

ATTACHMENT #1

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE FY2022 ANNUAL OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET FOR ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA SO AS TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR EXPENSES RELATED TO COSTS IN PROVIDING ANIMALS WITH MEDICAL CARE, INCLUDING MEDICAL SERVICES AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES, AND ANIMAL CARE MAINTENANCE IN THE ANIMAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia hereby ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. The Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia desires to amend the General Fund Operating Budget to provide funding for expenses related to costs in providing animals with medical care, including medical services and medical supplies, and animal care maintenance in the Animal Services Department.

Said Operating and Capital budget is hereby amended as follows:

General Fund:

EXPENDITURES:

Decrease:

Other General Administration	
General Fund Contingency	up to \$150,000

Increase:

Animal Services Department	
Operating Expense	up to \$150,000

SECTION 2. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**

SUBJECT: Animal Services Request for Contingency Funding

DATE: May 31, 2022

BUDGET INFORMATION:

REVENUES:

EXPENSES:

ANNUAL:

CAPITAL:

OTHER: Up to \$150,000 (Fiscal Year 2021-2022)

FUNDING SOURCE: General Fund Contingency

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON: June 7, 2022 under suspension of rules

PURPOSE:

To request that the Mayor and Commission adopt a budget ordinance (**Attachment #1**) amending the FY22 Operating Budget to provide General Fund Contingency in the amount up to \$150,000 for expenses related to costs in providing animals with medical care, including medical services (\$90,000) and medical supplies (\$10,000), and animal care maintenance (\$50,000) in the Animal Services Department.

HISTORY:

1. On September 1, 2019, volunteers, rescue group partners, and community members attended a Mayor and Commission voting meeting to highlight some of the many issues the Animal Control Division was facing.
2. On September 17, 2019, the Manager's Office met with primary stakeholder organizations that support the Animal Control operations, including Athens Area Humane Society and AthensPets, among others. It was reaffirmed that the local government should maintain the lead role in overseeing both enforcement and the shelter operations.
3. On November 1, 2019, the Mayor and Commission (M&C) voted to elevate the Animal Control Division of the Central Services Department to departmental status. The Animal Control Division was renamed the Animal Services Department, reporting directly to the Manager's Office.
4. On February 12, 2020, staff presented the recently completed Animal Services Strategic Plan at the regularly scheduled Mayor and Commission meeting.

5. On June 25, 2020, the M&C approved the first full year of department budget for the newly founded Animal Services Department, totaling \$1,148,337. Prior to FY21, Animal Services staff had not paid for medical operations for a full fiscal year. The experience gained during FY21, FY22 and throughout the pandemic will help staff better project medical costs moving forward.
6. On June 15, 2021, the M&C approved the FY22 Animal Services budget, which included an increase in contract labor (\$25,000) and medical services (\$17,625).
7. On February 21, 2022, personnel funding of \$83,000 was transferred to help cover contract labor costs due the consistent vacancies in Animal Services staff.
8. On April 27, 2022, personnel funding of \$53,000 was transferred to help cover contract labor due the consistent vacancies in Animal Services staff.
9. On May 20, 2022, Manager Williams approved moving \$15,000 from the contingency fund to assist in temporary overages until a final cost of overages were determined.
10. On May 23, 2022, Animal Services transferred an indirect expenses savings of \$5,000 over to medical expenses.
11. In May 2022, Commissioners received the Mayor's Recommended FY23 budget for their review which included proposed increases in the Animal Services budget. These areas include an increase in contract labor (\$35,000), in medical services (\$19,400), in animal care maintenance (\$5,000) and in medical supplies (\$5,000).

FACTS & ISSUES:

1. Prior to the creation of the Animal Services Department, AthensPets, a local non-profit group, paid medical bills for the shelter animals and provided funding for animal care maintenance, medical services and supplies. ACCGov has since assumed responsibility for these costs and purchasing of these basic supplies.
2. AthensPets reallocated their funding and prioritized their mission to focus on the community's unaltered pets by cutting back on the financial aid they have previously provided Animal Services for basic and extensive animal medical care. While they continue to provide funding for extensive animal medical care, they no longer fund basic diagnostic care or the Animal Services Foster Program.
3. In order to provide better standards of care and animal husbandry, along with increasing live outcomes to save more lives, the Animal Services Department has increased the quality and quantity of medical care it provides. Animal Services impounds a high volume of homeless animals. Without a medical history, there is a need for a higher quality and quantity of vaccinations, testing, preventatives, vaccine boosters, food, and equipment.

