

Animal Control Operations

Chief Rich Lockhart



Current Operation

- Calls for service
 - 2017 – 1125 calls
 - 2018 – 1158 calls
 - 2019 – 1220 calls
 - 2020 – 620 calls (ytd)
- We pick up dogs after evictions, owner deaths, arrests and search warrants
 - 12 animals a year
 - Most are reunited with owners, family or friends (75%)
 - Search warrants typically result in multiple dogs
 - Recent warrants had 5 dogs from 1 house and another had 3 dogs



Current Operation

- Animal Bite calls
 - 2019 – 22
 - 2020 – 11 (ytd)
 - These are typically “known” dogs and not feral or stray dogs
 - The shelter is used to quarantine dogs during the 10 day quarantine required by ordinance
- Dead animals
 - Dead animals are picked up by the animal control officer
 - This would need to be assigned to another city department. I would recommend the Street Department be responsible for this.



Current Operation

- Full service between 7am and 3pm, Monday through Friday
- Limited service all other times
 - Officers only respond to vicious dog calls
 - If a dog bites a family member, the family is responsible for securing the dog and ensuring the quarantine protocol is followed.
 - If a community member captures a stray, they would hold the dog until the animal control officer is back on duty.

Option 1 for Animal Control Service

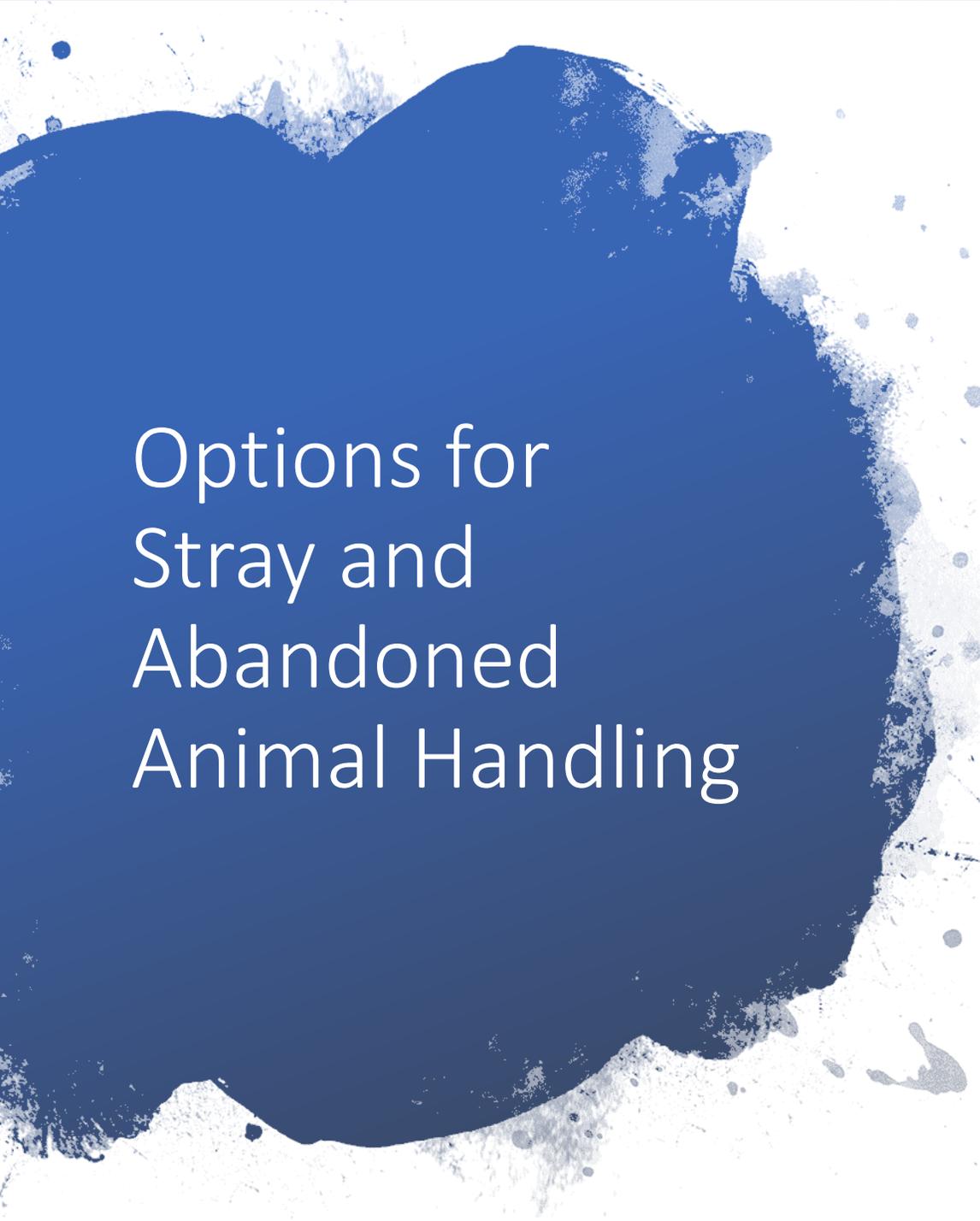
- Provide limited animal control service using current city employees
 - This option would require identifying city employees who would have animal control responsibilities added to their duties. Possible options here would include police officers, Public Works employees or the Code Enforcement Officer. This would be the most cost-effective option given that these positions are already in the budget. The downside to this option is that it adds to the workload of the selected employees whose workload is already pretty heavy. This would also require training the employees for handling dog calls. Mr. Stanfield would be available to train the selected employees prior to his retirement in December. Using this option would require changing the expectation with our community as we transition to limited animal control service. With this option, we still need to consider how we handle the seizure of stray animals.

