016
Amarillo	197,254	8	1	9	21,917
Dallas	1,281,048	44	11	55	23,292
El Paso	679,036	23	6	29	23,415
Fort Worth	812,238	20	11	31	26,201
San Antonio	1,436,697	28	18	46	31,233
Arlington	383,204	6	1	7	54,743
Houston	2,239,558	22	17	39	57,425

Fort Worth has **fewer resources** than do some Texas cities.

Staffing Resources, Continued

Recommendations

- Hire staff veterinarians: two full-time or one full-time and two part-time
- Create lower-level supervisors to reduce burden on current supervisors
- Add staff commensurate with the increased workload including:
 - ✓ Public education and marketing
 - ✓ Volunteer support
 - ✓ Shelter Technicians
 - ✓ Animal Control Officers
 - ✓ Operational Supervisors

Organizational Structure

Does the animal shelter's **organizational structure** facilitate high performance?

Summary of Comments

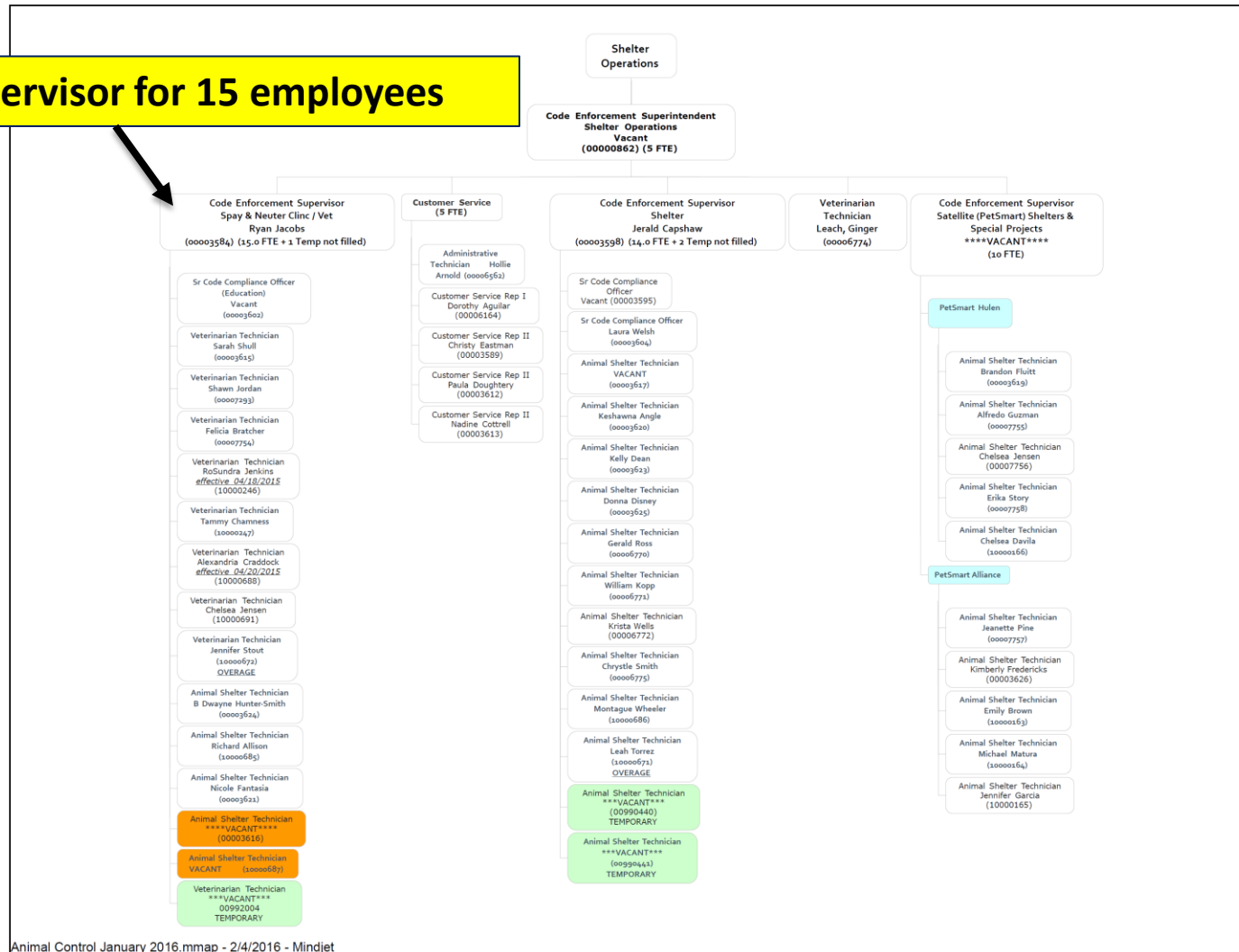
- Span of control is an issue for supervisory staff
- Volunteers, donors, rescue groups and other partnerships greatly enhance positive outcomes

Supporting Evidence

- Staff interviews
- Interviews with community stakeholders

Shelter Organizational Chart

1 Supervisor for 15 employees



Span of control exceeds commonly accepted standards.

