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## 2004 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

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### **2004 Public Health Operating Budget Proposed Animal Cadaver Pick up Service Level Reduction**

#### **Issue/Background:**

The Executive Management Team (EMT) has recommended a \$0.124 million reduction in the service level of the animal cadaver pick up by Animal Services. This reduction equates to a reduction of 1.2 Animal Care and Control Officer positions and approximately \$40,000 in related non-salary expenses. The total Animal Services Budget request for 2004 is \$6.8 million gross (\$5.4 million net).

#### **Key Point(s):**

The pertinent information relating to the current service that is provided by Animal Services regarding animal cadaver pick up includes the following:

- Animal Services picks up dead domestic and wild animals as requested by residents, elected officials and animal owners, on public or private property. The animal cadavers pick-up service also includes pick up of owned animals for a pick up and cremation fee.
- Total number of animal cadavers picked up in 2002 was approximately 5,400. This does not include birds picked up relating to West Nile Virus through 50:50 municipal/provincial funding.
- Animal Care and Control Officers (ACCOs) already in the field, respond to pick-up requests in their assigned area and in priority order with other field service responses.
- The Animal Services' dispatch refers the request to the field staff and updates the data in the Animal Services' data base. The data includes location, species, date and time, condition of animal and any special observations from the ACCO.
- Often the member of the public does not know what species of animal they are reporting.
- The cadaver is placed in a freezer in the area Animal Centre and is cremated when the crematorium is next operated. In some instances the cadaver is kept on hold by Animal Services. This occurs when a potential owner is identified, a bite is reported relating to that animal prior to its demise, the animal needs to be examined or tested because of a potential cruelty

investigation or for potential disease or spread of zoonosis (animal to human disease transmission).

- The data collected can also be used to locate lost pets and to determine patterns regarding numbers, condition and locations of dead animals. This helps determine potential disease outbreaks relating to a species (including zoonosis), patterns of poisoning or cruelty occurrences in an area, etc. For example, a number of animals died and/or became ill in a specific area of the city, which led to the discovery that animals were being poisoned. In another instance, a similar occurrence led to the discovery that distemper was prevalent in the raccoon population which further led to discovery of increased prevalence of distemper in the area cat populations.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources has requested the submission of dead raccoons and foxes in tracking rabies patterns and the impact of vaccination programs in and around the GTA.
- Animal Service staff are equipped and trained regarding intake, handling, recording and cremation of animal cadavers. This reduces the potential for exposure to disease and increases the usefulness of the data on animal specimens collected.
- Operationally, the ACCO field/shelter and Dispatch staff rotate through 10-hour shifts weekly. The current staffing level is such that any permanent reduction will directly impact on the number of staff available to fill these shifts and subsequently the hours of field operation plus shelter and dispatch intake. This domino affect will therefore impact all service areas resulting in reduced access to these services for the residents.
- Isolating specific costs to pick up animal cadavers is difficult and any reduction will impact other areas of service. Costs include staff time related to intake of information at the Animal Services call centre, call dispatch, response time in the field, time to handle the cadaver at the shelter and operation of crematoria plus any time involved in the shelter to search lost pet records or any related investigations.

**Date:**

February 20, 2004