Diane Hollenbach

From: Animal Rescue League of Berks County <alexis@berksarl.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2019 10:47 AM
To: Diane Hollenbach
Subject: Inside, please find your reduced-price animal control contract from the ARL

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Animal Rescue League of Berks County

NEWS & EVENTS

Dear Municipal Leaders,

Good Morning! Thank you for your patience awaiting the animal-control contract information from the Animal Rescue League. I hope you will be pleased to see many of the changes, including a 50% price reduction for 2020 contracts for your review. You can download an overview of these changes, as well as a renewed approach to our partnership by clicking HERE.

I would like to learn a little more about your needs before finalizing your contract, and I hope to have the opportunity to introduce myself as the new executive director and meet with your municipality to learn more about the issues you have to see how we can best serve and support you specifically moving forward. In the meantime, because we know that you have been waiting for correspondence from us, we will be mailing the reduced-priced per capita contract, along with an emergency services fee list, in the next few days.

I look forward to meeting you and hope we can find a new path forward as partners to serve your community. Please do not hesitate to reach out for brief call or meeting should you have any questions; my schedule is very flexible, and I would sincerely welcome the opportunity to meet with you.

My thanks, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE
OF BERKS COUNTY

September 30, 2019

Dear Municipal Leaders,

Thank you so much for your patience while awaiting the annual Animal Rescue League of Berks County's animal-control contract for 2020!

As you may know, shortly after those letters were sent out to you, I assumed the Executive Director role here at the ARL, replacing Tom Hubric. My experience includes more than 20 years of animal-welfare work, including working with both municipalities and residents to shape animal-control policy as the Executive Director of the Routt County Humane Society in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Having worked through these negotiations with municipal leaders before, as well as taking a detailed look at the negotiations that went on in Berks County last year, I understand deeply your frustrations, as well as the concerns of your citizens.

Please know that the ARL is passionately and genuinely committed to fulfilling our mission to care for stray, injured and abused animals—we have done it for more than 65 years, and frankly, we feel confident in our ability to provide excellent professional-level and compassionate care to these animals, your residents and your municipality. Further, we want to let your police force and your township officials do what they do best: care for people.

To that end, the ARL has some key changes we're planning to implement for next year while working with municipal leaders to engage in conversation to identify your needs, work within your budget cycles and realities, and ensure that we are moving forward as true partners in this endeavor. Below are the key changes:

We are returning to a per-capita contract.

Lower Per Capita Cost for Ramp-up

After listening to even just a few municipalities, it became clear that the period of time for this transition was too short and did not accommodate your budget cycles to enable consideration in a realistic manner for most municipalities. Therefore in 2020, we are cutting the per capita cost by 50% to just $1 to make it more attainable as a starting point and to allow time for discussion and ramp-up over an extended period of years. This will also allow us time to show you the value of a professional animal-control program and for your municipality to review the number of animals your residents are bringing into the animal-sheltering system.

This contract model supports efforts to reduce the total number of unwanted pets by spaying/neutering all of the animals who come through our doors and to reduce public health

outbreaks of disease that threaten people and owned pets in the community like parvo, distemper and rabies. It also allows us to scale what municipalities pay by tying it to your population and allows even small issues to be addressed so they don't grow into larger problems over time that ultimately cost more to remedy. Innovative animal-control models are transforming towns across America and we are ready to bring an affordable version of that to Berks County.

Avoiding Budget Overages

This billing method is genuinely the fairest to residents and municipalities and reflects the industry best practices in animal care and control. We believe this method provides "known dollars" to town budget processes with no unknown variability and also enables us to hire and maintain the staffing and equipment needed to service the community effectively.

Increased Data Integrity

Contracted municipalities will also receive monthly detailed reports of animal intakes and services provided to your residents to see the full picture of what your community needs and is receiving. We will be ensuring data integrity by requiring proof of residency when people bring animals to the ARL starting on January 1, 2020 so the numbers are even more verifiable while cross-referencing them with the County Tax Assessor's map to ensure that the municipality identification is accurate.

Adding More Value and Services

We are working extremely hard to raise money through donations to provide additional services to residents, such as subsidized spay/neuter, low-cost vaccination and microchipping, humane education and more. We will be focusing those efforts specifically on communities that engage us in services to leverage your community's commitment to public safety and effective animal control.

Free Trainings for Municipalities

If contracted municipalities do want to get involved with scanning for microchips, we would be happy to provide training to help support that, along with free educational seminars for police officers and municipal officials on safe animal-handling techniques, reading animal behavior in the field, and more.

Low-Cost Clinics

Contracted municipalities are also eligible for ARL support with clinics for initiatives such as low-cost vaccinations, microchips, trap-neuter-return (TNR) of free-roaming cats and more based on your specific community needs.

We will be prioritizing space for contracted municipalities.

We love what we do. The simple reality though is that we cannot ask our donors or other municipalities to shoulder the responsibility of non-contracting towns for the basic, required care to stray animals at the new modest $1 per capita level for 2020. And we do encourage you to continue to have open and in-depth discussions with your police departments and residents.

Should a resident from a non-contracting town approach us for service or to take in a stray, they

will be advised of the municipality's decision and be asked to pay a fee. In addition, if we are full from animals in our contracting towns, we will place the person on a waiting list. We utilize waiting lists for owner surrenders from any town when needed to assure that healthy animals are not euthanized. This is something the community wants from ARL and this is core to our mission. Priority will be given to residents from contracting towns.

We will be providing emergency and humane law services.

Contracting municipalities can rely on ARL to care for emergency situations, hoarding and cruelty cases. These services are included in our per-capita contract fee, although we certainly appreciate additional assistance, often in-kind, to support a major response and extraordinary circumstance.

If a municipality does not contract with us, we encourage you to carefully consider if a vendor has the capacity and expertise to respond to cases such as hoarding where hundreds of animals may be involved and the homes are often biohazards that require specialty equipment.

We care deeply for the people and animals of our community. Therefore, in an emergency, we will continue to assist with cruelty cases, hoarding situations, and Pennsylvania Dog Law issues under a fee-for-service schedule that will be provided, but will no longer require a contract like last year. It is important to consider that a single incident would likely exceed the animal control contract presented herein, but we wish to leave this door open to serve and support you.

Working together to find innovative solutions.

During 2020, I would like the opportunity to personally work with you to develop a comprehensive animal-control policy for 2021 and beyond that is affordable for your municipality, yet financially sustainable for the ARL to allow us to continue providing socially conscious and humane animal care.

As a charitable organization, we work tirelessly to be a safe haven for animals and our community members in their time of greatest need, but we are unable to keep our doors open without a fiscally responsible plan. I'm sure you are all too familiar with similar challenges when budgeting your needs in local government. The goal is to provide a humane animal-control service that our community demands while working together to find an equitable and affordable path forward so we can continue to be that safety net that the community continues to communicate to us that it needs and expects of us.

I will be on a listening tour to hear what services your municipality needs and to discuss where additional partnership is possible to address community concerns and reduce the animal-control burden from your police departments and municipal staff members. I believe that, working together, we can best serve the animals and our residents.

ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE
OF BERKS COUNTY

I will be in touch shortly to personally follow-up with you.

Should you have any questions, I encourage you to call or email me. I look forward to meeting you—and more importantly, working with you.

Sincerely,

Alexis Pagoulatos

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