

Board of County Commission's  
Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department  
**Animal Services Operations Audit**  
August 7, 2012

## **Management Letter**

**To:** Chief Mike Nickerson, Director of Public Safety

**Via:** Karen Nicolai, CPA, Clerk of Circuit Court

**From:** Peggy Caskey, Audit Services Director, CIA, CISA, CFE

**Subject:** Animal Services Operations Audit Report

**Date:** August 7, 2012

The Audit Services Department was requested to perform an operational audit of the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department's animal services operations. Based upon testing, observations, interviews and a survey, the Audit Team (comprised of members from the Audit Services Department and the Human Resources Department) has produced the attached report for your review. The report includes the Audit Team's opinion of the Animal Services Operations. A copy of this report has been forwarded to the Board of County Commission as an agenda "correspondence to note" item.

The purpose of this report is to furnish management independent, objective analyses, recommendations, counsel, and information concerning the activities reviewed. It is not an appraisal or rating of management.

Although the Audit Team exercised due professional care in the performance of this audit, this should not be construed to mean that unreported noncompliance or irregularities do not exist. The deterrence of fraud and/or employee abuse is the responsibility of management. Audit procedures alone, even when carried out with professional care, do not guarantee that fraud or abuse will be detected.

The courtesy and cooperation extended by the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department was sincerely appreciated.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need additional information in regard to the attached report, please do not hesitate to contact me at (352)540-6235 or just stop by my office in Room 201.

**Attachment:** Animal Services Operations Audit Report

**Distribution:**

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this audit is to provide management with an opinion of the Animal Services' animal intake thru disposition workflow function; compliance with applicable policies, procedures, agreements and county ordinances; and whether or not actual practices are consistent with best kennel practices.

The mission of the Animal Services function is to operate and maintain an animal shelter, to respond to citizens' service requests about animal related issues, and to enforce County ordinances and state laws to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and the animals of Hernando County.

To improve overall operations, since July 2011, management garnered support and guidance from two teams of veterinarian consultants, the veterinarian community, and a master dog trainer. Management also attained animal enrichment measures such as volunteer dog walkers and cat petters/lovers, donation of dog beds, and a professional volunteer photographer to take photos of the adoptable animals for marketing purposes.

**Discussion Point 1: Workflow Under Temporary Policies and PetLuv Agreement** - The temporary animal intake thru disposition workflow, as designed, has decision points and internal controls that, if not circumvented, should achieve many of management's goals and objectives. However, the recordkeeping function lacks monitoring controls and the effort to market adoptable animals is unfocused and gets little attention. There is a high use of temporary standard operating procedures. Procedures are lacking in some areas of operations. Housing animals deemed unadoptable for at least seven days is putting pressure on operations. Rounds for health and behavior are not performed daily and are not performed by persons who have daily/regular contact with the kenneled animals.

**Discussion Points 2 & 3: Survey and Interviews** - Based upon survey results and interviews, there is a real or perceived perception by some that: workload may be an area of potential concern, staff meetings are held irregularly, the Department may not be working cohesively to accomplish the Department's goals and objectives, animals in the custody of the Department may have been neglected or mistreated, and the Department may not be reaching some of its goals and objectives. Management and employees believe they are sufficiently trained to reasonably perform their work assignments,

**Discussion Point 4: Walk-Thru Kennel Observations** - Cat and dog housing units are clean and well maintained. The square footage of floor space in dog housing units appears to be reasonable. The cat kennels are much smaller than recommended by best kenneling practices. The cat population often exceeds the available staffing level and appropriate housing units available to humanely care for the cats housed in kennels. Temporary policies appear to be creating situations that are not in the best interest of either public safety or animal welfare.

**Discussion Point 5: Employee Qualifications and Staffing Level** - Currently, the Department has a total of 19 positions. Seven of these positions have responsibilities in Code Enforcement and Animal Services, four in only Code Enforcement, and eight in only Animal Services. The Animal Services kennel staffing level is 33% below the optimum to humanely care for kenneled animals when the population reaches the shelter's capacity of 76 animals.

Overall, with only one minor exception identified, Animal Services employees appear to hold the certifications that are required by their job description.

**Discussion Point 6: Compliance Testing** - The Department's recordkeeping is inadequate. Data and records are missing or do not exist.

**Discussion Point 7: Current Climate Compared to Last Climate Assessment** - Most of the 2011 Climate Assessment recommendations appear to have been fully or partially implemented.

**Discussion Point 8: Complainant Accusations** - Accusations were made regarding potential inhumane treatment of animals while in the possession of the Department. Three of these accusations were reviewed: 1.) the accusation that a dog was handled roughly and was inaccurately evaluated for adoptability was unsubstantiated (Animal ID # 1013857); 2.) the accusation that a dog came in with a wound, was left to bleed and slowly die for six days without treatment was unsupported (Animal ID # 1013440); and 3.) the accusation that a dog with a high flea infestation was not medicated for flea prevention was reasonably substantiated (Animal ID # 1013388).

**Discussion Point 9: Volunteer Program** - The Board of County Commission's volunteer program has a written volunteer application package but it lacks proper background screening for evaluating potential volunteers.

Animal Services volunteer program has a large pool of volunteers including two professionals. There are written volunteer job descriptions. The program lacks management oversight and scheduling of the volunteers which has undermined the effectiveness of the volunteer program.

**Discussion Point 10: Town Hall Meeting of Animal Welfare Resources** - Two common challenges for local animal welfare resources are: obtaining sufficient donations or revenue to cover costs, and maintaining an adequate number of volunteers to help provide necessary animal care.

## Acknowledgement

Other minor findings, not included in this report, have been communicated to management and/or corrected during fieldwork.

**Fieldwork was performed by:**

Elizabeth Hogan, Internal Auditor  
Jerry Haines, Workers Compensation & Safety Coordinator  
Peggy Caskey, CIA, CISA, CFE, Audit Services Director

*On behalf of the Board of County Commission, Mr. Haines provided a human resource presence and was responsible for evaluating any personnel (employee and volunteer) matters and the climate assessment. Mr. Haines participated in interviews and observations. Mr. Haines did not participate in the survey or compliance testing.*

**Management responses were provided by:**

Chief Mike Nickerson, Director of Public Safety  
Cheryl Marsden, Director of Administrative Services

**Management's responses were approved by:**

Leonard Sossamon, County Administrator

**This report was authorized by Don Barbee on August 7, 2012**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Don Barbee, Chief Deputy/General Counsel

8/7/12  
Date

### **Animal Services Mission Statement**

"The mission of Animal Services Division is to operate and maintain an animal shelter, to respond to citizens' service requests about animal related issues, and to enforce County ordinances and state laws to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and the animals of Hernando County."

## Background

### Summer 2011

The animal services operations were evaluated by two independent teams of veterinarians:

- Veterinary Relief and Support Services, LLC (VR&SS) - VR&SS issued a written report on May 10, 2011.
- University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program (UF) - UF held an end of fieldwork exit conference in July 2011. A written report was issued 10 months later on May 1, 2012.

### Between July 2011 and April 2012

- Management garnered support and guidance from the veterinarian community by obtaining donated services from a local veterinarian. This volunteer was a member of the UF team that assessed the animal services operations in July 2011.
- Management obtained donated services from a master dog trainer.
- Management garnered medical supplies (medication, vaccines, parasite prevention) and veterinarian care (spay and neuter surgeries) from PetLuv, a nonprofit spay and neuter clinic. This was accomplished on December 16, 2011, when the Board of County Commission entered into a 60 day temporary memorandum of agreement with PetLuv. The Board of County Commission agreed to meet certain animal welfare benchmarks in exchange for PetLuv's medical supplies and veterinarian services. After 60 days, there was an oral agreement to continue for an undisclosed number of days. Management implemented the Temporary Procedures For Animal Services Policy which mirrored the agreement with PetLuv. This Temporary Policy was to be reevaluated upon receipt of the UF Report.

### April 13, 2012

A black and white male mixed breed dog (Animal ID 1013857) was surrendered to the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department. On that same day, the dog was euthanized.

### April 23, 2012

Management contacted the Audit Services Department and requested performance of an investigation into the euthanasia of a dog (Animal ID 1013857) and a review of animal services operations. At completion of the audit, management planned to meet with a panel of animal welfare representatives, selected by the Board of County Commission, using the data provided in the audit report as a basis for panel discussion and possible improvement to overall operations.

### April 24, 2012

During a regularly scheduled Board of County Commission meeting, a volunteer made accusations that animals were inhumanely treated while in the possession of the Department,

animals were wrongly quarantined with no access to the public, and kenneled dogs were not vaccinated upon intake.

April 27, 2012

Management adopted the Temporary Euthanasia Procedure. This Procedure assigned new members of the animal assessment team that evaluates animal adoptability and selects animals for euthanasia. This team's primary members changed from the Senior Kennel Officer and Manager to two Animal Officers. The euthanasia team members were also changed from any staff member who holds a State of Florida Euthanasia Certification to two Animal Officers and two Kennel Workers. When any member of either the assessment team or the euthanasia team is unavailable, management assigns an alternate. The Temporary Euthanasia Procedure also temporarily suspended acceptance of owner surrendered euthanasia requests.

June 15, 2012

Temporary Procedure for Intakes, Housing Limits and Euthanasia Policy was adopted. This Policy combined and revised the Temporary Euthanasia Procedure with other temporary unwritten procedures. The Department began to once again accept only medically necessary owner surrender euthanasia requests but reserved the right to require veterinarian approval.

## Summary of Independent Veterinarian Assessments Performed During 2011

During the spring/summer of 2011, two independent veterinarian assessments were performed on animal services operations. These assessments used the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters (published by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians) as benchmarks for best shelter practices.

The Veterinary Relief and Support Services, LLC (VR&SS), on-site assessment was requested and funded by PetLuv a local nonprofit spay and neuter clinic. The report was issued on May 10, 2011.

The second assessment was performed two months later by the University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program (UF). The purpose of this on-site assessment was to observe operations pertaining to animal care. The assessment was requested by management and was funded by a scholarship. Upon completion, July 2011, the UF veterinarian team held an end of fieldwork meeting and provided an exit presentation of its initial recommendations for addressing the most critical concerns. A written report was issued approximately 10 months later on May 1, 2012.

**Both reports are well written and easy to understand. The reports provide a great deal of best sheltering practices and how Hernando County's Animal Services function could improve workflows, strategies, and overall operations. The Audit Team heavily relied upon the VR&SS report and the UF end of fieldwork presentation as criteria for assessing current operations.**

In summary, the reports contained the following comments and recommendations:

Both teams of veterinarians commented on the Department's staff and dedication to animal care:

- The VR&SS report states that, *"We were impressed with the care and conditions of the animals, as well as the staff's dedication to their responsibilities."*
- The UF report states that, *"We... found your staff to be welcoming and professional. It was clear that everyone involved in the operation of the shelter from the animal care staff and code enforcement officers to administration is committed to providing the best care possible for the homeless animals of Hernando County."*

Both teams of assessors agreed on several areas for improvement such as the need to develop standard operating procedures for all areas of the shelter.

Both reports stressed the importance of the intake process in shelter population management; thereby, improving the shelter's lifesaving capacity. The UF report states that, *"There are 3 strategies for effective population management: 1) reduce admissions, 2) reduce length of stay by pathway planning and decision-making, and 3) increase live release by increasing the number of animals adopted, transferred to pet placement partners, and returned to owners."*

The UF report stated that there is very little marketing of adoptable pets; pet placement partners were under-utilized, seeking live outcomes was more passive than proactive, and there are a lot of opportunities for increasing live outcomes.

Based on the two assessments and the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, the intake process should include: multiple scans of the animal for a microchip, health evaluation (physical and behavioral), proper identification affixed to each animal, shelter capacity (acceptance of owner surrendered animals), vaccinations, and parasite prevention.

The UF report notes the following strengths:

- There is written protocol for intake of animals brought in over the counter, brought in by Animal Officers, and brought in through the kennel. The protocol focuses on assigning identification, photographing, creating a cage card, and scanning for a microchip.
- The reception staff coded over the counter admissions properly.
- The staff created an individual animal record in the computer and printed cage cards for each animal admitted.
- Microchip scanners were available in the facility and on the animal control trucks.
- Animals were placed in cages or euthanized promptly. Animals were not staged in different areas of the shelter waiting for permanent location.

Noted in both reports is the need to ensure that all animals have proper identification affixed to the animal if at all possible including kittens and puppies.

Based on the capacity to provide humane care, the UF assessors recommended that management only accept owner surrendered animals if space allows. The report states that, *"The County is not mandated to take in owner-surrendered pets and should not do so if there is no space."* In addition, the report recommends implementing an appointment only process if the housing capacity is nearly saturated. The Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters states that, *"Active population management is one of the foundations of shelter animal health and well-being, and must be based on an appreciation that capacity to provide humane care has limits for every organization, just as it does in private homes."* The VR&SS report states that, if management chooses to accept owner surrendered pets at a time when space is at a critical point, it recommends management assess owner surrendered animals immediately and take appropriate actions. Expediting the pathway planning for that animal ensures that the shelter remains within its capacity to provide humane care.

Both the VR&SS report and the UF report concur that it is critical to vaccinate animals immediately upon intake.

