



City of Denton

City Hall
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, Texas
www.cityofdenton.com

AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Animal Services

DCM: Cassey Ogden, Deputy City Manager

DATE: May 20, 2025

SUBJECT

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction on the proposed Animal Services Responsible Euthanasia Policy and the proposed Animal Services rates and fees.

BACKGROUND

Responsible Euthanasia Policy

Denton Animal Services (DAS) is charged with providing for public safety in relation to animals in the community, and the welfare of animals in its care at the Linda McNatt Animal Care and Control Center. To that end, DAS has developed a Responsible Euthanasia Policy that strictly limits euthanasia to cases of severe health, behavioral issues, or public safety concerns—and only after all humane alternatives have been fully explored.

Recognizing the absence of a standardized euthanasia decision making process in the animal welfare industry, DAS conducted a comprehensive review of best practices from advocacy groups, municipal shelters, rescues, and industry experts. The resulting policy has been tailored to meet DAS's specific operational requirements and animal welfare goals, while remaining compliant with state and local regulations.

Key elements of the policy include establishing limits for euthanasia, including a prohibition of the euthanasia of animals on days the shelter is closed to the public, prohibition of euthanasia due to space constraints, and establishing the categories and criteria for when a euthanasia decision should be made. Additionally, the policy establishes a review process to consider the animal's condition, prognosis, and DAS' ability to provide adequate care. The Review Team, consisting of medical and animal welfare professionals, is responsible for reviewing each individual animal and providing their expertise to ensure the best course of action for the animal.

To facilitate the review process, the Welfare Assessment Tool was developed. These flow charts ensure all decision points and options have been considered and exhausted for every animal who is being considered for euthanasia. A draft of the policy, along with the Welfare Assessment Tool, was reviewed with internal staff, contracted veterinary staff, and subject matter experts from Best Friends Animal Society, Austin Pets Alive, and Shelter Savvy.

On November 13, 2024, DAS staff presented a draft of the policy to the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee and solicited feedback. No changes or edits were recommended by the committee at that time.

The Responsible Euthanasia Policy has additionally been reviewed by the City's Legal Department and the Policy Review Committee, and was presented again to the Animal Shelter Advisory Board on May 14,

2025. The Animal Shelter Advisory Committee recommended approval of the policy with a 6 – 0 vote. A final draft of the policy is attached as **Exhibit 3**.

Schedule of Fees

Animal Services' schedule of fees outlines the cost to the public for adoptions and services such as reclaim after impoundment and quarantine. The current fee schedule was adopted in 2013 by Ordinance 2013-157 (**Exhibit 4**). The proposed schedule of fees has been updated to reflect the recent Chapter 6 Animals Ordinance changes, reflect current practices, and offset an increase in expenses for goods and services.

In developing the revised fee schedule, Animal Services conducted a thorough review of the existing fees including conducting an informal internal cost study. Staff also benchmarked the fees against those of other municipal shelters to ensure market competitiveness.

Additionally, under the City's contract with Denton County, Animal Services provides holding and dispositioning services for County animals, with associated fees charged to the County. The updated fee schedule includes revisions to these rates to better reflect rising operational costs.

The proposed Schedule of Fees was presented to the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee on May 14, 2025, and was recommended for approval with a 5-0 vote. The proposed Schedule of Fees is attached as **Exhibit 5**.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests feedback on the proposed Responsible Euthanasia Policy and the Schedule of Fees in anticipation of returning to City Council for adoption of each item in June 2025.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (COUNCIL, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS)

On May 14, 2025, a draft of the Responsible Euthanasia Policy was presented to the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee who recommended approval of the policy with a 6-0 vote.

On November 13, 2024, a draft of the Responsible Euthanasia Policy was presented to the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee and feedback solicited. No changes or edits were recommended by the committee at that time.

The current fee schedule was adopted on June 18, 2013, by Ordinance 2013-157. The proposed Schedule of Fees was presented to the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee on May 14, 2025, and was recommended for approval with a 5-0 vote.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1- Agenda Information Sheet

Exhibit 2- Interlocal Agreement 2025

Exhibit 3 – DRAFT Responsible Euthanasia Policy

Exhibit 4- Ordinance 2013-157

Exhibit 5- Schedule of Fees

Respectfully submitted:

Nikki Sassenus, Animal Services Director