Option 2 for Animal Control Service

- Provide limited animal control service with a part time ACO
 - At a current cost of about \$19,000 (\$12/hour for 30 hours a week) we could provide part time animal control service. This option would allow us to manage stray dogs and keep a properly trained person handling animal calls. The maintenance cost for the animal control truck is minimal and could be absorbed within the PD budget. The vehicle is still in good shape so for the next few years we could manage without concern for replacing it. Long term, we would need to think about replacing the vehicle, however, we could find a good used pickup truck that could be purchased at a reduced cost over a new vehicle.
- With this option, we need to consider what we would do with stray animals. I will discuss options for stray, abandoned, and seized dogs later.

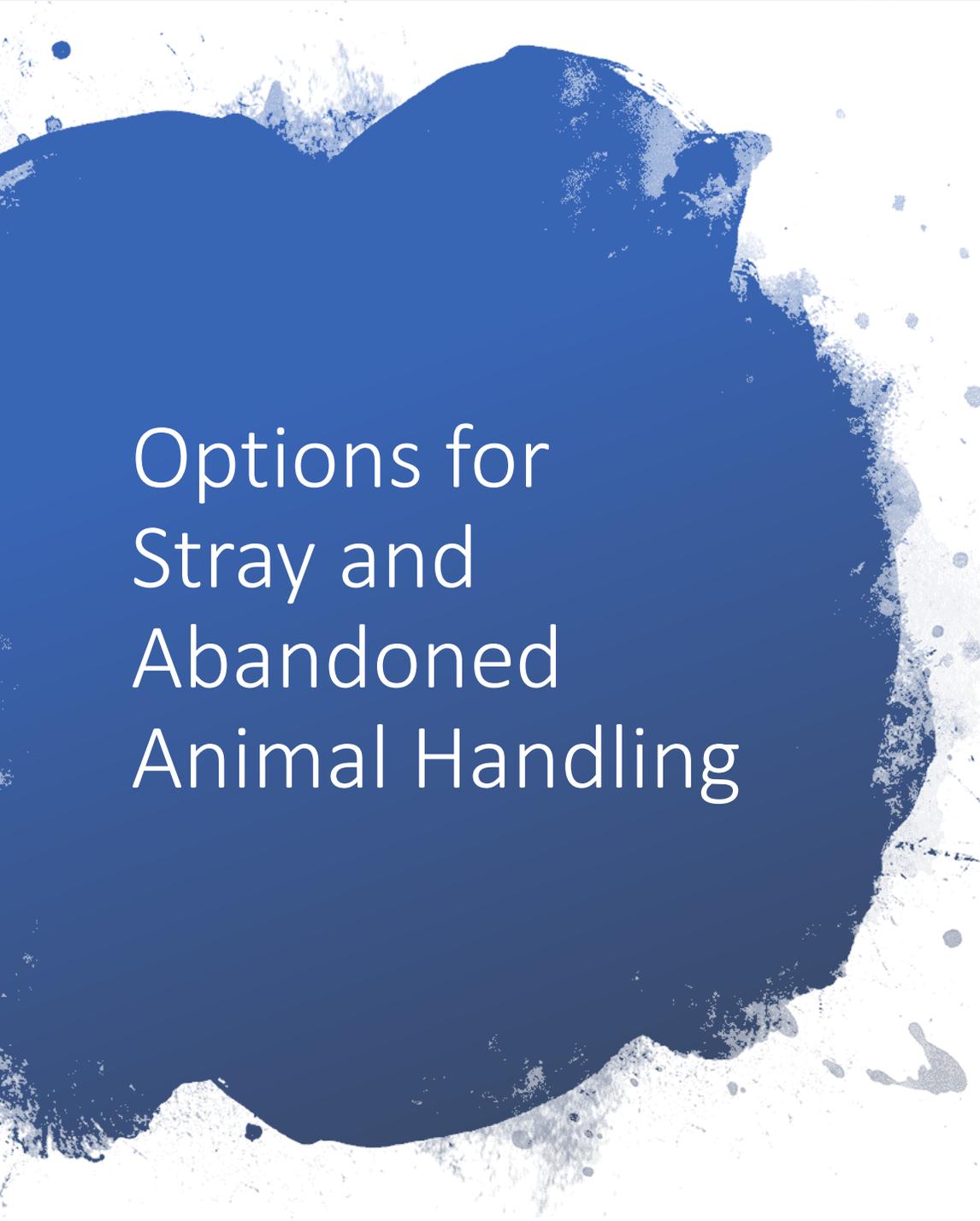
Option 3 for Animal Control Service

- Provide a response to animal bites only and do nothing with stray dogs
 - This option is the most cost-effective option and requires minimal additional workload for the city.
 - This option is likely to lead to an increase in stray and feral dogs. Should we see an increase in stray and feral dogs, we are going to see dog bite cases increase and likely lead to the possibility of increased cases of rabies. When Mr. Stanfield started his job as the ACO more than 15 years ago, he regularly recovered stray dogs. Due to his diligence, stray dogs are very rare in Warrensburg.
 - If we decide to provide this level of animal control service, we will need to prepare the public for seeing more stray dogs and potentially an increase in rabies cases.



Options for Stray and Abandoned Animal Handling

1. Contract with another municipality for shelter service
 - Options for us would include Sedalia and Raymore but we would most likely need to transport the animal to their shelter. This option would be less expensive than operating a full shelter but would still have personnel and vehicle cost. The animal control truck is not a suitable option for transporting long distance to these locations because the cages are not climate controlled. Using the current shelter van would be the best option for transporting to another animal shelter.
2. Contract with a rescue to take strays
 - This option would be less expensive than contracting with a shelter, but it would require creating a network of rescues who would be willing to accept the dogs. If we provided funding it could entice rescues to accept the dogs, but it would add to the overall cost.



Options for Stray and Abandoned Animal Handling

3. Create a volunteer foster program for stray animals