Similar to the intake process, both assessments provided recommendations for improvement of the euthanasia process (lack of veterinarian oversight, inadequate written protocols, and staff training). The written protocols should at a minimum address the following:

- Thorough microchip scanning prior to euthanasia.
- Clear and consistent euthanasia selection criteria.

- Animal retrieval and handling throughout the process.
- Weigh all tractable animals prior to administration of drugs.
- Recordkeeping practices.

The UF report recommended that management "*establish a clear and consistent decision-making process for euthanasia selection...*" and the "*...selection and review of animals for euthanasia should be performed by a committee consisting of the shelter supervisor, kennel manager, and adoption/rescue coordinator. Selection for euthanasia should not be placed in the hands of one individual.*"

In addition, the VR&SS report suggested that multiple staff be required to approve/select the animals for euthanasia. The report states that this requirement would "*give each animal a better chance at being saved.*"

The UF report listed the following euthanasia process strengths.

- There is one room dedicated for euthanasia. Having a designated space for euthanasia is essential for technician safety and stress reduction, animal safety and stress reduction, and the performance of euthanasia duties.
- Euthanasia is by injection (EBI) of sodium pentobarbital. EBI of sodium pentobarbital is considered a best practice, providing for a consistent and humane euthanasia experience across different species while providing for technician and animal safety.
- Euthanasia technicians are trained and certified according to the Florida Animal Control Association requirements.
- The majority of animals, including all cats and small dogs, are anesthetized prior to being euthanized.
- Mothers are anesthetized and euthanized prior to neonates. Euthanizing mother animals prior to euthanizing kittens and puppies prevents the stress and anxiety that may be experienced by the mother when neonates are removed for euthanasia.
- A Home Again global microchip scanner is located in the euthanasia room.
- Animals are not left unattended between induction of anesthesia and confirmation of death.
- The shelter offers owner-requested euthanasia services to the general public. Animals brought to the shelter for this service are euthanized in a timely fashion.
- Euthanasia technicians were observed to be calm when handling animals before and after euthanasia.

## Purpose & Scope

### PURPOSE

Provide management with an opinion of the Animal Services' animal intake thru disposition, workflow function, compliance with applicable policies, procedures, and agreements, county ordinances and whether or not actual practices are consistent with best kennel practices.

### SCOPE

The Audit Team obtained evidence by collecting information on matters related to the purpose of this audit. Collection included attendance at a Town Hall Meeting, interviews, a survey, observations, and testing. The Audit Team recorded its collected data on working papers. The Audit Team utilized the collected data as a basis for comparing actual practices to planned arrangements. To ascertain if actual practices conform to planned arrangements, the Audit Team compared evidence to criteria. Specifically, the Audit Team performed the following audit steps:

- 1) The Audit Team evaluated the design of the workflow from animal intake to disposition. The Audit Team identified decision and control points, or lack of the same. The Audit Team tested against the design under current conditions (Discussion Point 1).
- 2) A survey was distributed to 41 Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department representatives: management, employees, regular active volunteers, professional volunteers, and a donor of medical supplies and services (Discussion Point 2).
- 3) The Audit Team interviewed from the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department: one director, one manager, 13 employees, two regular active volunteers, two professional volunteers and one provider of medical supplies and veterinarian services (Discussion Point 3).
- 4) The Audit Team performed 11 walk-thru kennel observations (Discussion Point 4).
- 5) An evaluation of employee qualifications was tested against current data (Discussion Point 5).
- 6) The Audit Team tested for compliance with policies, the May 2010 VR&SS report, and the July 2011 UF end of fieldwork presentation. Sample testing was limited to the period from December 15, 2011, to April 20, 2012, utilizing the Animal Services' April 20, 2012, database backup tape created by and stored within the Technology Services Department's records. Live data and hard copy records were used only when necessary (Discussion Point 6).
- 7) The current climate was compared to the April 2011 Climate Assessment performed by the former County Administer (Discussion Point 7).
- 8) Three of the complainant's accusations of animal neglect were reviewed (Animal ID numbers 1013857, 1013440, and 1013388) (Discussion Point 8).

9) The volunteer program was evaluated under current conditions (Discussion Point 9).

10) An Audit Team member attended a May 8, 2012, Town Hall Meeting presented by Hernando County animal welfare groups (Discussion Point 10).

If/when the Audit Team believed it was necessary to correct any undesirable condition or to improve operations; the Audit Team provided a recommendation to management for immediate corrective action.

It was agreed in the preliminary stage of this audit that it would be management's responsibility to coordinate with the County Administrator and a panel selected by the Board of County Commission, or its designee, to devise a plan to improve overall operations.

#### SCOPE LIMITATION

This audit was performed when the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department was working under duress from negative public outcry over the euthanasia of an owner surrendered dog (Animal ID 1013857). The Department was working and operating under temporary policies and procedures and a temporary agreement with PetLuv. Fieldwork was performed when the Department was not operating under normal conditions.

## **Discussion Point 1: Workflow Under Temporary Policies and PetLuv Agreement**

Based upon interviews, observations, and temporary policies and procedures, the Audit Team prepared a diagram illustrating the current workflow from initial animal intake to disposition (**Diagram 1 on page 17**). The Audit Team identified decision points and internal controls, or lack of the same. The Audit Team evaluated if the workflow, as designed, should reasonably achieve management's goals and objectives and if any controls could be circumvented.

### **Evaluation of the Workflow As Designed**

Policies for all areas of operation are lacking (such as an intake function policy, and adoption/rescue function policy) and there is a high use of temporary policies and a temporary agreement. This made it difficult for management, staff members, and the Audit Team to prepare a workflow diagram that completely and accurately depicts management's directives.

**Audit Comment 1:** There is a high use of temporary standard operating procedures. Standard operating procedures are lacking in some areas of operations.

**Recommendation 1:** Consideration should be given to developing more permanent standard operating procedures for all areas of operations.

**Public Safety Management Response 1:** Management concurs with this recommendation and has planned since the development of the temporary procedures to replace with permanent when feasible. Temporary procedures were implemented in order to secure the Memorandum of Agreement with PetLuv while awaiting the release of the final UF report. The agreement provided for free intake vaccinations for all dogs and cats and free rabies vaccinations and sterilization for adopted animals. Both parties agreed that the procedures and the agreement would be revised upon receipt of the final UF report.

Management has already begun drafting permanent policies and procedures based upon the Animal Sheltering Guidelines, UF recommendations, and current resources (staffing and funding). This project will be ongoing.

The workflow, as designed, has decision points and internal controls that, if not circumvented, should achieve management's goals and objectives for:

- identifying the animal intake type,
- creating and maintaining adequate records,
- identifying microchip in animals and reuniting stray animals to owners,
- reasonably evaluating which animals are more or less adoptable,
- providing secure and clean animal housing units, food and water,
- providing a healthy environment reasonably free from parasites and communicable disease,
- providing adequate comfort measures (dog walks, cat petting, beds, heat/air conditioning, etc.),

- minimizing discomfort (pain, undue suffering) and providing adequate behavioral and medical evaluations,
- maintaining a reasonable maximum inventory level, and
- making good euthanasia decisions.

**There are two areas in the design that could be circumvented:**

1. Recordkeeping practices – The recordkeeping function lacks monitoring controls that if designed correctly, should ensure recordkeeping is performed consistently, completely, and accurately. (See *recordkeeping and compliance testing at Discussion Point 6: Compliance Testing.*)

**Audit Comment 2:** The recordkeeping function lacks monitoring controls.

**Recommendation 2:** Consideration should be given to implementing a recordkeeping monitoring control (such as a monthly review of a few animal files from intake to disposition) to determine whether or not recordkeeping practices are performed consistently, completely and accurately.

**Public Safety Management Response 2:** Management concurs with this recommendation and has completed a monthly checklist for recordkeeping control monitoring.

2. Live outcome effort – There is very little employee marketing of adoptable animals. There is no adoption/rescue policy or an employee who has animal advocate responsibilities (other than placing a photo on PetFinder). There is no monitoring control that ensures pathway planning (adoption, placement and outreach) begins at the point of animal intake or whether or not pathway planning is effective (consistent, complete, and accurate).

The UF team also identified this area for improvement when it stated in its report that there is very little marketing of adoptable pets; pet placement partners were under-utilized, seeking live outcomes was more passive than proactive, and there are a lot of opportunities for increasing live outcomes.

**Audit Comment 3:** The effort to market adoptable animals is unfocused and gets little attention.

**Recommendation 3:** Consideration should be given to assigning an employee to have animal advocate responsibilities within his/her job duties that include: coordination with placement partners that begins at animal intake, marketing each kenneled animal starting at the time of animal intake, and is a member of the daily rounds team.

**Public Safety Management Response 3:** Management concurs with this recommendation; however the current staffing level is not sufficient for additional duties. Management recommends that when funding is available a staff position of "Rescue, Adoption and Volunteer Coordinator" be created to handle these duties, along with managing a volunteer program.

Currently the following advocate activities are performed as staff and volunteer time allows:

- Staff or volunteers photograph the animals and staff members upload them to the County website via bldsys; and
- The majority of adoptable animals are added to the Petfinder website; and
- A ranked list of animals with photographs is emailed to rescue organizations; and
- Featured pets are chosen and marketed using additional methods.

Management will begin marketing of adoptable animals as soon as possible after intake based on available staffing

**Practices that could be done better:**

1. Housing unadoptable animals for at least seven days – The VR&SS veterinarian team encouraged animals deemed unadoptable (those with non-life threatening injury/sick, behavior issues, feral cats, and aggressive dogs) to be quickly removed from the housing population. Since then, management’s adoption of temporary policies and a temporary agreement with PetLuv require these animals (as well as those animals deemed highly adoptable) to be housed for no less than seven days before the space need becomes a consideration.

Management’s decision to house animals deemed unadoptable for at least seven days may be detrimental to operations:

- increases medical costs,
- increases labor effort,
- increases employees’ and other kenneled animals’ risk of being injured,
- goes against the mission to ensure public safety,
- increases chance of spreading disease to other kenneled animals,
- takes limited housing units away from animals deemed more highly adoptable,
- creates special housing needs,
- puts stress on the kennel population level, and
- puts undue stress on animals that will most likely be euthanized later.

**Audit Comment 4:** Housing animals deemed unadoptable for at least seven days is putting pressure on operations.

**Recommendation 4:** Consideration should be given to re-evaluating the seven day rule by either quickly removing unadoptable animals from the population at intake or by giving the animal a shorter amount of time for a live outcome. Consider increasing the effort of more quickly moving sick or injured animals to animal welfare providers.

**Public Safety Management Response 4:** Management concurs with this recommendation. A procedure is being drafted that places animals being held in custody into one of three pathways: Adoptable, Rescue Only, or Unadoptable (Euthanasia after mandated waiting periods). Minimum holding times will be assigned separately for dogs and cats in each pathway

based upon the Animal Sheltering Guidelines, UF recommendations, and current resources (staffing and funding). Sick or injured animals will be moved more quickly to animal welfare providers or euthanized if no placement is available. The procedure will be completed and tested within 90 days. If the testing is successful, it will be fully implemented within 120 days.

2. Performance of Daily Rounds - The UF team recommended management to, “*Create daily rounds team – Animal Services Supervisor (Manager), Kennel Operations Supervisor (Senior Kennel Officer), and Animal Adoption Advocate...Daily rounds (is a) critical decision-making tool for pathway planning. Communicates decisions and prompts follow-through with actions. Assigns responsibility and ensures accountability. Increase (s) animal flow-through efficiency. Decrease(s) wasted animal care days. Early recognition of problems or needs (welfare/stress, medical needs, identify next step).*”