Organizational Structure, Continued

Recommendations

- Develop a sustainable span of control based upon commonly accepted business models.
- Add front-line supervisors to reduce span of control impacts on current supervisors.

Communication

Does the Department **communicate** effectively with the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee, animal welfare organizations, donors, volunteers, and the general public about the animal shelter's operations?

Summary of Comments

- Some stakeholders express concerns about a lack of information, which could lead to a reluctance to make private donations
- Misinformation from social media and resulting speculation lead to lack of trust and confidence

Supporting Evidence

- Public input
- Advisory Committee interview

Public Education

Developed social media presence (2011)

Animal Care & Control - Facebook (2011)

Instagram (2014)

City Facebook - Twitter

Fort Worth Police Department - Facebook

Community Outreach Officer (2014)

52 community/mobile adoption events

43 school presentations

15 neighborhood association events

Expanded partnerships

Internal: Fort Worth Police Department, Parks Department

External: PetSmart, World Wear Project, Fort Worth Independent School District, Chase Bank, AmeriTrade, The Blue Zones Project, Open Road Lending, Texas Christian University, Saving Hope, Don't Forget to Feed Me and media partners

Communication, Continued

Recommendations

- Advisory Committee members should regularly spend time in the shelter to gain first-hand knowledge.
- Resume monthly Rescue Roundtable meetings.
- Update communication plan and focus on target audiences:
 - ✓ Rescue groups and other partners
 - ✓ Donors/supporters
 - ✓ General public
- Provide annual reports to the Mayor and City Council.
- Involve citizens in strategic planning activities.

Patrice Randle, CPA

City Auditor

Budget Implications



FY2016 Animal Shelter Budget

Item	Amount
Salaries and Benefits	\$2,321,840
Materials and Equipment	\$1,157,649
Total	\$3,479,489



Current Five-Year Plan for Shelter

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Shelter Expansion	North Shelter Master Plan	North Shelter Funding	North Shelter Siting	North Shelter Ground Breaking
North Shelter Annex	Relocate Field Staff	North Shelter Partnership		
Outdoor Runs	Fresh Air Cattery (\$150,000 Donations)	West Shelter Annex (\$500,000 Donations)		
Coalition Development	New License Program			
Expand Feral Cat Program	Online Registrations			
Organizational Development	Technical Upgrades			
Shelter Software Update				
Ordinance Updates				
Medical Records				
New Shelter Medicine Program				
Online Payments				
COOP Plan Update				
Policy and Procedure Update				

Task Force Recommendations and Department's Five-Year Plan

*“The animal shelter is **performing well** and could do even better in certain areas:*

- *Work environment*
- *Facilities, equipment, and supplies*
- *Customer service”*

Topic	Task Force Recommendation	Included in 5-Year Plan?	Plan Year	Budgetary Impact
Work Environment	Support staff and acknowledge effort publicly	Yes	2016	-
	Counsel staff with annual performance evaluations	Yes	2016	-
	Conduct anonymous employee survey using third party consultant ➤ Will incorporate into the 2016 organizational development project	No	-	-
Facilities, Equipment and Supplies	Conduct facility needs audit	Yes	2017	-
	Develop shelter master plan and design new north shelter	Yes	2017	-
	Develop indoor meet-and-greet area	Yes	2017	-
Customer Service	Provide regular customer service training	Yes	2016	-
	Training for handling stress and difficult customers	Yes	2016	-
	Hold employees accountable for providing excellent customer service	Yes	2016	-
	Improve City's website for volunteers ➤ Will implement changes by May 1, 2016	No	-	-
	Post hours of operation more prominently on City's website ➤ Working with Webmaster on updating web pages	No	-	-
	Expand hours to seven days a week as staff resources permit	Yes	2016	-

Task Force Recommendations and Department's Five Year Plan, Continued

*"The animal shelter **needs significant improvement** in these areas:*

- *Staffing resources*
- *Organizational structure*
- *Communication"*

Topic	Task Force Recommendation	Included in 5-Year Plan?	Plan Year	Budgetary Impact
Staffing Resources	Hire staff veterinarians	Yes	2016	-
	Add temporary operational supervisors to reduce workload on current supervisors	Yes	2016	-
	Add staff commensurate with increased workload ➤ Will prepare improvement packages for Fiscal Year 2017	No	-	\$1,173,803
Organizational Structure	Develop sustainable span of control based on common business models	Yes	2016	-
	Add front line supervisors to reduce span of control (temp supervisors)	Yes	2016	-
Communication	Advisory Committee members should regularly spend time in shelter ➤ Currently available to members	No	-	-
	Resume monthly Rescue Roundtable meetings	Yes	2016	-
	Update communication plan ➤ Will create a communication plan specifically for Animal Control by May 1, 2016	No	-	-
	Provide annual reports to Mayor and Council	Yes	2016	-
	Involve citizens in strategic planning activities	Yes	2017	-

