



**Item:** Resolution 9749, Creating an Animal Shelter/Enforcement Advisory Committee

**From:** City Manager's Office

**Initiated By:** City Staff

**Presented By:** Cheryl Patton, Assistant City Manager

**Action Requested:** Adoption of Resolution 9749

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**Suggested Motion:**

1. Commissioner moves:

“I move that the City Commission adopt Resolution 9749.”

2. Mayor calls for a second, discussion, inquiries from the public, and calls the vote.

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**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends the adoption of Resolution 9749, creating an Animal Shelter/Enforcement Advisory Committee.

**Background:**

The City of Great Falls did not renew a contract with the Humane Society of Cascade County (HSCC) and resumed operation of the City owned Animal Shelter and all municipal animal code enforcement duties in July of 2007 following several months of attempting to resolve citizen complaints and performance issues with the contractor. The decision by the City has been a contentious and divisive issue in the community.

The City Commission has advised the community that it does not intend for the City to continue to operate the shelter in the future but intends to contract for shelter operation when an acceptable contractor can be found willing to provide the level of service desired by the City. In the meantime, the animal shelter and all animal code enforcement operations are being provided by the police department. Staff is working to assess the accurate level of financial support which will be necessary for either the City to continue to provide the services or for support of a contractor.

At the same time, The Animal Foundation (the Foundation) is raising money to construct a new animal shelter. With the City back in the shelter and enforcement business, the Foundation is

asking for a decision as to the City's willingness to participate in 50% of a new shelter, total cost estimated at \$3 Million with the City's share at \$1.5 Million. If the City does not wish to participate in the costs of the new shelter then the City would have to find a way to hold animals picked up under municipal ordinance which could include continuing to operate some functions out of the existing shelter.

An Animal Shelter/Enforcement Advisory Committee is recommended to assist the Commission and staff in resolving all the various issues relating to shelter and enforcement operations, financial responsibility, citizen satisfaction and animal welfare. If this resolution is adopted, the Committee would be made up of seven members appointed by the City Commission. Two members would be recommended by the HSCC and two members would be recommended by the Foundation. Three additional members would come from the elected Neighborhood Council Members.

The Committee's charge is to find the best course of action for the community to provide humane treatment of animals in the care and responsibility of the City of Great Falls within the limits of the City's financial means.

The Animal Shelter/Enforcement Advisory Committee would meet two times each month for up to 3 years. The Committee would have a timeline approved by the Commission for making certain critical recommendations. Staff would be assigned by the City Manager to work with the Committee and would include the Police Chief and one Police Captain; the Fiscal Services Director and the Budget Officer.

**Concurrences:** The Police and Fiscal Services departments agree with recommending this resolution.

**Fiscal Impact:** The fiscal impact of creating an Animal Shelter/Enforcement Advisory Committee will be minimal with staff time the most significant City contribution.

However, the annual fiscal impact of the City continuing to operate the Animal Shelter and providing animal enforcement is anticipated to be \$622,000 for FY 2009. The City is experiencing related revenue for FY 2008 of \$136,000.

If a new shelter is built, which the City would use, there will be a need for the City to participate in the cost of the constructing the new shelter. The amount requested by the Animal Foundation is \$1.5 million. This will not include annual operating expenses.

The Animal Shelter Advisory Committee will be charged with recommending an appropriate level of City financial support to the new shelter and to the City's ongoing responsibility of enforcing the municipal animal ordinances.

**Alternatives:** The City Commission can choose to deny Resolution 9749 or the City Commission could choose to amend the resolution to designate a different membership composition.

**Attachments/Exhibits:** Resolution 9749