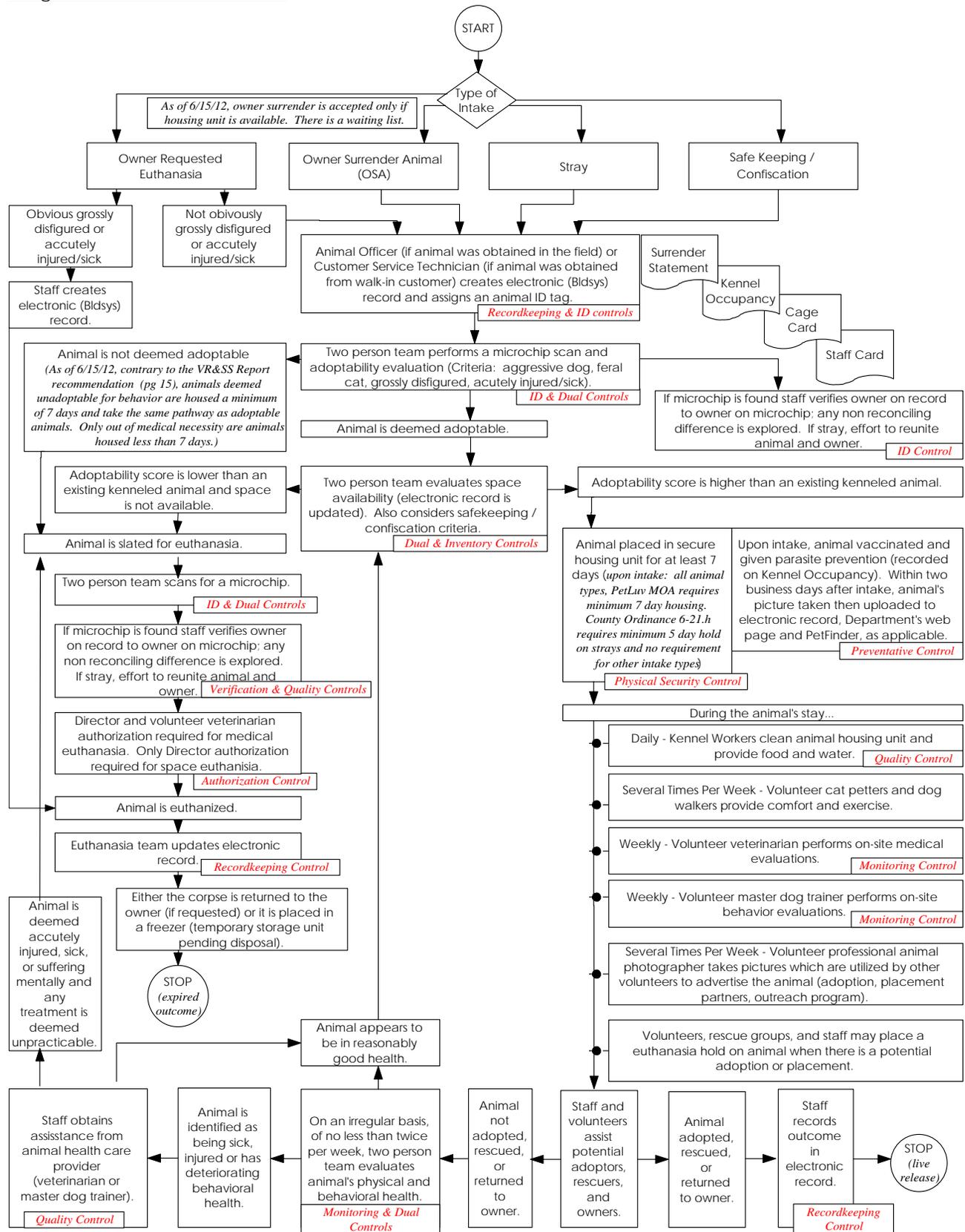
Per management, after the UF veterinarian team recommended daily rounds, management adopted the practice. A team composed of the Manager and Senior Kennel Officer was created. During fieldwork, temporary policies were adopted and the team’s composition changed to two Animal Officers. Due to workload capacity, this new team performs rounds about twice per week. The Guide for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters states that, “*Inspection of all animals must be performed daily in order to routinely evaluate and monitor adequacy of capacity and to identify needs for housing, care, or service.*” Management overrode the Guide and in its Temporary Procedure for Intakes, Housing Units Limits and Euthanasia it directed the Assessment Team to perform rounds, “*Preferably daily, but at least three times per week...utilizing the rounds form...*” Normally, the Manager, or designee, performs animal inventory counts each workday, or as time allows. Formal assessment of the animals is no longer performed daily.

**Audit Comment 5:** Daily rounds for health and behavior are not being performed daily and are not being performed by persons who have daily/regular contact with the kenneled animals.

**Recommendation 5:** To help ensure early recognition of kenneled animal problems or needs (welfare/stress, medical needs, identify next step), consideration should be given to reassigning the daily rounds team to the Manager, Senior Kennel Officer and an on staff animal adoption advocate. Consideration should be given to performing the rounds (examining each kenneled animal for health and behavior concerns) on a daily basis.

**Public Safety Management Response 5:** Management concurs with this recommendation; however the current staffing level prohibits full implementation. Performing rounds as a team takes 2-3 hours per day, which is an impractical amount of time for the Manager and Senior Kennel Officer given their other duties. Management recommends that full rounds be completed by the team 2-3 times per week and that one staff member take a daily inventory checklist to quickly check for health concerns on the other weekdays. This will be completed within 30 days of audit release. Management recommends that when funding is available a staff position of “Rescue, Adoption and Volunteer Coordinator” be created as the third person assigned to the daily rounds team.

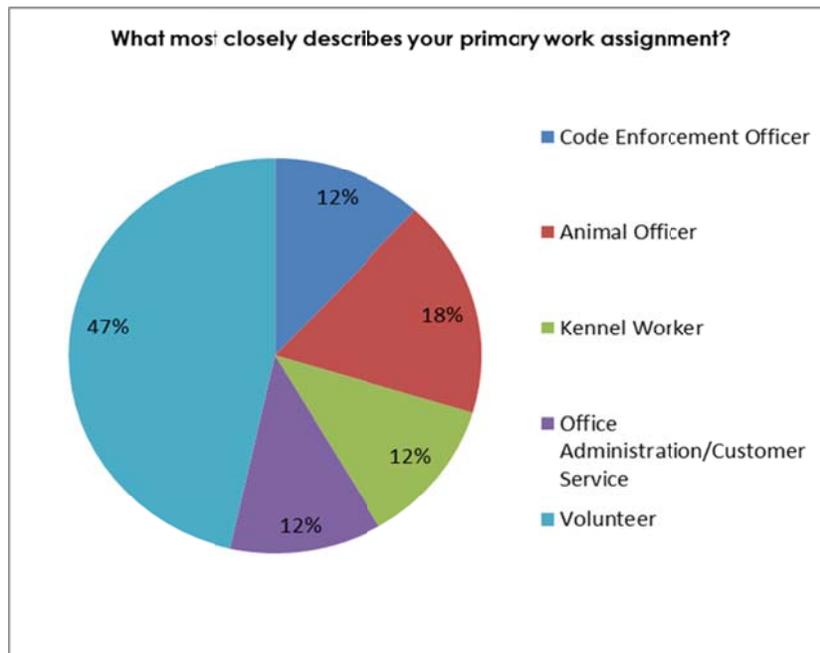
Diagram 1: Current Workflow



**Discussion Point 2: Survey**

To ensure that the 41 Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department management team members, employees, regular active volunteers, professional volunteers, and a donor of medical supplies and veterinarian services each had an opportunity to participate in the audit, the Audit Team created and distributed a survey to each of them. This allowed the participants the opportunity to communicate any praise or concerns they may have regarding the operations of the Animal Services function. The Audit Team received 18 survey responses.

Forty-seven percent (47%) of the respondents are active and professional volunteers and 53% are Department personnel.



Fifty-three percent (53%) of the respondents (volunteers and employees) indicated that their workload is too much for them to perform their jobs to the best of their ability. The remaining 47% indicated that their workload is about right.

Ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents indicated that staff meetings are held irregularly.

The respondents generally rated the Department’s unified effort to work as a single team to accomplish the Department’s goals and objectives as somewhat lax to poor.

	Excellent	Very Good	Adequate	Somewhat Lax	Poor
Communications	0%	12%	12%	25%	50%
Coordination	6%	0%	25%	31%	38%
Collaboration	6%	0%	19%	19%	56%
Consistency	6%	0%	0%	38%	56%

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents indicated that they have not witnessed neglect or mistreatment of an animal while in the custody of the Department. Eleven percent (11%) indicated that they have seldom witnessed this behavior. Twenty-two percent (22%) indicated that they often witnessed this behavior.

For those respondents that reported that they witnessed neglect or mistreatment of animals, they reported that they witnessed: 1. a lack of medical care, 2. lax pain management practices 3. underutilized pathway planning, 4. a dog sprayed with a garden hose, 5. dogs being tugged if they get fearful and won't walk well on a leash, and 6. dogs that come to the shelter together are not always housed in the same kennel. (Also see **Discussion Point 3: Interviews for additional opinions regarding animal care** and **Discussion Point 4: Walk-Thru Kennel Observations.**)

The volunteer veterinarian stated that, "During the UF evaluation, as one of the evaluators, I saw a Chihuahua that was in a run. The information on the cage sheet indicated that the dog may have been hit by a car. We found an abscess on his shoulder, which was not being treated. After the evaluation, I was called and asked by the manager (name removed by the Audit Team) what needed to be done to treat that dog. Antibiotics and pain medications were prescribed. The dog showed drastic and immediate improvement and was eventually adopted. Prior to that incident, medical care was unavailable. Since, I have visited once weekly to assess the animals within HCAS (Hernando County Animals Services). Since the exit interview by the UF evaluation, I have not witnessed similar behavior."

How well is the Department reaching the following goals and objectives? The feedback received was a mixed bag.					
	Excellent	Very Good	Adequate	Somewhat Lax	Poor
Customer Service	18%	41%	12%	6%	24%
Recordkeeping Practices	18%	24%	24%	18%	18%
Stray pet owner identification (on admission investigate microchip, ID, and rabies tag)	20%	27%	27%	20%	7%
Accuracy of canine identification (breed, age, sex, color, neuter status, condition)	0%	12%	44%	19%	25%
Accuracy of feline identification (breed, age, sex, color, neuter status, condition)	0%	0%	60%	20%	20%
During intake health evaluation and early pain management	8%	31%	31%	8%	23%
Accuracy of canine temperament	12%	44%	19%	0%	25%
Accuracy of feline temperament	13%	33%	27%	7%	20%
Meet daily care of kenneled canines (feeding, sanitation, compassion, monitoring)	27%	20%	20%	20%	13%
Meet daily care of kenneled felines (feeding, sanitation, compassion, monitoring)	20%	27%	13%	27%	13%
Recognition of signs of pain and distress of kenneled pets	20%	33%	7%	27%	13%
Advertising/marketing adoptable pets	0%	20%	40%	27%	13%
Outreach and pet placement partners	7%	27%	27%	20%	20%
Adoption friendly environment	27%	20%	7%	27%	20%
Decision-making for pet euthanasia	8%	31%	31%	8%	23%
Euthanasia practices performed humanely	50%	17%	0%	17%	17%
Animal related public safety	27%	27%	20%	27%	0%

When asked what solutions or ideas the respondents have to enhance the work environment, 33% suggested increasing the staffing level; 28% suggested making better volunteer and employee hiring decisions; 17% suggested a change in management or staff; 11% stated that there is a need for stronger management; 11% suggested improving communications for more live outcomes; 11% suggested improving policies and procedures; and 11% suggested reducing animal stress in kennels by setting a schedule for the volunteers.

**Audit Comment 6:** Based upon survey results, there is a real or perceived perception that:

- workload may be an area of potential concern, (See *Discussion Point 5: Employee Qualifications and Staffing Level* for more information.)
- staff meetings are held irregularly,
- the Department may not be working cohesively to accomplish the Department's goals and objectives, (See *Discussion Point 7: Current Climate Compared to Last Climate Assessment*.)
- animals in the custody of the Department have been neglected or mistreated (See *Discussion Point 3: Interviews* and *Discussion Point 4: Walk-Thru Kennel Observations*.), and
- the Department may not be reaching some of its goals and objectives. (See *Discussion Point 6: Compliance Testing*).

**Recommendation 6:** Management should take into consideration the survey results and take corrective action, as appropriate.

**Public Safety Management Response 6:** Management concurs with this recommendation and has begun reviewing the survey and interview results in order to improve the identified areas of concern. The survey results were predictable considering the divide caused by the poor relations between employees and some volunteers, the low morale of both, the constant changes the Department has undergone in the past four years (see summary), and the increasing workload.

Overall communication, coordination, and collaboration has improved significantly among all but one employee in the department, however Management recognizes the need to continue these improvements into the future utilizing the insight gained from the survey and interview results.

### Discussion Point 3: Interviews

The Audit Team interviewed one director, one manager, 13 employees, two regular active volunteers, two professional volunteers (one of which was on the UF veterinary team that assessed the animal services operations during July 2011), and one donor of medical supplies and veterinarian services.

The purpose of these interviews was to:

1. gain knowledge and understanding of employees' primary job duties and whether or not they believe they have been adequately trained to perform their work assignments;
2. gain awareness of any suspected or known mistreatment, neglect or inhumane treatment of any animal while in the custody of the Department; and
3. obtain any eye witness accounts of what transpired while three dogs (Animal ID 1013857, 1013440, and 1013388) were in the custody of the Department. (These three dogs were listed in the complainant's accusation.)

Once all three of the above topics were discussed, the Audit Team opened the floor for the persons being interviewed to discuss topics of their choice.

Employee Job Duties – The employees interviewed, described their primary job duties. The Audit Team found that the described duties materially aligned with the employees' corresponding written job descriptions. The employees indicated that they were sufficiently trained to reasonably perform their work assignments. (See **Discussion Point 5: Employee Qualifications and Staffing Level** where the Audit Team performed employee qualification testing.)

Mistreatment, Neglect or Abuse – Fourteen of the 20 persons interviewed indicated that they are not aware of, suspect, or have witnessed any mistreatment, neglect or inhumane treatment of any animal while it was in the custody of the Department. The six persons who reported awareness of, suspicion of, or have witnessed mistreatment, neglect or inhumane treatment that occurred after the UF Veterinarian Team performed its fieldwork (July 2011) described the following: (See **Discussion Point 2: Survey** where the Audit Team surveyed management, employees, volunteers, and a donor regarding animal care.)

1. Over population of kenneled cats that has led to: housing multiple cats in small cages and housing the spillover in a garage that is not climate controlled and after hours, has no air movement, including the use of a fan.

The Audit Team consistently observed an overpopulation of kenneled cats.  
(See **Discussion Point 4: Walk-thru Kennel Observations** for additional information.)

2. Suffering condition of some animals under the temporary policies and the agreement with PetLuv which under normal conditions, may have been euthanized instead of being housed for too long.

