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March 26, 2007

RECEIVED
MAR 27 2007
LANE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Faye Stewart
Lane County
125 East 8th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401

RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR NO KILL PHILOSOPHY IN LANE COUNTY

Dear Commissioner Stewart,

AFSCME (the Union) strongly urges the Board to consider the following before adopting a desirable no kill philosophy in Lane County. For the record, the Union is supportive of a no kill philosophy. However, implementation of the specifics in the resolution **conflict** with both our Labor Agreement to provide service and the State of Oregon's Revised Statutes, which specifically govern labor relations for public sector employers.

Before the Board ventures forward with a new philosophy which, in my opinion, will be difficult to fund, the Board of Commissioners should examine and prioritize health and welfare issues for LCARA staff, which has not been done because of a lack of funding. Please consider whether the organization has the resources to functionally implement another unfunded resolution, i.e., who will train, assist, monitor and advise the "volunteers". It takes paid staff time to deal with volunteers.

The union has consistently argued that more positions are needed at LCARA, but that has not occurred due to lack of funding. Our members work around the clock, on call, with far fewer staff than is needed to accomplish the high work load. The stress level is always excessive in that work environment: please keep in mind that LCARA is a regulatory agency, where many unhappy, unfriendly citizens go to claim their animals. At the same time, others are there to adopt an animal, occupying the same waiting room as those who are surrendering aggressive animals. LCARA staff is often caught in the middle and must react quickly to protect themselves and others. Where will the volunteers go during these times?

These are just a few of the many functional issues that should be reviewed before the flood gates of volunteerism are opened and longstanding health and welfare issues of our hardworking AFSCME members get swept away in the current of a special interest group's political agenda.

In addition, the Board should consider the legal issue of replacing or contracting out bargaining unit work with "volunteers". AFSCME has been and will remain steadfast in defending its contractual right to maintain bargaining unit work. Any attempts to circumvent or replace existing working conditions for bargaining unit members without a written agreement to do so will meet with an immediate and appropriate legal response from my office.

Gentlemen there is certainly considerable middle ground to support not killing adoptable animals. This Union wants to be part of the solution and instrumental in developing a protocol. The Union hopes you all will consider our position on this matter, and that a resolution can be sought that allows us to continue a harmonious relationship in these very trying times.

Sincerely,



Jim Steiner
Council Representative
Oregon AFSCME
Council 75

cc: Commissioners
Cheryl Dyer