

**TO THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

Your **PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE**

reports as follows:

PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT relative to the Department of Animal Services' (DAS) elimination of the "graveyard shift" (midnight to 6:00 am) for all 16 Animal Care Technicians working at the City's six animal shelters.

Recommendation for Council action, as initiated by Motion (Koretz - Zine):

NOTE and FILE the April 1, 2013 DAS report relative to the elimination of the "graveyard shift" (midnight to 6:00 am) for all 16 Animal Care Technicians working at the City's six animal shelters.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Not applicable

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On April 2, 2013 you Committee considered a Motion (Koretz - Zine) relative to the DAS' elimination of the "graveyard shift" (midnight to 6:00 am) for all 16 Animal Care Technicians working at the City's six animal shelters. Additionally, the Committee considered an April 1, 2013 DAS report that was submitted subsequent to the release of the meeting agenda in response to the Motion. According to the DAS, over the last several years, the DAS has seen its overall staffing levels decline while the number of kennels built has increased. This imbalance required the DAS to look at ways of effectively staffing for six shelters when, at times, its effective workforce should only staff four.

After fielding complaints from kennel staff and the public, and consulting with shelter management and the City's budget and human resources experts, it was determined that, rather than close a shelter, reduce hours or days of operations, the most practical solution seemed to be to redeploy the graveyard shift staff to day and swing shifts. This influx of staff onto day shifts would promote both animal and employee safety, while providing better customer service. In lieu of having a skeleton crew of Animal Care Technicians staff the graveyard shift, a security guard would be stationed at each of the six shelters. It is important to note that security guards would not be expected to perform any animal care.

Prior to the time when the expanded North Central kennels (the first of the new facilities) were opened in 2006, the DAS received approval from the Mayor and Council to begin expanding its kennel staff (primarily Animal Care Technicians [ACTs]) in anticipation of the increased number of kennels that would have to be served and maintained once all the new facilities were built. The DAS recruited several "classes" of ACTs over the 2007 and 2008 fiscal years (FY), expanding those ranks. Then the recession hit and the City budget began contracting as revenues fell and legal requirements to make payments to the City's pension funds forced decision-makers to divert hundreds of millions of General Fund dollars to that purpose. At that point, the DAS not only

stopped hiring new ACTs but had to scramble to hold onto the ones it had. Budget cuts in FY 2009 threatened several dozen ACTs with layoffs until the Council identified funds to save those jobs.

Since then, ACTs have not been laid off but there has been no new hiring. The latter has been mandated by the citywide hiring freeze that has been in place for about three years. In fact, on March 15, 2013, the DAS was given permission to hire six new ACTs, the first such new-hires in recent memory. However, six new ACTs amounts to only one new body per shelter, not nearly enough to solve the staffing shortage that motivated the proposed change to the graveyard shift.

In 2005-06 the Department had 120 ACTs to care for animals in 759 kennels and cages throughout the shelter system as it existed at the time. With the February 2013 opening of the new South Los Angeles shelter, Animal Services had 134 ACTs available to care for animals in 2029 kennels and cages. So, although there was a modest increase of 14 ACTs (12%), there was an increase of 1270 animal spaces (167%). The result is that the DAS is operating six facilities with a staffing level that would be, according to national shelter management standards, just about ideal for four

The Committee then questioned representatives from the City Administrative Officer and the DAS and then expressed the intention to take measures to maintain the “graveyard shift” by way of separate Council action. Finally, after further consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to note and file the April 1, 2013 DAS report. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
KORETZ:	YES
ALARCÓN:	YES
ZINE:	ABSENT

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