



**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
June 23, 2020 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

In Virtual Attendance:

Sheri Gustafson
Cary Payton
Michael Cahill
Dr. Martha Smith-Blackmore
Kara Holmquist
David Feldman
Ray West
Laura Marwell
Deanna Gualtieri
Blythe Owen

Due to Covid-19 Social Distancing restrictions, this open meeting was held virtually over the ZOOM platform.

I. Fund Totals and Expenditures

A PowerPoint presentation was shown over ZOOM to all attendees. See attached.

Sheri explained the current Fund's revenue totals. Total intake for donations so far in 2020 was \$242,439 Revenue for CY20 is down \$79,849 compared to this month in CY19. Current numbers reflect that the FY20 is \$81,322 down from where we were at this time in FY19. Sheri believes this reduction in donations is due to the financial hardships being caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sheri explained the Fund's current balance sheet that illustrated all income and expenditures of the Mass Animal Fund since 2017. The balance sheet also contains the proposed spending for CY20. To date, In CY20 the Fund received a total of \$242,239 in revenue and has spent \$149,226. To date (start of the program) the Fund's spending was in the following distributions: 61% for veterinary services, 3% for ACO training, 23% for administration, <1% for marketing, and 12% surplus.

Sheri proposed a newly adjusted budget due to the reduction in revenue created by the Covid-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, the Fund approved a CY20 budget of \$485,000, which includes \$385,000 from donations and \$100,000 from the line item. The following budget allocations were previously proposed for CY20: 67% for veterinary services, 2% for ACO training, 30% for administration, <1% for marketing, and 0% towards surplus. Sheri stated that the previous budget was created hoping that the Fund would see a 12% increase in revenue in 2020. To date, the Fund has seen a 20% drop in revenue. The new proposed CY20 Budget was based on projected revenue of \$275,000 received from tax donations, grant funding, online donations, and interest. Also, Sheri proposed utilizing 25% (\$60,000) of past surplus to create a working budget of \$335,000. The Proposed CY20 Budget had the following allocations: 54% for veterinary services, 2% for ACO training, 45% for administration, less than 1% for marketing. Sheri said also proposed that any amount received over the estimated \$275,000 in revenue be applied directly to veterinary services.

The Advisory Committee discussed the proposed budget changes and agreed to table the budget discussion until the next meeting when the full 2020 tax donation numbers will be reported.

II. BUDGET LINE ITEM

Sheri mentioned that the MDAR Chief Financial Officer, Cullen Roberts, received word that ANF was looking at the Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Trust for a partial sweep of \$30,000 to help balance the state budget. MDAR responded to the potential sweep stating that it would be very detrimental to the fund and could reduce future public donations and trust. Cullen has received no further mention of a potential sweep but will keep the Fund informed.

Sheri presented how the FY18, FY19, and FY20 \$100,000 budget line items were spent allowing the Fund to perform additional spay/neuter surgeries.

Currently, the Massachusetts FY21 Budget is in the Governor's Budget phase.

Sheri stated that the proposed budget adjustments do not include a possible line item and that given the financial strain created by the pandemic, the department felt that it is unlikely that any line items will be approved in the state budget.

III. SPAY/NEUTER VOUCHER PROGRAM

Sheri presented the Spay/Neuter Voucher Program numbers.

In CY20, \$62,410 has been spent on spay/neuter to help 388 dogs and cats, 86 of those animals were in emergency situations. In 2020, the Fund has issued 581 vouchers. Since the Voucher Program's inception in 2014, the Fund has spent \$1,634,420 to help 12,774 Commonwealth cats/dogs.

As of June 23, 2020, the voucher waitlist is 664 animals, equaling \$116,290 in assistance. There are currently 138 unexpired vouchers outstanding equaling \$22,650. In 2020, 213 vouchers issued have since expired totaling \$34,200. The voucher distribution rate is currently 10 vouchers a week. If the proposed CY20 budget is approved voucher distribution would be between 16-20 weekly.

The Fund received a grant from the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts for \$8,050, which will enable the Fund and Sterling Animal Shelter Clinic to provide free services for 50 animals in that region.

The Fund applied for a SpayTogether grant as well.

Sheri stated the Fund currently has no Voucher Days scheduled and is focusing on reducing the waitlist. Waitlist additions and inquiries have greatly reduced since the start of the pandemic. Cary stated that some animals have been on the waitlist since last fall. Martha asked if an email could be sent to all waitlisted owners to verify if services were still needed. Sheri mentioned that not all requests have direct contact info on them, but that the fund could reach out to ACOs individually to help remove vouchers requests that are no longer needed.

Sheri reported that the Fund is still waiting on contracts from the Municipal Program launch.

IV. PROMOTIONS/EVENTS

Sheri stated that the Fund is still pushing tax donation promotions through mid-July, and that other offseason funding options are being explored such as grant funding, and online donation pushes. No in-person events have been planned at this time.

V. ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER PROGRAM UPDATES

Sheri opens the discussion on postponing the 2020 Core Competencies Training until the Spring of 2021. The Advisory Committee discussed and agreed that it was best to postpone training due to Covid-19 concerns.

Sheri mentioned that in the next Core Training cycle 8 ACOs need to retake the training, and 63 ACOs need to take the Core for the first time. Roughly half of the ACOs that need to take the Core for the first time are ACOs that have been employed in the field for less than 18 months.

Sheri stated that over the next couple of months the Fund will be exploring Core alternatives such as virtual ACO jumpstart meetings, handbook updates, and online course development.

Sheri reported that 200+ ACOs have already started logging credits for 2020. Online CEs are being encouraged at this time. The Fund's website has over 100 preapproved online training options.

Sheri mentioned that double CE credit and carry over options are being offered to encourage ACOs to take classes in diversity, de-escalation, anti-racism, and Covid-19.

Next meeting date was set for

Tuesday, September 1st, 2020

10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Zoom Platform