

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members

From: John Leach, Municipal Administrator

Date: February 19, 2025

Subject: Proposed MOU between CBS and FOSAS

Background

Following Assembly guidance from the October 8, 2024, Assembly meeting, city staff re-entered negotiations with FOSAS to establish a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the operation of the Sitka Animal Shelter. These negotiations were facilitated through mediation with the Municipal Attorney to ensure a balanced and fair agreement that aligns with both CBS and FOSAS's operational needs.

Analysis

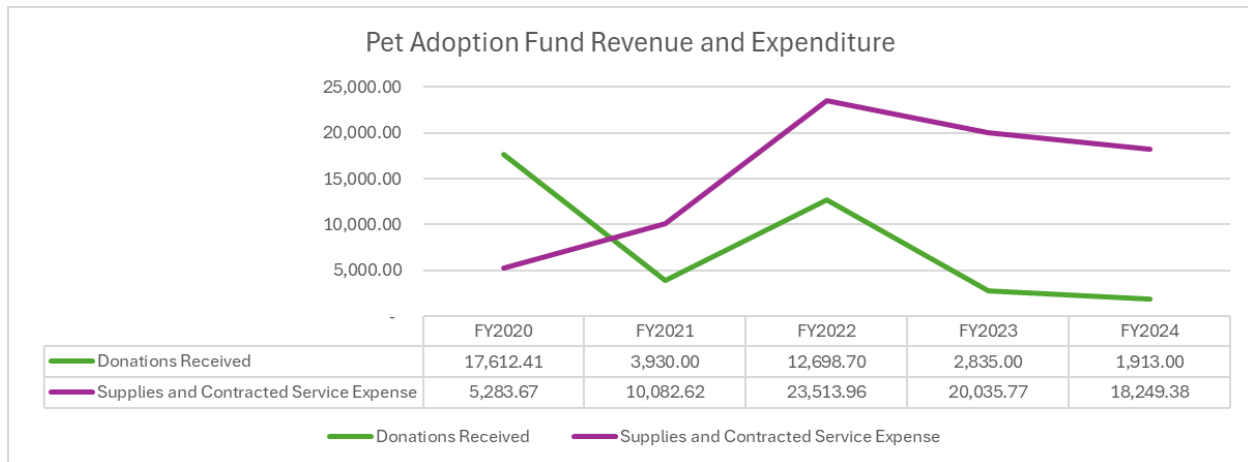
Since October 2024, multiple mediated meetings have occurred between CBS and FOSAS, resulting in numerous draft MOUs and over 12 hours of productive discussion and effort. While CBS had initially proposed a full-day mediation session to expedite the process, the availability and work schedules of FOSAS representatives necessitated a segmented approach, leading to scheduled meetings as participants were available.

Key updates in this MOU compared to prior versions include:

- A more structured volunteer scheduling, background check, and training process to enhance operational efficiency and accountability.
- Clearly defined building access schedules to regulate facility entry and usage.
- Clarification of intake procedures and responsibilities to prevent operational conflicts.
- Introduction of veterinary consultation as a consideration in determining the disposition of animals when feasible.
- Specification that CBS, through SPD, will make reasonable efforts to facilitate adoption for at least three months before making final disposition decisions. At the three-month mark, FOSAS will have the first option to formally adopt animals at their own expense before any euthanasia decisions are made.

Additionally, during the mediation process, I proposed that FOSAS lease the Animal Control Facility from CBS under the structure outlined in the enclosed proposal letter. This leasing arrangement would have required no amendments to Sitka General Code (SGC), nor would it have necessitated an MOU or financial contributions from CBS. However, FOSAS ultimately did not accept this proposal.

Fiscal Note



In FY2020, FY2021, and FY2022, supplemental appropriations increased each year's budget by \$10,000 for supplies and services. From FY2020 through FY2024, the fund balance for the Pet Adoption Fund decreased from \$64,574 to \$32,088.

This new MOU may result in increased operational costs for CBS due to the extended three-month animal retention timeline, which will elevate the costs of care for animals housed at the Animal Control Facility. Furthermore, including veterinary consultations in decision-making will likely contribute to higher veterinary expenses.

Additional expenses will be incurred for the installation of a new key card building access system, as well as for the procurement of an IT solution to track volunteer scheduling and training. While the Pet Adoption Fund will continue to cover these new expenditures, historical fund balances suggest that subsidies from the General Fund will likely be necessary, and adoption fees may need to be significantly increased to maintain financial sustainability.

Recommendation

I recommend approval of the updated MOU to ensure clear operational guidelines and continued collaboration between CBS and FOSAS. Additionally, I encourage ongoing efforts to transition Sitka's animal shelter services toward an outsourced nonprofit model, as seen in other communities, to improve efficiency and financial sustainability.

Encl: FOSAS and CBS MOU
 Sitka General Code 8.05 "Animal Protection and Control"
 Municipal Administrator's Memo of September 30, 2024

Municipal Administrator's Proposal Letter of January 8, 2025 to FOSAS