On June 5, 2012, the Audit Team and a veterinarian observed two kenneled dogs (Animal ID 1014531 and 1014477) that were unable to standup or walk due to illness or age. Per staff, had the temporary policies not been in effect,

these dogs would have been euthanized sooner instead of waiting for the veterinarian to provide a recommendation.

The Audit Team was made aware of an additional dog (Animal ID 1015118) that was owner surrendered for medical euthanasia and had a written veterinarian recommendation for euthanasia that was unable to stand up or walk due to illness. Due to the temporary policies, this dog laid on the floor of a kennel for approximately 21 hours before being euthanized. The Department has eight employees who hold euthanasia certifications. On July 9, 2012, the day the dog was surrendered, six of these employees were on the clock and one was in the building. But due to the temporary policies, they could not euthanize the dog. Instead, they waited for one of the employees on the euthanasia team to perform the task. The next day, when this employee failed to perform the task, management requested another employee to break away from field operations to return to the shelter and perform the task.

*(See Discussion Point 4: Walk-thru Kennel Observations for additional information.)*

3. A lack of medical care.

One of the persons who reported this concern cited that after the UF consulting team performed its evaluation, in July 2011, medical care improved and animals are now receiving good care under the direction of the volunteer veterinarian. This veterinarian has also provided support and training which improved operations.

During fieldwork, the Audit Team did not observe any kenneled animal that appeared to be suffering due to a lack of medical care. *(See Discussion Point 4: Walk-thru Kennel Observations for additional information.)*

On July 6, 2012, a citizen reported to Customer Service staff members that a dog was in a kennel bleeding heavily and vomiting. Staff immediately contacted the Manager. The Manager and representative from an external entity, who had been meeting with the Manager at that time, went to the kennel area and inspected all the kenneled dogs. They walked through the kennel area twice and did not identify an animal bleeding and vomiting. They identified one dog (Animal ID 1014929) that had two small circles of spittle (the size of a 50 cent piece) on the kennel floor from perhaps an upset stomach from medication given to the dog earlier that day, but no blood. The kennel did not appear to have been cleaned from the time the citizen reported the concern until the inspection was performed.

4. Rough treatment of dogs while leashed.

One of the persons who reported this concern cited that she has seen dogs put-on-the-breaks and staff kept walking pulling the dog along but if/when the dog started to show any signs of choking, staff eased up on pulling the dog. She reported that she has never seen staff hurt a dog and indicated that staff members are not mean spirited. She stated that in her opinion, staff

members are transferring dogs the best way they know how. She recommended additional staff training on how to properly relocate animals.

Another person interviewed explained that sometimes dogs don't want to walk on the lobby floor and when this has happened, she has seen staff either carry the dog, place it on a cart or has given the dog a little tug to get it walking. She also has seen that when a dog acts aggressive, it is not unusual for staff to ask the owner to help put the dog in a kennel. This individual stated that she has never seen any kennel worker tug or drag a dog in any unkind way.

During fieldwork, the Audit Team saw dogs walking on leashes and carried. The Audit Team did not observe any dogs being tugged or dragged. (See **Discussion Point 4: Walk-thru Kennel Observations** for additional information.)

5. Adoptable dogs housed in quarantine.

The Audit Team did not perform any testing on this accusation.

6. A kennel worker held a puppy outstretched and carried it to a kennel and tossed it in.

During fieldwork, the Audit Team did not observe any mistreatment of any animal while in the Department. (See **Discussion Point 4: Walk-thru Kennel Observations** for additional information.) However, the Audit Team was made aware of a kitten that had been accidentally left on an Animal Officer's truck after hours. When management became aware of the incident, management took immediate corrective action and the employee was disciplined. Management and employees indicated that this was an isolated incident.

7. On a day the shelter was closed, an Animal Officer saw a kenneled ferret that had no food or water and the litter box was dirty.

During fieldwork, the Audit Team did not see any kenneled ferrets but did consistently observe other types of animals in clean and well maintained kennel units, with food and/or clean water, as appropriate for the time of day. (See **Discussion Point 4: Walk-thru Kennel Observations** for additional information.)

8. Animals are not vaccinated upon intake.

The donor of vaccines and parasite prevention indicated that it was many months after donations were made before management implemented inventory and recordkeeping controls to reasonably assure animals are consistently vaccinated and given parasite preventative upon intake. This donor cited that he is now reasonably sure animals are vaccinated against disease and parasites at intake. (See **Discussion Point 6: Compliance Testing** for testing of vaccination practices.)

Eye Witness Accounts of three dogs (Animal ID 1013857, 1013440, and 1013388) while in the custody of the Department – The eye witness account information was carried forward to **Discussion Point 8: Complaint Accusation.**

Volunteer Program - Management and employees expressed appreciation for the work provided by a majority of the volunteers. They stated that they depend on the volunteers to adequately meet the needs of the kennel animals and to assist with finding them live outcomes. The employees indicated that most of the volunteers are helpful and pleasant to work with. Some employees and volunteers cited that there is a small group of volunteers that do not provide value added services. They cited that this group is disruptive to operations and is unpleasant to work with. They perceive this group as not being volunteers but as animal activists with an agenda that does not align well with the Department's mission to provide public safety. The employees indicated that they are offended by this group's Facebook page content which they said has called them murderers and killers. Some employees and volunteers indicated that this group has made it a difficult work environment and that they do not have faith in management's ability to oversee the volunteers.

Most of the volunteers expressed that they enjoy volunteering for the Department and working with the animals and employees. They indicated that the employees are hardworking and compassionate toward the animals in their care. A few interviewees had a very different perspective of certain management, employees, and operations. They expressed a certain level of distrust and indicated that there are some areas of operations that are dysfunctional (recordkeeping, kenneling, and pathway planning). They also indicated that certain management and staff members are resistant to change. They cited that staff members mislabel animals, behavior, and medical conditions.

*See Discussion Point 9: Volunteer Program for more information.*

#### Operations –

- The general consensus is that operationally, employees and volunteers would like to see more consistency with policies and management directives. They are frustrated with the frequency of policy changes and a lack of communication when policies and directives change. They are equally frustrated that their suggestions and input does not flow into management decision making. Many cited concern that management directives are based on knee jerk reactions and emotion rather than doing what is best for the animals. Directives are not based on best kennel practice criteria. They said outside pressure from persons who have little or no shelter experience are influencing management to make critical mistakes that are harming operations.
- Many cited a lack of management support and a need for better communication and coordination between management, staff members and volunteers. They want a more authoritative management force when dealing with difficult individuals and situations.
- Some employees and volunteers indicated that more training is desired in the areas of assessing adoptability and aggression.
- A common recommendation is to hire a veterinarian and to increase the budget to cover medical costs. *See Discussion Point 5: Employee Qualifications and Staff Level for more information.*

- Animal Officers, Manger, and kennel staff cited workload concerns that were caused by temporary policies (daily kennel round assignments, euthanasia team assignments, and housing too many cats in the population). *See Discussion Point 5: Employee Qualifications and Staff Level for more information.*
- Many staff members voiced concern that one employee quite often avoids certain job assignments, rescue calls, and euthanasia tasks. This employee is perceived as being very difficult to work with and that management is not controlling this situation.
- Several employees cited that the Department is poorly educating volunteers as to its mission and operations.
- One of the most commonly voiced concerns is favoritism and inconsistency in applying the first come first served policy (which makes animal adoption to a family home a priority over transfer to a rescue group). Employees overwhelmingly cited that management often overrides this policy for certain individuals and welfare groups. Several employees gave specific examples of when this policy was overridden. Management denied this accusation. (During fieldwork, management was looking at this policy for possible revision.)
- Some employees and volunteers are concerned with release of highly aggressive animals to a family home or welfare group. These animals could seriously harm children or other animals. Employees cited specific instances when this had happened in the recent past. They blamed the temporary policies for creating this potential liability. They recommended implementation of a special liability release form so when any aggressive dog (with a history of bite or identified in a behavior evaluation as highly aggressive) is released to a family or welfare group, that the person taking the animal is aware of the animal's history and behavioral issues and the County minimizes its potential liability. *(Note: per management, a legal request was given to the County Attorney's Office and is pending legal review.)*
- Kennel staff and a professional volunteer talked about the added stress put on dogs when they are doubled up in kennels. They have had to break up dog fights and in some instances, staff and dogs have been injured. They don't recommend kenneling dogs together unless they came into the shelter together.
- One professional volunteer explained that due to a lack of routine scheduling and negative energy, she has seen an increase in dog stress, hair loss, and deterioration in temperament. She explained that dogs are creatures of habit and that there are stressors on dogs. Dogs need a regular schedule (walking, feeding, kennel cleaning, rest periods) and; therefore, management should not allow humans to come and go at any time.

**Audit Comment 7:** No comment; the data was pulled to other sections of this report.

**Recommendation 7:** Management should consider the interview results and take corrective action, as it deems appropriate.

**Public Safety Management Response 7:** Management concurs with this recommendation and has begun reviewing the survey and interview results in order to improve the identified areas of concern. The survey results were predictable considering the divide caused by the poor relations between employees and some volunteers, the low morale of both, the constant changes the Department has undergone in the past four years (see summary), and the increasing workload.

Overall communication, coordination, and collaboration has improved significantly among all but one employee in the department, however Management recognizes the need to continue these improvements into the future utilizing the insight gained from the survey and interview results.

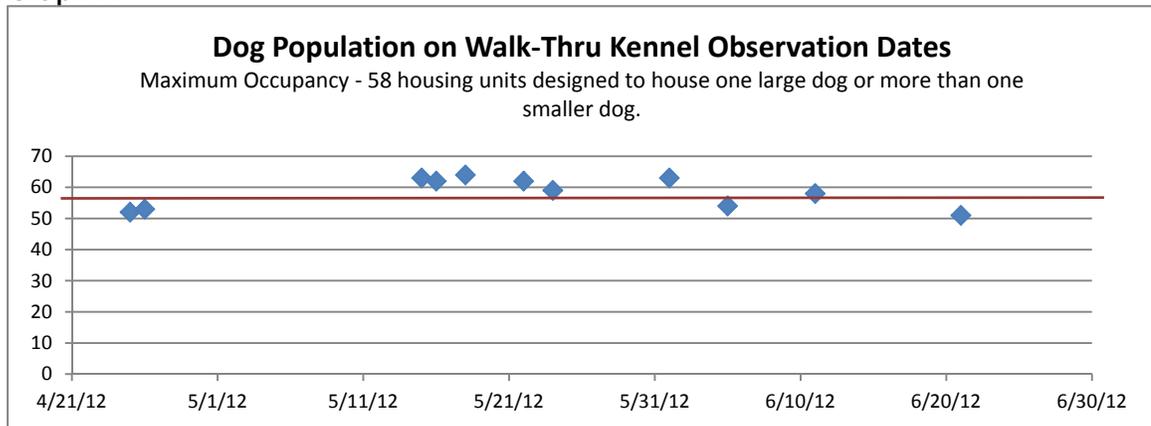
#### Discussion Point 4: Walk-thru Kennel Observations

To discover any mistreatment, neglect or inhumane treatment of any animal while in custody of the Department, during fieldwork, between April 25, 2012, and June 11, 2012, the Audit Team performed 10 walk-thru kennel observations (April 25, April 26, May 15, May 16, May 18, May 22, May 24, June 1, June 5, and June 11, 2012). Most of these observations were unannounced. One additional unannounced observation was performed after the end of fieldwork (June 21, 2012). Walk-thru kennel observations were performed by Audit Team members and in some instances, Department personnel and/or professional volunteers participated.

During these observations:

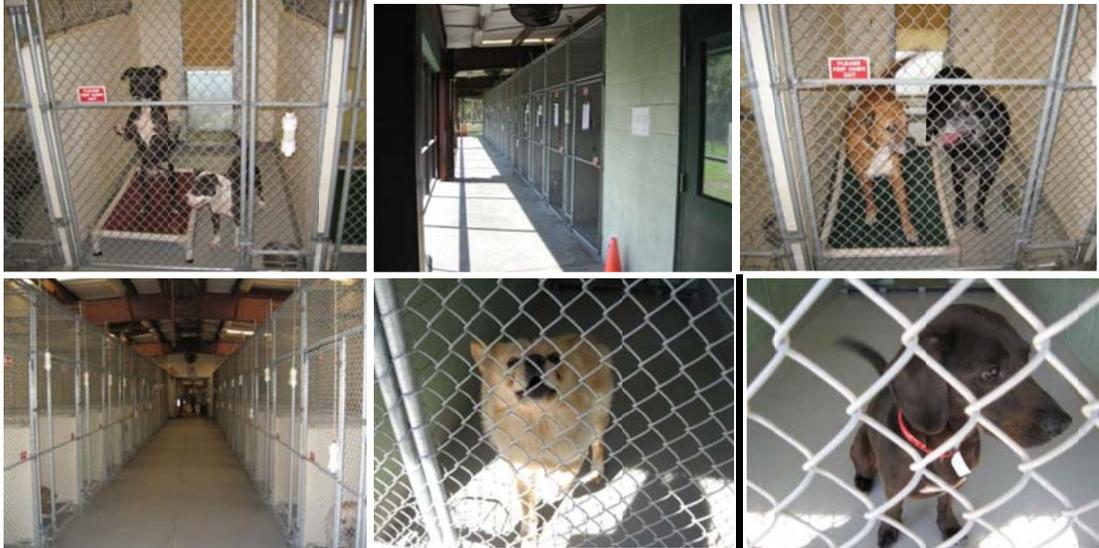
1. The Audit Team did not witness any animal mistreatment or abuse.
2. The kennel staff appeared to be attentive to animal needs and available to the public.
3. The dog population consistently appeared to be appropriate for the staffing level capacity and housing units available (see Graph A). The square footage of floor space in dog housing units appeared to be reasonable. Each dog housing unit has two sections, an inside space where the dog can escape the elements and an outside space where the dog can get fresh air. The VR&SS assessment team also made this observation and stated in its report that, *"these are excellent spaces for dogs of all sizes."* The Audit Team consistently observed clean and well maintained kennel units, food and/or clean water, as appropriate for the time of day, and bedding.