 - The cost with this option would be minimal but would require someone to create and maintain the foster families. When we started this with the shelter, we had good success. This option comes with minimal cost and could most likely be done at no cost. Maintaining the relationships is the most important aspect of this option.
4. Downsize the current shelter
 - This option is the most expensive but would still be less expensive than the current operation. If we only kept the main building open, utility costs would be reduced. We would only take in stray, abandoned, or seized animals which would reduce the staffing requirement. This would require a robust volunteer program to assist with feeding and cleaning to maximize the cost savings. We estimate this could be accomplished with one part time or full-time employee. When Sedalia first opened their shelter, they operated with one full time employee and a very robust volunteer program to help with cleaning and feeding. Relationships with foster homes and rescues would be pivotal for the success of this option.



Options for seized and abandoned animals

1. Utilize a jail cell at the police station for temporary handling
 - Our detention area has concrete floors and secure doors. We have a cell that has a flusher built into the floor that would make clean up very easy. A water hose outside the cell can be used to wash the cell out and flush any waste out of the cell. We would need to have food and bowls on hand to feed animals we take in. We would then work on contacting family or friends of the person we take the animal from to release the animal. Additionally, we can utilize the foster program or a rescue to assist when we are unable to locate someone to pick up the animal. Since the cell is climate controlled and locks, we would not need to provide constant supervision as it would be similar to the current practice at the shelter. This option has a minimal cost.
2. Utilize one of the options listed for stray animals
 - This option comes with the conditions identified above.

Conclusion

- Elimination of the ACO would require an examination of Chapter 5 for possible revisions. For example, The City would want to consider a change to the quarantine requirement in Chapter 5. We would suggest that if an owner is able to produce current shot records, the dog could be quarantined at home. The City employee handling animal control would go back after the quarantine period to ensure the dog was not sick. If someone cannot produce shot records, the owner would be required to either home quarantine or quarantine the animal at a local veterinarian. The City employee handling animal control would then check back in 10 days to determine if the animal is sick. There are other issues that would be identified in this review as they reference the work of the ACO.
- Once options are selected, we can conduct further research to determine the feasibility and work on implementation as directed.