
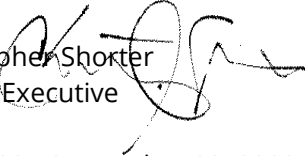




March 8, 2023

TO: Board of County Supervisors

FROM: Peter Newsham 
Chief of Police

THRU: Christopher Shorter 
County Executive

RE: DIR 22-33 - September 20, 2022 - Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release Program (TNVR)

Background:

In September 2022, the Board of County Supervisors (Board) directed county staff to bring back recommendations for consideration at a future Board meeting to amend the County Code for the implementation of a community trap-neuter-vaccinate-release (TNVR) program for cats. This directive was provided in response to the memo from Chief Newsham, dated September 2, 2021, which was sent to the Board in response to DIR 21-46. County staff was directed to work this directive into the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget process.

Current Situation:

Prince William County Code – Current County Code does not allow for free-roaming cat colonies: *Sec. 4-5.1. Impoundment of animals running at large. Any animal, other than a dog, found running at large in the county, shall be taken up by the animal warden or other officer, as defined in section 4-21, and impounded at the animal shelter and thereafter disposed of under the provisions of section 4-5. For the purposes of this section, "animal" shall not include agricultural animals. (Ord. No. 03-47, 6-24-03, effective 7-1-03) State law reference(s)—Enabling provisions, Code of Virginia, § 3.1-796.96.*

PWC Animal Services Center – Prince William County currently does not offer in-house spay/neuter services in the Animal Services Center. However, the newly constructed Animal Services Center has a dedicated Veterinary Suite, which includes dedicated areas for examination, surgery and recovery. If the county moves forward with a Managing Veterinarian, and that person is identified and staffing plan is in place, the design of this space could enable the Police Department to pursue licensing of the clinic for operational use. This arrangement would allow for future consideration of in-house spay/neuter surgery of all adoption dogs and cats prior to being made available for adoption, reduce length of stay, increase customer satisfaction, and ensure compliance with the state code requirement for sterilization.

Veterinary Staffing Shortage – Currently, the veterinary industry is experiencing a staffing shortage, to include a lack of both veterinarians and veterinary technicians. This shortage will influence the cost and availability of any chosen approach to supporting TNVR in Prince William County.

The county's current spay/neuter contractors have gone from five vendors to two, and the two remaining have reduced the number of available surgery slots per week. Further, one of the current contract clinics has recently notified the county it will now further reduce the availability of surgeries for adopted animals down to one day per week. This will further impact the need for the bureau to house animals longer while they wait to be sterilized as is required.

Fiscal Impact to Implement a TNVR Program:

Staffing and Operating a PWC Veterinary Clinic - Due to the continuing and worsening area veterinary staffing shortages, the county would need to allocate three FTE positions to create a veterinary staff for the new Animal Services Center. This will give the county greater potential to attract and maintain all needed veterinary care for animals housed by the Animal Control Bureau. This staffing would include one veterinarian, one veterinary technician, and one veterinary assistant. The estimated cost for these three positions is \$265,000/year in the current market for salary costs, plus outfitting (uniforms, computer, etc. is \$91,200) and benefits (\$102,100) for a total of \$458,300.

The staffing and licensing of the veterinary treatment space at the Animal Services Center would require a yearly operational budget increase of \$205,000. This budget increase would go to cover all software and supplies used in the operation of the clinic including medications, oxygen, etc.

Total Fiscal Impact – The total funding needed to implement a TNVR program in Prince William County is approximately \$663,300.

Opportunities for Potential Cost Mitigation Strategies: - If the Board decides to move forward with a TNVR program then there may be opportunities for potential cost mitigation strategies, such as an increase in adoption fees.

Next Steps:

If the Board decides to move forward with a TNVR program, the following will need to occur:

- The Board will need to provide a directive to staff to authorize and schedule a public hearing to change Section 4-5.1 of the County Code, such that impoundment of free roaming cats is not required.
- The Board will also need to determine whether they would like to fund the program in the FY24 Budget or in future years. The TNVR program is not included in the FY2024 Proposed Budget.

Staff Contact: Peter Newsham, Chief of Police, ext. 6650