**Graph A**



Below are walk-thru dog kennel observation pictures taken on May 15, 2012, and June 20, 2012.

Note: Two pictures do not show bedding. This is because the beds were located in the opposite side of the kennel (outside the picture frame).

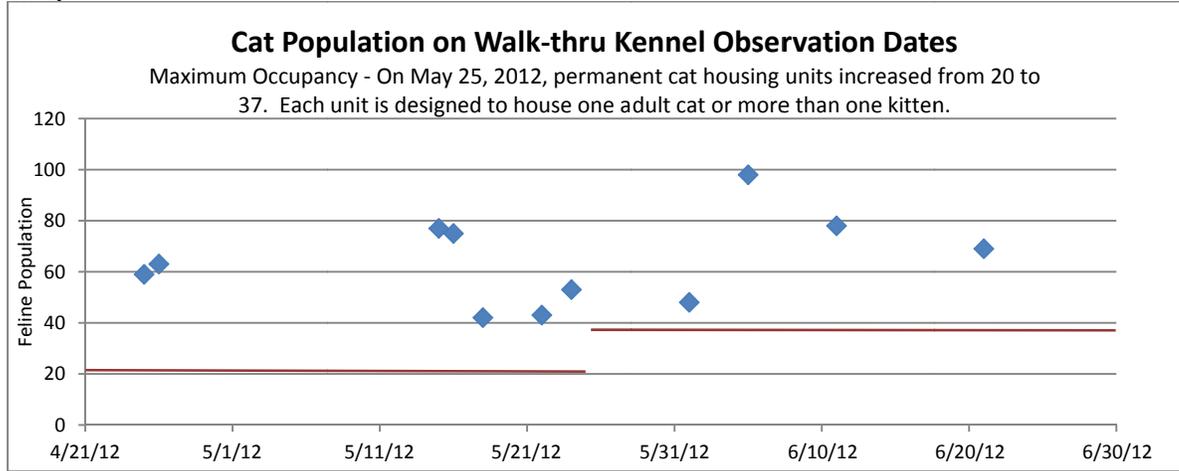


4. The cat population often exceeded the staffing capacity level and housing units available to effectively care for the kenneled cats (see Graph B). Due to overcrowding, the spillover was housed in a garage that exceeded acceptable temperature fluctuation guidelines (of 60 – 80 degrees Fahrenheit). The garage is not air conditioned or heated, has no windows, and outside normal work hours (evenings, weekends, and holidays), the garage is essentially closed up and, due to a concern of a fire hazard, there is no air circulation, including the use of fans. This unacceptable housing location was identified in each observation from May 15 to June 21, 2012. On May 18 and May 25, 2012, the Audit Team voiced this immediate concern to management. Management took partial corrective action on June 1, 2012, by opening a second temperature controlled cat room and moved some cats to that new location but cats continued to be housed in the garage. On June 6 and June 7, 2012, the Audit Team reiterated this concern to management. On June 21, 2012, the last walk-thru kennel observation, cats were still housed in the garage. This concern was also identified and reported in the UF report which states that, *"when the number of cats exceeds the number of cages in the cat room, the spillover is housed in the garage. The garage is not an acceptable area for housing cats because it is not climate-controlled...The temperature and humidity extremes during hot and cold weather seasons are outside the acceptable limits for animal housing."*

The Audit Team identified that most of the cat housing units (permanent and temporary) are much smaller than the Guidelines for Standard of Care in Animal Shelters recommendation of 11 square feet of floor space per housing unit. This concern was also identified and reported by the UF veterinarians who stated that, *"...similar to most shelters, there are no acceptable cages for humane housing of cats at Hernando County Animal Services based on the Guidelines for Standard of Care in Animal Shelters...most (85%) of the 55 cages in use provide <5 sq ft of floor space. These enclosures do not allow the cats to make any choices in their environment such as where to rest, to stretch out with legs extended, or to walk more than 1-2 steps. Some cages are <2ft by 2 ft (<4 sq ft floor space)." Per the Guidelines for Standard of Care in Animal Shelters, "small stainless steel cages less than 2 ft by 2 ft are unacceptable as primary enclosures and are cruel if used as such."* The VR&SS team also identified this concern and reported that, *"your shelter is not unique in having cages for cats that are of less-than-desirable size. Cage size is a major factor in cat comfort and health."*

The Audit Team consistently observed clean and well maintained cat kennel units, food and/or clean water, as appropriate for the time of day, and litter boxes. Suitable bedding was not consistently provided.

**Graph B**



Walk-thru cat kennel observation pictures taken on May 15, 2012, and June 20, 2012.



**Audit Comment 8:** The cat population often exceeds the available staffing level and appropriate housing units available to humanely care for the cats housed in kennels. The kennels are much smaller than recommended by best kenneling practices.

**Recommendation 8:** Consideration should be given to maintaining the cat kennel population to no more than 40 cats. Kennels should meet best kenneling practices (11 square feet of floor space, bedding, temperature and humidity controlled).

**Public Safety Management Response 8:** Management concurs with this recommendation. At audit start there was only one air conditioned cat room with 20 holding cages. When the cat

population exceeded 20 cats, the additional cats were housed in temporary holding cages in the garage. The garage does not meet the minimum temperature and humidity requirements for housing cats. Therefore, an additional air conditioned room was devoted to cat housing, providing an additional 18 holding cages and reducing the need for garage housing.

The majority of holding cages are significantly smaller than the recommended size for housing of cats. Management is currently considering options for modifying existing housing to meet minimum requirements and/or purchasing new housing units as funding will allow. Management anticipates completion of this within 120 days from audit release. Increasing the size of the holding cages will correspondingly reduce the number of housing units available. This will require that the population be reduced to keep the population within the capacity for humane care.

The current staffing level of four employees is below the recommended minimum of six employees cited in the UF report. The recommendation for six employees was based upon the housing of an average of 16 cats per day. Management does not recommend adding any additional cat housing without also increasing the number of kennel staff to provide humane care.

5. During the June 5, 2012, walk-thru kennel observation with the volunteer veterinarian, animal neglect was identified in kenneling two elderly/sick dogs for too long. Neither of these dogs could walk. These dogs were deemed unadoptable and appeared uncomfortable. The veterinarian indicated that these two dogs were perfect examples of when humane euthanasia decisions should be made sooner by management rather than letting the animal lay there with no hope of recovery. After receiving the veterinarian's recommendation for euthanasia, these dogs were put to sleep. Management cited that these dogs were able to walk the day before the veterinarian examined them, the dogs failed quickly, and that had the temporary euthanasia policies not been in effect, the dogs would have been euthanized sooner.

**Audit Comment 9:** The temporary policies were instituted by management. The temporary policies appear to be creating situations that are not in the best interest of either public safety or animal welfare.

**Recommendation 9:** If the temporary policies are creating situations that are not in the best interest of either public safety or animal welfare, then consideration should be given to changing those policies. Policies and management decisions should be based upon best shelter practice guidelines. Management should implement a permanent policy that considers the timely and humane euthanasia of sick, injured, and elderly animals.

**Public Safety Management Response 9:** Management concurs with this recommendation and has planned since the development of the temporary procedures to replace with permanent when feasible (see Management Response 4). The permanent procedures will include the timely and humane euthanasia of sick, injured and elderly animals. We anticipate implementation of a new euthanasia procedure within 90 days from audit release.

**Discussion Point 5: Employee Qualifications and Staffing Level**

The Audit Team reviewed the employees’ qualifications for compliance with job requirements and the staffing level for compliance with the UF report. The Audit Team interviewed employees. (See **Discussion Point 3: Interviews.**)

Employee Qualifications

To determine if the Manager, Lead Animal Officer, Animal Officer, Kennel Officer and Kennel Workers are in compliance with their job standards criteria, the Audit Team reviewed: Florida Statute 828.27(4)(a), and applicable job descriptions.

The Audit Team found that the following certifications are required by job descriptions, Florida Statutes, or by tasks performed:

Animal Services Manager	Animal Services Officer	Kennel Officer	Kennel Worker
Florida Association of Code Enforcement (FACE) Level III			
Certified Code Enforcement Professional (CEP)			
		Cremator Operator	Cremator Operator
HCSO – Use of Pepper Spray			
Animal Control Officer (40 hrs)	Animal Control Officer (40 hrs)	Animal Control Officer (40 hrs)	
Chemical Immobilization (16 hrs)	Chemical Immobilization (16 hrs)	Chemical Immobilization (16 hrs)	
State of Florida Euthanasia Certification	State of Florida Euthanasia Certification	State of Florida Euthanasia Certification	State of Florida Euthanasia Certification

The Audit Team reviewed the personnel files for the staff currently holding the above referenced positions to ensure that they hold the required certifications. This review disclosed that one of the nine employees did not have the required cremator operator certification. Per management, this one exception was primarily attributable to budgetary constraints and the employee is not performing this task. In addition, the review disclosed that each of these employees had obtained the required continuing education units to maintain their respective certifications.

**Audit Comment 10:** An employee does not hold a certification that is required in his/her job description.

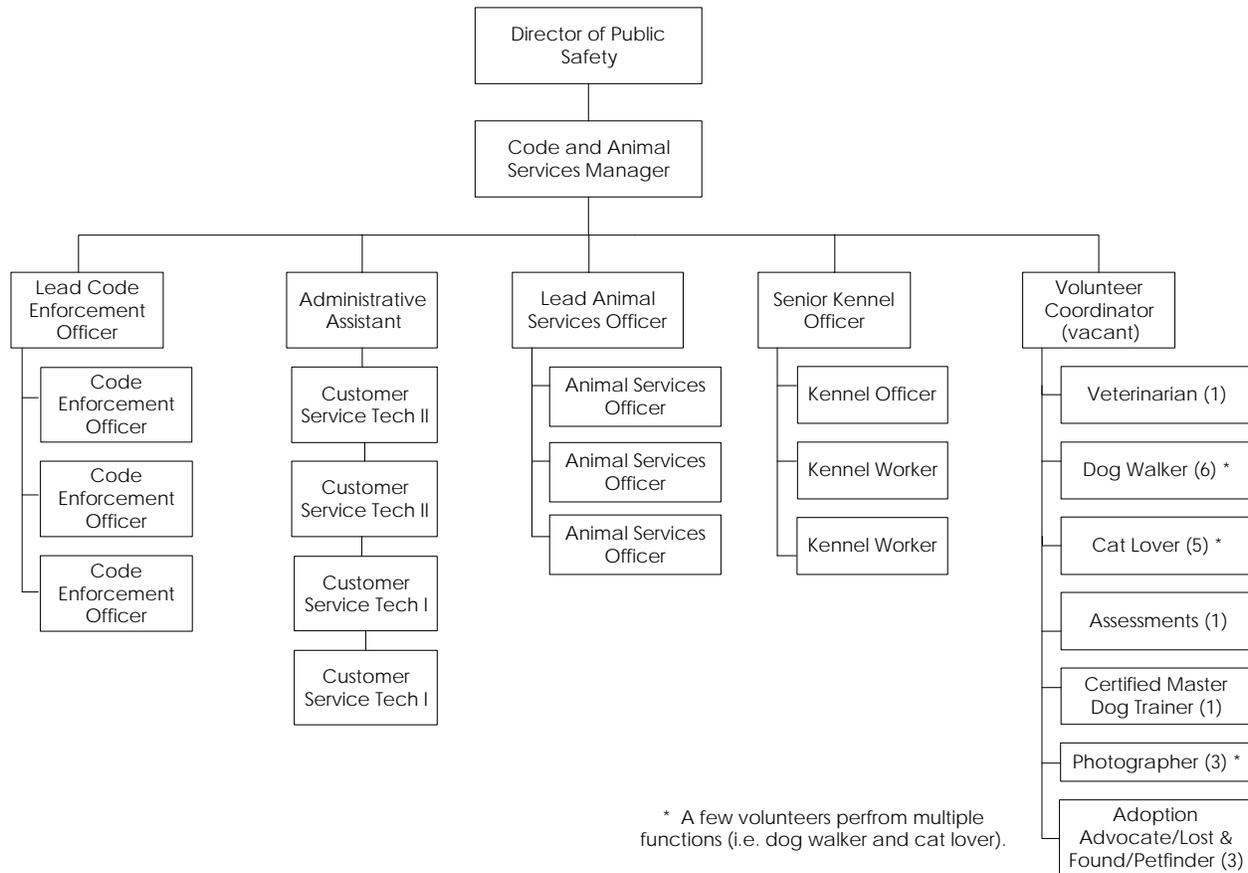
**Recommendation 10:** Consideration should be given to budgeting a sufficient amount of education dollars to allow for staff members to obtain required certifications and continuing education units to maintain those certifications.