Recommended Budget Priorities

Priority	Activity	First-Year Capital	Materials and Supplies	Salary and Benefits	Estimated First-Year Cost
1	5 Supervisors and 3 Vehicles	\$150,000	\$9,000	\$408,910	\$567,910
2	3 Volunteer Coordinators	--	6,000	197,477	203,477
3	1 Public Education Coordinator	--	9,000	68,421	77,421
4	1 Customer Service Manager	--	4,000	97,083	101,083
5	3 Shelter Technicians and 2 Customer Service Reps	--	6,000	217,912	223,912
Total		\$150,000	\$34,000	\$989,803	\$1,173,803

Recommended Budget Priorities, Continued

Priority	Activity	First-Year Capital	Estimated Annual Cost
1	5 Supervisors and 3 Vehicles	\$150,000	\$567,910
Improvement package to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in work environment • Significant improvement in span of control • Significant improvement in communication 			

- Improvement package would reduce span of control to 1 supervisor for 7-10 staff
- More consistent supervisory coverage
- Improve internal and external communications

Recommended Budget Priorities, Continued

Priority	Activity	First-Year Capital	Estimated Annual Cost
2	3 Volunteer Coordinators	--	\$203,477
Improvement package to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in customer service • Significant improvement in staffing resources • Significant improvement in communication 			

- Currently, shelter does not have volunteer coordinators
- Improvement package would provide volunteer development, scheduling, guidance and evaluation
- A more robust volunteer program
- Volunteer hours more productive and meaningful

Recommended Budget Priorities, Continued

Priority	Activity	First-Year Capital	Estimated Annual Cost
3	1 Public Education/Marketing Coordinator	--	\$77,421
Improvement package to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in customer service • Significant improvement in communication • Significant improvement in staffing • Significant improvement in span of control 			

- Shelter does not have a full-time public education/marketing position
- Education is picked up as a second/third job, competing demands
- Would add a professional educator with a focus on animal welfare/control
- Better, consistent and focused communication will result in less customer/partner confusion and higher community compliance rates

Recommended Budget Priorities, Continued

Priority	Activity	First-Year Capital	Estimated Annual Cost
4	1 Customer Service Manager	--	\$101,083
Improvement package to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in work environment • Improvement in customer service • Significant improvement in staffing resources • Significant improvement in span of control • Significant improvement in communication 			

- Divide animal control into three focused area commands:
 - ✓ Field Operations
 - ✓ Shelter/Care Operation
 - ✓ Customer Service
- Focus on customer service, communications, adoptions, community events, and administrative support
- Relieve the existing two managers of administrative duties

Recommended Budget Priorities, Continued

Priority	Activity	First-Year Capital	Estimated Annual Cost
5	3 Shelter Technicians and 2 Customer Service Reps	--	\$223,912
Improvement package to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in work environment • Improvement in customer service • Significant improvement in staffing resources • Significant improvement in organization structure • Significant improvement in communication 			

- Shelter technicians and other staff serve the public as a second/third task
- Improvement package would provide support staff seven days a week:
 - ✓ Reduction in customer wait times
 - ✓ Improve customer communication
 - ✓ Improve customer adoption decisions
 - ✓ Improve efficiency of other staff (reduction in multi-tasking)

Potential Funding Sources

- Reallocation of existing resources within the **Code Compliance Department's budget**
- Allocation of **additional operating funds**, which are currently not anticipated for the FY 2017 General Fund budget
- Reallocation of existing resources from **other departments**
- Increases in **private donations**
- Increases in **fees and fines**



Charles Daniels

Next Steps Questions



Next Steps

Date	Action
April 5	City Council considers resolution accepting Task Force report.
April 8	Code Compliance Department submits budget requests to City Manager's Office for possible inclusion in proposed FY2017 General Fund operating/capital budget.
April - June	<p>Code Compliance Department begins to implement high-priority recommendations within current budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hire new Veterinarians ○ Hire new Shelter Manager ○ Conduct Shelter Advisory Committee retreat to improve communication and teamwork with shelter staff ○ Reduce span of control ○ Conduct third-party survey of employees ○ Conduct customer service training

Questions?

