

## COUNCIL ACTION FORM

### **SUBJECT: FEE WAIVER AUTHORIZATION FOR ANIMAL CONTROL**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Animal Shelter provides sheltering and adoption services for companion animals associated with the citizens of Ames. Fees for Animal Shelter Services are set by resolution of the City Council and are found in Appendix E of the Municipal Code. This proposal requests the authority to waive Animal Shelter fees under certain circumstances

The first situation where a fee waiver may be valuable is in the adoption of animals with special needs. These may be animals needing special care or medications due to medical conditions, animals with behavior problems or animals with other significant barriers to adoption. By having the authority to reduce or waive adoption fees in these circumstances, euthanasia is avoided.

The second situation where a fee waiver or reduced fee assists the staff is during a period of shelter overcrowding. This typically occurs with cats. By reducing fees or allowing “two for one” promotions, shelter populations can be reduced quickly and the associated animal stress and disease risk is avoided.

The third situation where a fee waiver may be warranted is emergency sheltering. Examples would be, temporary sheltering of an animal following an automobile crash, home fire, sudden onset of a medical problem, or the death of a pet owner. In many of these cases, the Shelter provides a short-term sheltering service until the family can make other arrangements.

The process for waiving fees would begin with a determination by the Animal Control staff member if one of the three fee waiver categories may apply (special needs, overcrowding, or emergency shelter services). If the Animal Control Supervisor reviews and approves the fee waiver, a record would be retained showing the rationale and approval process. **The budget impact of this proposal is expected to be insignificant since the costs of animal care or euthanasia would be reduced as adoptions increased.**

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Authorize the Animal Control Supervisor to approve fee waivers for special needs adoptions, overcrowding, or emergency shelter services.
2. Authorize the Animal Control Supervisor to approve fee waivers for a more limited set of special circumstances.
3. Do not authorize any fee waivers in animal sheltering.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The staff believes that the provision of cost-effective animal sheltering services is enhanced by being able to provide adoption incentives for certain animals. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby allowing the Animal Control Supervisor to approve fee waivers in some cases of special needs adoptions, shelter overcrowding, or emergency sheltering.