**Public Safety Management Response 10:** The cost for the cremator operator training is approximately \$1600 regardless of the number of people that attend the training. This cost is prohibitive when only one employee requires the course and there are other employees that can perform this job function. In order to be good stewards of education funds, management

has delayed this training until such time as it becomes more affordable or absolutely essential for this employee to perform this job or when there are more employees that require the training. In the interim this duty is being performed by other certified staff. For accuracy, the kennel worker job description will be updated to reflect this.

Staffing Level

Currently, the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department has a total of 19 positions. Seven of these positions have responsibilities in Code Enforcement and Animal Services (management and office staff). Four have responsibilities in only Code Enforcement (the Code Enforcement Officers). Eight have responsibilities in only Animal Services (the Animal Officers and kennel staff). The volunteers have responsibilities in only Animal Services. The composition of the staff by position is depicted in organization chart below:



The Senior Kennel Officer, Kennel Officer and two Kennel Workers are responsible for the care and management of kennel operations. Per the UF report, based on the average daily population of 76 animals (dogs and cats), the average daily intake of 13 animals (dogs and cats), and the average daily euthanasia of nine animals (dogs and cats), the minimum kennel staffing level requirement estimate is six full-time equivalents.

**Formula: Average number of animals per day x 15 minutes per animal/60 minutes per hour = Hours per day**

Using this calculation, the UF team concluded that, "A minimum of 6 staff is required to complete the feeding and cleaning of dogs and cats in a 3 hour period before the shelter opens each morning. In addition, 2 staff members need to spend 3.25 hours each day to process newly admitted animals and 2.25 hours each day to perform euthanasia. **This represents a total of 8.5 hours [3 + 3.25 + 2.25] in each work day that a minimum of 6 staff must devote to care of the dogs and cats in the shelter. This does not account for time necessary for other species (rabbits, livestock, birds) in shelter care, or other duties such as supply inventories, daily rounds, pathway planning, tracing microchips, returning animals to owners, assisting potential adopters, contacting rescue groups, etc. Since it is unlikely that more staff positions will be created to meet the need, the dog and cat population must be reduced by effective population management strategies to bring the population within the capacity for humane care based on numbers of appropriate housing units and available staff."**

The current kennel staffing level of four full-time equivalents is below the recommended minimum of six full-time equivalents to humanely care for all of the kenneled animals. Therefore, on a daily basis, management utilizes volunteers and Animal Officers to assist with the care of the animals housed in the shelter. Animal Officers perform kennel rounds and euthanasia. One Animal Officer assists with animal placement.

During the interviews, many persons stated that a staff veterinarian is needed to assist with sick and injured animals and euthanasia decisions. The Audit Team did not analyze whether or not this position is necessary. However, it should be noted, that the Department is relying on volunteer donations of time in this area.

**Audit Comment 11:** The current kennel staffing level is 33% below the optimum capacity to humanely care for kenneled animals when that population reaches capacity of 76 animals (cats and dogs).

**Recommendation 11:** Consideration should be given to either: 1. increasing the kennel staffing level to six full-time equivalents or 2. maintaining the current kennel staffing level of four full-time equivalents and reducing the kennel population to meet that staffing level's capabilities. Pathway planning must be efficient and effective so as to minimize the animals' length of stay.

**Public Safety Management Response 11:** Management concurs with this recommendation. With four kennel staff the population of animals should be reduced to 48 animals per day, which would significantly lessen the amount of animals held and the length of stay for each animal. Management recommends increasing animal care staff to the recommended level of six and adding the position of Rescue, Adoption, and Volunteer Coordinator in order to humanely care for a population of 76 animals including providing the necessary recordkeeping, pathway planning, and marketing for the animals.

In the interim, Management has been and will continue to look at alternatives to partially support the kennel operations including:

- Continuing to use community Service workers when available; and
- Utilizing Animal Services Officers in the kennel as needed pending a final decision on their relocation to the Sheriff's Department; and
- Assessing the inmate labor program for applicability

If funding is not available for additional staff, population reduction will be phased in over the next 90 days.

More aggressive pathway planning would greatly assist with population management, however the current staffing does not allow for additional duties. Management recommends that when funding is available a staff position of "Rescue, Adoption and Volunteer Coordinator" be created and assigned the duty of aggressive pathway planning including marketing of animals beginning at the time of intake.

## Discussion Point 6: Compliance Testing

To determine whether or not actual intake through euthanasia practices align with best kennel practices, the Audit Team compared actual practices to a sample of criteria found in the temporary policies, Hernando County Code of Ordinances Chapter 6, the agreement with PetLuv, Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, recommendations made in the May 2010 VR&SS report, and recommendations made in the July 2011 UF end of fieldwork presentation.

To provide a layer of protection against data tampering, the Audit Team based testing upon the Department's April 20, 2012, database backup files created by and stored within the Technology Services Department records. Upon the Audit Team's request, Technology Services created from this backup a Kennel Audit Report listing animal intake cases in chronological order. The Audit Team utilized live data and hard copy records only when necessary. Sample testing was limited to the period from December 15, 2011, to April 20, 2012.

The Audit Team utilized the Kennel Audit Report to randomly select a sample of 30 animal cases by choosing the first 30 cases listed with an intake number ending in the number 4. The sample contained 1 bird; 11 cats; 15 dogs; 1 livestock; and 2 other. The Audit Team selectively increased the sample size by including the first three examples of animal neglect cases the complainant presented to the Board of County Commission during its regularly scheduled meeting on April 24, 2012. The full sample contained 33 animal cases.

### Compliance with Intake

Recordkeeping Practices – Due to a lack of adequate recordkeeping, the Audit Team was unable to substantiate whether or not the Department consistently or in fact performed the following tasks (which were specified in the VR&SS report and the UF end of fieldwork presentation):

- Intake behavioral evaluations.
- Identification affixed to animal.
- Attempts to contact owner.
- Animals scanned multiple times for a microchip.
- Accurate description of the animal.
- Veterinary evaluations.
- Core vaccines and parasite preventative administered to the animal upon intake.
- Animal's weight at time of intake.

Animal Identification - Based upon testing 27 of the 33 animal cases in the sample that applied to this particular test, it appears that:

- 67% of the animals had a photograph on file.
- 63% of the animals were accurately described on the medical record/kennel card.
- 11% of the animals were scanned multiple times for a microchip.
- 4% had a tag affixed to the collar. Test based strictly upon the photograph in the file.
- 22% of the animals were assigned a tag number in the system.

Core Vaccines and Parasite Prevention – Based upon 16 of the 33 animal cases in the sample of animals that were housed in the shelter, it appears that:

- 69% of the animals tested appeared to have core vaccinations:
  - 50% were administered core vaccinations by the Animal Services staff however, the date administered was not documented and 19% were vaccinated prior to intake (per owner surrender medical record)
- 22% were administered parasite prevention by the Animal Services staff; however, the date administered was not documented.

Health and Behavioral Evaluation Upon Intake – Based upon 23 of the 33 animal cases in the sample that applied to this particular test, it appears that:

- 100% of the animals' health condition was documented on the kennel card.
- 0% were weighed in during intake.
- 17% had documentation to support that a behavioral assessment was performed upon intake and 35% of the behavioral assessments were performed during the daily rounds procedure.

Daily Care & Kenneling – Based upon 18 of the 33 animal cases in the sample that applied to this particular test, it appears that:

- 100% were housed as appropriate (in dog kennel, cat cage, or stable).
- 88% of the animals kenneled were noted on weekly rounds sheets. The stabled animal was not found on any rounds sheet.
- 16% had supporting documentation that a veterinarian had either evaluated or performed a consultation on the animal.

Advertising and Outreach – Based upon 18 of the 33 animal cases in the sample that applied to this particular test, it appears that:

- 27% of the animals were advertised on the PetFinder website (Happy Tails). Only 5% of these were recorded in the Animal Services record.
- 5% had attempts made to contact the owner.  
17% were marketed to an adoption partner.

### **Compliance with Euthanasia**

Fifteen (15) of 33 animals in the sample were euthanized.

Approval Process - Both the VR&SS report and the PetLuv agreement address the need to have multiple staff members evaluate the animals, and if necessary, recommend euthanasia. Based upon testing, it appears that the euthanasia approval process is in compliance with the VR&SS report and the PetLuv agreement.

Compliance with Stray Hold Period – Based upon test results, it appears that stray animals are held for the period of time required by the PetLuv agreement and Hernando County Ordinance Chapter 6.

Animal Identity Check - For all applicable cases, personnel documented that the animal was scanned for a microchip prior to euthanasia.

Euthanasia Performed Timely - The VR&SS report did not define timely in regards to the minimal length of stay in the animal shelter prior to euthanasia. Based on the cases reviewed, the average number of days that the animals were housed prior to euthanasia was 11 days. The VR&SS report states: “...*rapid assessment is key to preventing animals from sitting in cages only to be euthanized later. Only those animals thought to have the potential to become adoptable quickly should be held as a special exception.*” The PetLuv agreement requires a minimum of seven (7) days. Hernando County Ordinance Chapter 6 requires five (5) days for strays, and there is no requirement for owner surrendered animals.

**Audit Comment 12:** The Department’s recordkeeping is inadequate. Data and records are missing or do not exist.

**Recommendation 12:** Consideration should be given to improving record keeping practices. Monitoring controls would be helpful in identifying when staff is falling behind or not complying with management record keeping standards.

**Public Safety Management Response 12:** Management concurs with this recommendation. Thorough record keeping is an essential component of any organization. Less thorough record keeping and monitoring controls are a direct result of staffing constraints. To improve upon record keeping and monitoring controls the following have already been implemented:

- Written Veterinary Assessment forms
- Written Behavioral Assessment forms
- Written Medication Forms
- Vaccination Log
- Monitoring Checklist for vaccinations and deworming, scanning, and id tags
- A Petfinder and Facebook checkbox were added to bldsys
- Customer ID’s are scanned into the computer upon intake of an animal
- Most documents are now scanned into the computer system
- A master book was created holding original kennel cards for animals currently at the shelter

Management will continue to work with Audit Services to create any additional monitoring controls that are needed.

## Discussion Point 7: Current Climate Compared to Last Climate Assessment

To assess what, if any, improvements have been made to the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department climate during the past year, the Audit Team compared the Department's current climate to the April 2011 Climate Assessment performed by the former County Administrator.

### Climate Assessment 4/21/2011:

Were the recommendations made in the assessment implemented?

- a. Compliance Merger: There was no notice of resistance to the merging of the Code and Animal, many of the administrative staff are cooperatively assisting in both functions. The officers of Code and Animal now share the same office space whereas creating a team atmosphere. The conference room is also now used as a work space for the volunteers. Other recommendations such as restructured floor plans are in progress and management by walking around is being performed
- b. Management Communication: A majority of the staff continue to feel that management is ineffective and is a general area of concern that needs to be addressed. Staff meetings and section meetings were being conducted following the Climate Assessment, but the section meetings were discontinued because they were not productive. Individual meetings are held within each work group and full staff meetings are held only when needed. It is not known if agendas for the meetings are being used. Discrimination and Harassment Training was given to Code and Animal in August 2010. The Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness (DiSC) training that was given to the Landfill was not budgeted in the Animal Services budget. A less costly training program would be a session on Dealing with Difficult People.
- c. Shih-Tzu Incident: The Climate Assessment recommended that additional protocols be discussed with staff and establish protocols for supporting groups. Protocols were developed for the volunteer program. An emergency drill was performed prior to an April 20, 2012 bomb threat which helped staff during the evacuation. There is no known media site visitation policy in effect.
- d. Pending Involvement of other agencies: Since the Climate Assessment, Animal Services lost two employees that were not replaced. There is a temporary agreement between Animals Services and Pet-Luv and guidelines had been followed. The recommendation for building a new building for the Human Society close to the Animals Services building at this time has not been built.
- e. Operation/Morale Issues: Cross training of the different jobs was observed during the inspections of the Audit team. The one Animal Services Officer that was mentioned in the Climate Assessment as having a caustic and abusive attitude toward fellow workers and who was allowed to make unilateral decisions related to assigned tasks is still at the facility. Interviewed employees still continue to complain to management about this employee's behavior. Animal Services continues to be under the direction of Public

Safety as recommended by the Climate Assessment. Recommend that management guide employees during available times and perform progressive discipline on employees when needed.

**Audit Comment 13:** The Climate Assessment recommendation A was fully implemented. Recommendation B was partially implemented with the setup of section meetings but, per management, was discontinued because the meetings were deemed unproductive. Recommendation C was partially implemented with the development of protocols for staff and the volunteer program. Recommendation D was partially implemented with the temporary agreement with PetLuv. Recommendation E was partially implemented with the Department remaining under the Public Safety Business Unit.

**Recommendation 13:**

Recommendation B – Consideration should be given to providing a training program on dealing with difficult people instead of The Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness (DISC) Training that the Landfill received.

Recommendation D – Management should determine whether or not to pursue erecting a building on the property to house a rescue organization. If management does want to pursue this recommendation then a timeline should be provided in the management response.

Recommendation E – Consideration should be given to managing and guiding employees with follow up of progressive disciplinary action when needed.