Animal Services is now providing all intake vaccinations, microchips, heartworm test for dogs, FIV/Leuk test for cats, flea, tick and heartworm prevention, deworming, and rabies shots, as well as paying for alterations. Animal Services also provide heartworm treatments for dogs that are heartworm positive which can then be adopted where as in the past these dogs would have been euthanized if a rescue was unable to take them.

4. Medical costs have increased in both FY21 and FY22 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will most likely continue to increase in FY23 because of longer lasting effects. Animal Services staff consistently look for lower prices and buys in bulk to ensure the best pricing.
5. Due to the high volume of homeless animals that enter the shelter on a daily basis, there is also a need for a higher quality and quantity of appropriate, animal-specific cleaning products and supplies. Staff has changed cleaning protocols to include products that are safe for use around animals and intended to properly kill animal-specific disease.
6. Without any medical staff or veterinarian onsite, combined with the high volume of injured and sick animals that enter daily or become sick while in the shelter, there is a higher need to outsource veterinary care.
7. During this fiscal year Animal Services has increased spay and neuter operations at the adoption center. So far this fiscal year ACCGov has spayed and neutered 185 more animals than during the previous fiscal year. Surgery costs have risen around 12% across the clinics utilized for these surgeries.
8. ACCGov Animal Services began utilizing the Athens Area Humane Society (AAHS) in January of 2022. Before then ACCGov was using only private veterinarians for surgeries and occasionally Planned Pethood in Duluth. The cost through a private veterinarian is more than double the cost of any of the low cost spay and neuter resources. AAHS has planned on ACCGov being able to receive a dedicated second surgical day starting in July 2022. However due to staffing this will not be happening at this time. ACCGov utilizes the low cost facilities first and then the private veterinary hospitals for overflow.
9. Dr. Legato is the overseeing veterinarian and DEA License holder for ACCGov Animal Services. There is a monthly fee for his services and for training Animal Services' employees to become euthanasia certified. This ensure that Animal Services is meeting all the legal requirements and that animals are properly cared for.
10. Animal Services will be exploring an onsite option in FY24 to complete spays, neuters and other veterinary services at the facility. The cost of medical care continues to rise and having a way to complete these tasks and services at the adoption center would be ideal saving both time and money.
11. Animal Services, in prioritizing the health of each animal, has seen the live release rates go up for both dogs and cats. In CY2018, the live release rate was 90.7% for dogs and 75% for

cats. In CY2021, the live release rate was 96.04% for dogs and 91.31% for cats. The increase in medical operations are leading to better outcomes for the animals.

12. Animal Services has had challenges filling Animal Caretaker vacancies, having reposted the position more than six times. As staff have worked to hire full-time employees, Animal Services has had to hire contracted labor to meet the workload demands. The majority of personnel savings has been transferred into the contract labor account.
13. Animal Services is currently over budget in operating accounts approximately \$28,000. It is not anticipated that the full \$150,000 will need to be utilized from General Fund Contingency, and the Finance Department will only allocate what is needed at year end.
14. This recommendation supports the following Mayor and Commission Strategic Commitments:
 - Accountable and Responsive Government
 - Informed and Engaged Citizens
 - Healthy, Livable, Sustainable Athens Clarke County

OPTIONS:

1. Mayor and Commission adopt a budget ordinance (**Attachment #1**) amending the FY22 Operating Budget to provide General Fund Contingency in the amount up to \$150,000 for expenses related to costs in providing animals with medical care, including medical services (\$90,000) and medical supplies (\$10,000), and animal care maintenance (\$50,000) in the Animal Services Department.
2. Mayor and Commission deny approval.
3. Mayor and Commission defined option.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION: Option #1

DEPARTMENT:

Prepared by: Kristall Barber

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6/2/22

Date:

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION: Option #1



Manager

June 2, 2022

Date:

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1: Budget Ordinance