



City of Denton

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

AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Human Resources

DCM: Cassey Ogden, Deputy City Manager

DATE: June 16th 2025

SUBJECT

Consider approval of a resolution of the City of Denton establishing Policy “Responsible Euthanasia” to establish humane animal euthanasia decision making standards for Animal Services; and declaring an effective date.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This action supports the Key Focus Area: Strengthen Community and Quality of Life.

POLICY PROCESS BACKGROUND

The City’s Code of Ordinances, Section 2-28, “Policies, Procedures, and Directives,” establishes the definitions and approval processes for policy documents. The City of Denton maintains two types of policy documents: Policies and Administrative Directives.

- **Policies** must be adopted and approved by the City Council. A “Policy” means a statement of overall philosophy and direction, describing goals to be accomplished and programs to be established. To revise a Policy Statement, the City Council must approve the revision.
- **Administrative Directives** are approved and issued by the City Manager to city employees to establish rules and regulations concerning internal operational matters. Administrative Directives do not require City Council review or approval for enactment or revision.

City Council will be provided with a redline version of policies and directives that are updated from a previous version. If a policy or directive is a new document a redlined version will not be available.

POLICY REVISION/BACKGROUND

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 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, are 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, Autin Pets Alive, and Shelter Savvy.

The proposed policy was presented to the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee on November 13, 2024 and again on May 14, 2025. At that time, the committee voted 6 to 0 to recommend approval of the policy.

The Responsible Euthanasia Policy has additionally been reviewed by the City Manager's Office, Legal department and the Policy Review Committee and was presented to City Council at the May 20, 2025, Work Session for review, discussion, and approval to move forward.

The policy has been in practice at the shelter since September 2024. Upon Council adoption, the policy will become effective immediately.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the resolution.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (Council, Boards, Commissions)

On May 20, 2025, the Responsible Euthanasia Policy was presented to City Council.

On May 14, 2024, the policy was presented to the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee who recommended adoption with a vote of 6 to 0.

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.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1 – Agenda Information Sheet

Exhibit 2 – Resolution

Exhibit 3 – Responsible Euthanasia Policy

Respectfully submitted:
Megan Gilbreath, 940-349-8357
Director, Human Resources

For information concerning this policy, contact:
Nikki Sassenus, Director of Animal Services, 940-349-7469

Legal Point of contact:
Susan Keller, Deputy City Attorney, 940-349-8132