**Public Safety Management Response 13:**

Recommendation B: Management found DISC training to be cost prohibitive. The cost for the training was \$850 plus \$300 per employee. In place of DISC, management implemented a more cost effective training program that included several ½ day training sessions on a variety of topics including respectful workplace training. These ½ day training sessions will be ongoing on a quarterly basis. Management is currently working with Human Resources to pursue a training program on dealing with difficult people. If funding is available this training program will be held within 120 days.

Recommendation D: Management continues to feel its proposal (dating back to 2010) for a public/private partnership with a not-for-profit adoption orientated animal shelter, on the adjoining “Master Gardner’s” site would be advantageous and mutually beneficial. Progress toward the development of a RFP to move the public/private partnership forward has been placed on hold during the UF Report/Audit review process. Management intends to move the issue forward within 90 days of being authorized to do so by the County Administrator.

Recommendation E: Management concurs with this recommendation.

## Discussion Point 8: Complainant Accusations

On April 24, 2012, during a regularly scheduled Board of County Commission meeting, a volunteer made accusations that animals were inhumanely treated and neglected while in the custody of the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department, animals were wrongly quarantined with no access to the public, and kenneled dogs were not vaccinated upon intake. The complainant cited several incidents. To validate if the accusations were valid, the Audit Team tested the first three animal cases that the complainant presented to the Board of County Commissioners (three dogs Animal ID 1013857, 1013440, and 1013388). To test for validation, the Audit Team reviewed the Animal Services backup records, interviewed witnesses and performed a survey.

### Sample Item 1: Animal ID 1013857

Animal ID #	Description	Intake Date	Intake Type	Vaccinated & Parasite Prevention	Placement Pathway	Special Care	Disposition Date	Disposition Type
1013857	Pit Bull mix, 8 months old	4/13/12 at 15:02	Owner Surrender (by family member)	Not applicable. Dog not kenneled	Not applicable. Dog not kenneled	Not applicable. Dog not kenneled	4/13/12 at 15:24	Euthanized (space and fearful)

**Complainant:** *"Surrendered by cousin of owner. Dragged by neck without giving dog a chance to walk – no kind word or touch. Logged in, killed and logged out all within 12 minutes, even though according to statement from (the Public Safety Director) to (the complainant - names removed by the Audit Team) staff that made decision had no info on his adoptability (and there was no time for them to have that info): beautiful 8-mo-old, housetrained, great with kids and dogs, playful and affectionate. Never on euthanasia list. Shelter Director and (Public Safety Director – name removed by Audit Team) committed to give volunteers and rescues starting 3/20 never made known to rescues or public. 10 empty kennels, 40 kennels with only 1 dog. All kennels with only one-half occupied."*

**Witnesses:** On 4/13/12, sometime after 15:00, the dog was surrendered in the front lobby. A customer service representative interviewed a family member of the owner, data input the information, and created an animal record. The family member signed an Owner Surrender Statement and was also verbally told that the animal may be euthanized. The complainant was snapping a photo of the dog at about the same time a kennel worker entered the lobby and stated to the second family member that the kennels were full. That family member verbally acknowledged that she understood. The kennel worker placed a slip lead around the dog's neck. The kennel worker gave the dog a gentle tug to get it walking. The dog walked on its own from the family member through the kennel door. The dog walked on its own to the kennel facility and down the hallway to the evaluation team. The kennels were full at that time and the population needed to be reduced to provide space for any animals that may be taken in over the weekend. The evaluation team evaluated the dog and determined that it was fearful, unpredictable when handled (snapped at a kennel worker), and less adoptable than the other dogs on the euthanasia list. The dog was scanned for a microchip and none was found. The evaluation team and euthanasia team documented their results on the Cage Card. Staff members cited that if the temporary policies were not in effect, the kennel space would have been available, and the dog would have been given a day or two to relax before being reevaluated. The dog was euthanized approximately 15 minutes after it was surrendered. When all the dogs on the list were euthanized, 9 dog kennels were available.

**Animal and Payroll Records:** On 4/13/12 at 15:02, the electronic Bldsys record was created. At 15:05, the Kennel Occupancy record was created, at 15:08 the Surrender Statement and Cage Card were created. At 15:17 the Kennel Occupancy record was updated with the kennel information, and at 15:24 it was closed out with the euthanasia record.

On 4/13/12 at 14:19 the Daily Rounds Action List was updated by the Manager. The document indicates that all the dog kennels were occupied and some occupied by more than one dog. At 15:00 there appears to have been 71

dogs in the population (there are 58 dog kennels). On that same day at 16:30, the Manager updated the Daily Rounds Action List. Audit Team test of the kennel occupancy record found that at the end of the day, nine (9) kennels were available and eight (8) were occupied by more than one dog (this is after the euthanasia process was completed for the day) for a total population of 62 dogs. Per the temporary policy and agreement with PetLuv, the weekend empty kennel maximum is 15. Nine (9) empty kennels is well below the 15 maximum.

The euthanasia team members electronically clocked out of the Executime timekeeping program at 15:44 (Kennel Supervisor) and 16:00 (Kennel Worker). This electronic payroll records were reviewed by the Clerk of Circuit Court's Payroll Supervisor to ensure that they had not been tampered with, adjusted, or changed since the records were created.

**PetLuv Agreement:** The temporary agreement with PetLuv states that, *"A written policy shall be adopted and enforced giving adoptable (owner surrender animals) OSA a minimum 7-day holding period before being euthanized. Exception: when space necessitates euthanasia, a less adoptable OSA with less than 7 days shall not be kept at the expense of a more adoptable stray. This exception shall apply to a large-scale owner surrender as well as single animals. The overriding consideration is that adoptable animals should be euthanized only because there is no room, regardless of how the animal was acquired. The secondary consideration is that less adoptable animals should be euthanized first, regardless of how the animal was acquired...A written policy should be adopted and enforced requiring a minimum of two HCAS (Hernando County Animal Services) personnel to evaluate and document the adoptability of each animal and to recommend euthanasia when necessary. This will give each animal two looks and two chances for survival. Only obviously unadoptable animals should be recommended for immediate euthanasia (e.g., aggressive dogs, feral cats, grossly disfigured or acutely injured/sick animals)...A written policy shall be adopted and enforced establishing a maximum number of cages to be empty to allow for daily intakes. This number shall be 10 for dogs...A larger number (10 + 2.5 cages for each closed HCAS facility day...shall be allowed for dogs during ...closures (weekends and holidays)..."*

**Audit Comment 14:** The Audit Team was not able to find any supporting documentation, video recording, or witness that substantiated the complainant's accusation that the dog was mistreated by being dragged by the neck without allowing the dog to walk on its own. The complainant, witnesses and documentation agree that the dog was quickly evaluated by two State of Florida Euthanasia Certified staff members. The complainant and evaluation team members disagree on the dog's temperament and adoptability. The complainant, witnesses and documentation agree that the dog was euthanized less than one half hour after being owner surrendered. The complainant and witnesses agree that at some time between 14:30 and 16:30 there were nine (9) or 10 unoccupied kennels and that some of the occupied kennels housed more than one dog. The documentation supports that there were nine (9) kennels vacant after the euthanasia procedure was complete which was well below the 15 maximum stipulated in the PetLuv agreement. The Audit Team could not substantiate whether or not this dog was more or less adoptable than other dogs housed at the facility at that time.

**Recommendation 14:** To provide a better record of how the assessment team determines adoptability, consideration should be given to implementing adoption assessment criteria (i.e., health, history of aggression, behavioral issues, etc.) and an evaluation rating for each of those criteria.

**Public Safety Management Response 14:** Management concurs with this recommendation. The computer software has already been upgraded with the ability to provide a numerical adoptability rating for each animal. A draft of the criteria is in progress and requires testing to determine whether the numerical scores based on the criteria provide an accurate reflection of adoptability and translate appropriately to the three pathways: Adoptable, Rescue Only, or Unadoptable. The numerical rating and pathways will be based upon the Animal Sheltering Guidelines, UF recommendations, and current resources (staffing and funding). The procedure will be completed and tested within 90 days. If the testing is successful, it will be fully implemented within 120 days.

**Sample Item 2: Animal ID 1013440**

Animal ID #	Description	Intake Date	Intake Type	Vaccinated & Parasite Prevention	Placement Pathway	Special Care	Disposition Date
1013440	Rat Terrier, age unknown, mammary tumor	3/20/12	Stray	Yes (date not documented)	3/23/12 Advertised on Petfinder	Dog given blanket and crate.  Daily Rounds Action List notation, " <i>suffering, aged, urine and feces on self? Open mammary tumor...</i> " veterinarian consultation 3/26/12	3/26/12 Euthanized

**Complainant:** *"Old dog, came in with wound. Left to bleed and slowly die for 6 days, without treatment, even though Shelter Director was told of suffering by Kennel Worker (name removed by Audit Team) and volunteer (name removed by Audit Team); Director said she was waiting for vet to come in."*

**Witnesses:** The dog came into the shelter with a mammary tumor. The dog was not bleeding and was alert the week of her occupying a kennel. The dog was advertised for adoption. On the morning of the last day of the dog's life, during the morning daily rounds, the Manager noticed that the dog did not appear well and may be suffering. The dog's blanket had no blood on it but it did have a feces. The Manager asked a Kennel Officer to change the dog's bedding. The Kennel Officer removed the crate with the dog laying in it, and went to a back room to change the bedding. A volunteer saw the Kennel Officer remove the dog and thought the dog had died. The Manager went to her office and called the volunteer veterinarian to ask him to provide medical care. When the Kennel Officer returned to the dog's kennel, he placed the dog in an inside location. The volunteer went to the kennel and checked the kennel card. The volunteer stated that she saw the dog and said it appeared to be comatose and was hemorrhaging. She said there was a five inch round stain of bright red blood on the blanket. The volunteer asked the Kennel Officer what was happening with the dog. The Kennel Officer replied that the dog was not eating or drinking and that he had reported it to the Manager. When the Manager returned to the kennel area to complete her rounds, the Kennel Officer said to her that a volunteer and an Animal Officer were just there. They were upset and wanted to talk to the Manager about the dog. Another Animal Officer heard that the dog was bleeding and went to check on the dog. That Animal Officer saw the dog in the kennel and did not see any blood on the blanket. The dog was not bleeding. The volunteer went to the Manger and communicated to her that it was inhumane to keep the dog alive since the dog was very sick. The Manager replied that she was waiting for the veterinarian to examine the dog. The veterinarian recommended euthanasia. The dog was euthanized that same day.

**Animal Records:** Intake notes cite that, *"this cat (data input error) is old and has sores on it...this is a rat terrier."* The 3/26/12 veterinarian kennel notes state that, *"the dog is not eating, drinking, has not gotten up since it's been here, has open mammary tumors, body temp is very cold and clammy, put to sleep."*

**Audit Comment 15:** The complainant and the witnesses agree that the dog had a wound or mammary tumor and may have been uncomfortable. The records show that a veterinarian was consulted on the sixth day. The complainant and witnesses do not agree as to whether or not the wound was bleeding and at what point in time the dog's health deteriorated. There is no known record showing if pain or other medication was given to the dog.

**Recommendation 15:** Consideration should be given to improving recordkeeping (photograph wounds, health condition, date and dosage of any medications administered, behavior, weight, eating habits, etc.). Pain management and veterinarian care should be given as soon as necessary to minimize suffering.

**Public Safety Management Response 15:** Management concurs with this recommendation and has partially implemented improvements. A medication form has been completed and is in use documenting any ongoing medication given to every animal. One time medications are listed on the staff card in the

Master Book. A monitoring checklist was created to ensure that all animals are vaccinated and dewormed or it is documented that this is unable to be done. Behavior is documented on daily rounds assessment forms. All staff are empowered to list any animal with minor health concerns that do not require immediate intervention on the veterinarian's form for weekly rounds. All staff are empowered to notify the Senior Kennel Officer or Manager or if they are unavailable to contact the veterinarian directly for any health condition that requires immediate care or consultation. Management will incorporate this into written procedures within 90 days.

Currently there is no funding for flea prevention for animals and funding for medical care is very limited. The shelter currently relies on volunteer veterinarians to provide free evaluation and assessment of animals. Management recommends that a full or part-time veterinarian be hired, along with two certified veterinary technicians (in lieu of additional kennel staff) to provide the necessary medical care and documentation for the animals at the shelter. Additionally, Management recommends additional funding for medical supplies including medications, flea control, and the necessary equipment for the staff veterinarian and certified technicians to provide care for the animals. In the alternative, Management recommends pursuing a public-private partnership with other shelters for shared veterinary services. The addition of a veterinary team to the staff will provide quality medical oversight and care for all animals in the care of the County.

**Sample Item 3: Animal ID 1013388**

Animal ID #	Description	Intake Date	Intake Type	Vaccinated & Parasite Prevention	Placement Pathway	Special Care	Disposition Date
1013388	Dachshund, old, blind, deaf	3/19/12	Stray	Yes (date not documented)	Advertised on Petfinder	Special diet, good appetite	3/26/12 Rescued

**Complainant:** *"3/19/12 – Came in “covered with fleas” according to kennel card. 3/20 – complainant (Audit Team removed name), volunteer, donated 19 Capstar flea pills to Shelter director in meeting with Chief (Audit Team removed name), mentioning Scotch. 3/26 – Scotch still “covered with fleas” when rescued.”*

**Witnesses:** When the dog came into the kennel it was covered in fleas. While in the kennel the dog just slept. Per kennel staff, under normal circumstances the dog would have been euthanized to put the animal out of its misery. The veterinarian recommended that the dog be euthanized due to severe disease. A small group of volunteers overruled the veterinarian’s recommendation and asked that the dog not be euthanized (placed an euthanasia hold on the dog). The dog was released to a rescue. The rescue noted that the dog had fleas. The rescue took the dog to a local veterinarian who recommended euthanasia as the dog had no quality of life. None of the witnesses could remember if the dog was given any flea medication.

At around that same time period, a Kennel Worker and the Senior Kennel Officer saw the complainant drop a Capstar (flea medication) pill into the kennel expecting the dog to eat it. None of the witnesses could recall if this was the same dog as mentioned in the accusation or another dog. The Kennel Worker and Senior Kennel Officer entered the kennel and administered the medication.

That same week, the Manager saw the complainant in a kennel medicating a dog that had already been medicated by kennel staff. The Manager explained to the complainant that this could result in overdose and does not allow the kennel staff to record the medication into the record or to regulate medication schedules. The Manager asked the complainant to give her any medications she may have and that she would direct the kennel staff to properly administer the medication, as applicable. A short time later, the complainant gave an Animal Officer 19 Capstar pills. The Animal Officer gave the pills to the Manager. The Manager gave the pills to the Kennel Staff with instructions to administer them as applicable.

**Animal Records:** Intake notes cite *"The dog was found on Horselake Road by the school board in the pond. The dog is elderly and looks to have cataracts. No collar the dog appears to be full of fleas."* The Senior Kennel Officer indicated that the dog is old, needs a special diet, but has a good appetite. The Daily Rounds Record of 3/22/12 to 3/23/12 shows rescue hold on dog until 3/25/12. There is no known record of Capstar being administered to the dog.

**Audit Comment 16:** The complainant and the witnesses agree that the dog was old, had fleas, and may not have been given any flea medication.

**Recommendation 16:** Consideration should be given to improving recordkeeping (photograph wounds, health condition, date and dosage of any medications administered, behavior, weight, eating habits, etc.). Pain management and veterinarian care should be given as soon as necessary to minimize suffering.

**Public Safety Management Response 16:** Management concurs with this recommendation and has partially implemented improvements. A medication form has been completed and is in use documenting any ongoing medication given to every animal. One time medications are listed on the staff card in the Master Book. A monitoring checklist was created to ensure that all animals are vaccinated and dewormed or it is documented that this is unable to be done. Behavior is documented on daily rounds assessment forms. All staff are empowered to list any animal with minor health concerns that do not require immediate intervention on the veterinarian’s form for weekly rounds. All staff are empowered to notify the Senior Kennel Officer or Manager or if they are unavailable to contact the veterinarian directly

for any health condition that requires immediate care or consultation. Management will incorporate this into written procedures within 90 days.

Currently there is no funding for flea prevention for animals and funding for medical care is very limited. The shelter currently relies on volunteer veterinarians to provide free evaluation and assessment of animals. Management recommends that a full or part-time veterinarian be hired, along with two certified veterinary technicians (in lieu of additional kennel staff) to provide the necessary medical care and documentation for the animals at the shelter. Additionally, Management recommends additional funding for medical supplies including medications, flea control, and the necessary equipment for the staff veterinarian and certified technicians to provide care for the animals. In the alternative, Management recommends pursuing a public-private partnership with other shelters for shared veterinary services. The addition of a veterinary team to the staff will provide quality medical oversight and care for all animals in the care of the County.

## **Discussion Point 9: Volunteer Program**

To assess the Board of County Commission's volunteer program for all departments under its control, the Code Enforcement and Animal Services volunteer program, and the Board of County Commission's Volunteer Policy (Policy No. 28-01), the Audit Team interviewed the Community Relations Coordinator, Code Enforcement and Animal Services' management, employees, and volunteers, and reviewed the volunteer packets.

The Community Relations Coordinator provided a workflow which she feels is appropriate for processing new volunteers.

1. All applications received in County Administration will be forwarded to the appropriate department as indicated on the application (if a specific department or activity is indicated) for review and consideration by that department.
2. Departments will review and consider each volunteer application received and contact the individual to indicate a) their services are not needed at this time, but they will keep the application on file; or b) they would like the person to come in to discuss their interest in volunteering. If a volunteer is not needed, the department should notify County Administration/Human Resources so they can reallocate the volunteer application to another department.
3. If the department is interested in the volunteer, they should arrange to interview the applicant, discuss the services needed, and the applicant's expectations then determine if the applicant is suited for the work that needs to be done.
4. If both are in agreement to proceed, the department must make sure the applicant has fully completed the Volunteer Application, including the Background Release Form and the Waiver of Liability and Release Form.
5. Department should contact the past employer references. If applicable, send the completed application (including the two forms) to County Administration/Human Resources for completion of the background check and preparation of ID badge.
6. If background check is clear, the ID badge is made, email confirming background check is sent to department by County Administration and the ID badge is picked up by the department representative from Human Resources.
7. On volunteer's first day, department provides an orientation and gets volunteer's signature on the Policy Acknowledgement Form as well as acknowledgement of any additional departmental handbooks, policies or procedures as applicable.
8. Department sends a copy of the signed acknowledgement forms to County Administration/Human Resources.
9. Volunteer is now ready to begin work.

This review disclosed the following strengths and weaknesses of the volunteer program:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Administrative Services Level – Written Application	Administrative Services Level - Lax Background Check
Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department Level – Written Job Description	Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department Level – Lax Management Oversight/Control
Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department Level – Two Professional Volunteers	Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department Level – No established schedule
Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department Level – Large Volunteer Pool	

Upon review of the Administrative Services level volunteer program, the Audit Team discovered that Administrative Services performs a local public records background check. Whereas Administrative Services for the Board of County Commission currently does the following background checks for each newly hired employee:

- Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) – Criminal;
- Sexual Predator;
- Local Public Records;
- Worker’s Compensation Screening;
- Motor Vehicle Report (MVR);
- Pre-Employment Drug Screening.

Based upon interviews and current events, it appears that the Code Enforcement and Animal Services Department Volunteer Program lacks proper management oversight and controls. Many individuals cited a lack of management support and a need for better communication and coordination between management, staff members, and volunteers. They want management to be more responsive when dealing with difficult individuals and situations. The survey found similar results. This lack of management oversight and direction has made it difficult for staff and volunteers to effectively perform their tasks.

There is very little routine scheduling of volunteer assignments. A professional volunteer explained that due to a lack of routine scheduling and negative energy, she has seen an increase in dog stress, hair loss, and deterioration in temperament. She explained that dogs are creatures of habit and that there are stressors on dogs. Dogs need a regular schedule (walking,

feeding, kennel cleaning, rest periods) and; therefore, management should not allow humans to come and go at any time.

**Audit Comment 17:** The Board of County Commission's Volunteer Program lacks proper background screening for evaluating potential volunteers.

A lack of management oversight and scheduling of the Animal Services volunteers has undermined the effectiveness of the volunteer program.

**Recommendation 17:** Consideration should be given to adopting the following corrective measures to enhance the volunteer program:

#### Administrative Services Level

- Improve the application process to include employment/volunteer history for three past employers or places volunteered at along with a contact person and description of tasks/responsibilities.
- Enhance the background screening process similar to what is required for the Board of County Commission's new employees. Ensure that all background screenings are performed prior to volunteer's first day.
- Include the Code of Conduct HR07-01 in the volunteer packet.
- Ensure the signed Volunteer Acknowledgement and Receipt form is received by the Community Relations Coordinator in a timely manner.

#### Code Enforcement and Animal Services Level

- Establish a set schedule for the volunteer assignments to alleviate undue stress on the animals.
- Establish appropriate facility access controls based on the volunteer's assignment.
- Management should enforce volunteer policies and procedures in the same manner as they enforce other Department policies and procedures.
- Revise the Volunteer Handbook & Procedures to address the following elements:
  - To ensure the volunteers understand that they are to perform duties as set forth in their job description and to abide by the policies and procedures of the Animal Services function.
  - Address the appropriate use of the facilities equipment and supplies.
  - Include a section on public relations.

**Administrative Services Management Response 17:**

- The Volunteer Application form was revised and now requires information on past three employers.
- In addition to the Hernando County case search done on the Hernando County Clerk of Circuit Court's website to determine if there are any disqualifying offenses, we are now searching the FDLE Florida Sexual Offender and Predator database.
- The Volunteer Orientation Packet has been revised to add the code of conduct policy.
- The Volunteer Orientation Packet has been revised to add the code of conduct policy.

**Public Safety Management Response 17:** Management concurs with this recommendation. A successful volunteer program requires continuous management including selection of quality volunteers, training and development, scheduling and organization of duties, and proper supervision. Current staffing and workload prohibit these additional duties from being added to current staff. Management recommends not expanding the volunteer program until such time as funding is available for a staff position of "Rescue, Adoption and Volunteer Coordinator" to provide the necessary oversight for the program to run efficiency and effectively. Exceptions may be made at Management's discretion for high value and professional volunteers on an as needed basis.

#### **Discussion Point 10: Town Hall Meeting - Animal Welfare Resources**

To obtain a global perspective of the local animal welfare resources and the challenges faced by these providers, on May 8, 2012, the Audit Team attended an animal welfare town hall meeting at the Palace Grand facility in Spring Hill. The panel included a representative from each of the following organizations: Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Hernando County Public Safety Department, Compassion For All His Creatures, Humane Society of the Nature Coast, and Animal Sterilization and Prevention (ASAP) veterinarian clinic. During this meeting, local rescue groups presented their mission statements and the services they provide for the homeless animals. The panel and audience discussed challenges, concerns, workable suggestions, and solutions. Two common challenges were: obtaining sufficient donations or revenue to cover costs, and maintaining an adequate number of volunteers to help provide necessary animal care. Several attendees encouraged the Hernando County Public Safety Director to consider implementing Saturday hours.

## Appendix A

### Public Safety Summary of Management Response

Management recommends operating Animal Services in accordance with the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters which provide the best practices for the humane care of animals. The recommendations made by Management in this audit provide the foundation for the required staffing and funding resources to implement best practices.

The Animal Services Division has undergone a tremendous amount of change in the past four years, including working under four different directors, a budget reduction of 43.3%, a staffing reduction of 7.5 FTE's and a merger with the Code Enforcement Department (which has also experienced reduced funding and staffing). The merger included the cross training of the Manager and Support staff to serve both functions. Despite these reductions the Department has maintained the average daily census of animals at the same or greater level.

The current staffing level is well below recommended minimums. The UF report estimated the minimum staffing level for the kennel at six full time equivalents for an average daily census of 76 animals. There are currently four Kennel Staff. The Florida Animal Control Association's recommended staffing level for Animal Services Officers is nine full time equivalents. There are currently four Animal Services Officers.

In order to implement best practices identified by the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, there are three options available:

- 1) Reduce the workload by:
  - a) Decreasing the number of animals to an average daily census of 48 animals, which is the level acceptable for providing humane care with existing staff; and
  - b) Eliminating non-essential services.
- 2) Increase the number of staff to the level necessary for providing humane care and to perform the additional recommendations for medical care, pathway planning, marketing of adoptable animals, etc.
- 3) A combination of the above two approaches.

Management's recommendation for additional staff includes:

- One Rescue, Adoption and Volunteer Coordinator that would be the third person assigned to the daily rounds team, be responsible for pathway planning and marketing of adoptable animals to adopters and rescues, and be responsible for managing a volunteer program; and
- One Veterinarian to provide necessary medical care and oversight regarding the health of the animals at the shelter; and

- Two Certified Veterinary Technicians (or two Kennel Workers in the alternative) to provide medical care and documentation, as well as assisting with kennel duties.

If the above staffing recommendations are implemented, the shelter can provide humane care for an average daily census of 76 animals. Management further recommends reduction or elimination of non-essential services such as only accepting owner surrender animals as space allows.

Management has already implemented multiple improvements. Below is a timeline for implementation of additional recommendations:

<b><u>Within 30 days:</u></b>
Daily rounds reassigned to Manager and Senior Kennel Officer to be completed 2-3 times per week
<b><u>Within 90 days:</u></b>
Reduce animal population to 48 animals or increase kennel staff to six employees
Development and testing of pathway procedures and numerical rating system
Move forward plans for public/private partnership with humane shelter upon direction
Written procedure for obtaining veterinary care and administering pain medication
Permanent intake and euthanasia procedure
Market adoptable animals as soon as possible after intake based on available staffing
<b><u>Within 120 days:</u></b>
Implementation of pathway procedures and numerical rating system if testing is successful
Increasing the size of the holding cages if funding allows
Hold training on Dealing with Difficult People if funding allows
<b><u>Ongoing:</u></b>
Development of permanent, written procedures
Reviewing the survey and interview results in order to improve the identified areas of concern.
<b><u>When funding/staffing available:</u></b>
Hire a Rescue, Adoption and Volunteer Coordinator to be assigned as third person on daily rounds team, manage volunteer program, and conduct pathway planning.
Hire two kennel workers in order to humanely care for a population of 76 animals
Cremator Operator training for one employee
Flea prevention program
Hiring of veterinarian and two veterinary technicians (in lieu of two kennel staff) to provide comprehensive medical care to animals