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VIA EMAIL

October 18, 2021

His Worship Charlie Clark
Mayor, City of Saskatoon
and Jeff Jorgenson
City Manager, City of Saskatoon
222 3rd Ave N
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear: Sirs

Re: City Poundkeeper Agreement

Despite the ongoing hard work from dedicated staff, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected The Saskatoon SPCA. We are currently facing a monthly shortfall of \$50,000, and our financial forecasting indicates that without intervention, our reserves will only sustain operation for another year.

There are several factors contributing to this bleak financial forecast, many of which are listed below. Simply put, as costs continue to rise due to inflation and other economic factors, and service levels have increased due to an increasing population, our revenues have not followed a similar trajectory. Currently, only \$620,319 of our \$2,036,114 operating budget comes from the City of Saskatoon, even though we see intakes as high as 90% during high season and around 76% during low season pursuant to our Poundkeeper Agreement with the City. **We rely heavily on charitable funds to subsidize this underfunding, while honouring the Poundkeeper Agreement and serving our community as best as possible.**

We write to formally request the City of Saskatoon re-evaluate the current funding structure that has been allocated to the Saskatoon SPCA for the Poundkeeper Agreement.

The Regina Humane Society receives more than 1.2 million dollars annually from the City of Regina, while serving a smaller population and providing a safe space for fewer animals, around 500 less, each year than the Saskatoon SPCA. Moreover, the Poundkeeper Agreement between the City of Saskatoon and the Saskatoon SPCA has not been updated to reflect the City's growth in both population and overall size.

Some significant factors affecting the Shelter include:

- Adoption rates have declined while the number of intakes has not. To promote adoptions, we have had to offer financial adoption incentives such as low cost or free. While effective at reaching some goals, this approach means that we shoulder the majority of costs for spay/neuter surgeries, vaccinations, deworming treatment, and any other necessary medical treatments.
- The fines associated with pets running at large pose a barrier to many. These fines have led to a decline in redemption rates, impacting our Shelter capacity and increasing the length of stay and associated costs mentioned above.
- Due to a shortage of veterinarians/clinic services in the City, we are consistently put on waiting lists for surgery dates. This reality has a negative impact on shelter operations as it increases the length of stay for animals and results in our shelter capacity consistently hovering between 85% full and completely full, especially during high season (April to November). We are left shouldering associated costs for longer periods of time.
- More than 90% of the animals received at the Saskatoon SPCA flow through the pound and fewer than 500 animals are redeemed by the public, which increases our capacity and limits our ability to support the general public bringing animals in need to us. This number significantly increases during high season so that we cannot accept any animals from the public that are not in distress.
- When the Shelter is at or close to capacity, the risk of animals getting sick significantly increases, just as it does for humans. When a contagious disease spreads through the facility due to overcrowding, we are forced to make humane choices and our euthanasia rates increase. This situation results in poor outcomes for animals in our care, takes a tremendous toll on our staff, and damages our reputation with the public; it contributes to a lack of trust, understanding, and negatively affects adoption rates.
- Increased animal illness and euthanasia in the Shelter leads to poor mental health among our staff, which translates to increased sick days. This adds to an already stressful work environment as we are unable to consistently ensure we are fully staffed, and individual workloads can increase. With more time and resources, our staff can do what they do best and provide extra enrichment, limit the number of animals who become stressed in a shelter environment, and work to minimize the spread of disease.
- Low wages and a stressful work environment, as outlined above, make it difficult to retain fully trained staff. It takes almost a year to fully train an animal care attendant to be efficient and able to perform on call duties.

- The Poundkeeper Agreement requires us to provide 24/7 availability for enforcement officers and animal in distress calls from the public. With only two Animal Protection Officers (APO) we are forced to rely on animal care staff to perform on call duties weekly, including 24-hour telephone service. Combined with high staff turnover rates, we run the risk of putting both our staff and the animals we care for in harm's way.
- The Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association (SVMA) will be requiring all health-related work to be done by Registered Vet Techs (RVT). Currently we can only afford to employ one casual RVT due to significantly higher wages required.
- In the past, we have relied on volunteers to support our work through various elements of care and enrichment, such as exercise breaks, cleaning, and other tasks. However, we have not been able to run a full volunteer program due to Covid precautions, but without being able to hire more staff to replace this vital aspect missing from our operations.

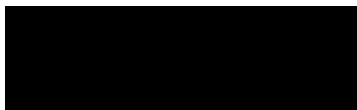
We are hopeful that the City of Saskatoon will be able to match a level of funding received by the Regina SPCA from that municipality to ensure we can continue to provide these essential services to our community.

With recent changes to our management structure, we firmly believe we can be efficient, create a robust fundraising program, and attract, train, and retain staff. We have been working towards a public capital campaign to build a new low cost spay/neuter clinic. This clinic will allow us to perform necessary surgeries and medical events in-house, which will lead to cost savings. It is also in the plans to eventually provide this low-cost service to residents in Saskatoon, allowing us to better control the pet population. But we cannot achieve this strategic success if financial and HR resources are being directed away from other areas to supplement the underfunding of poundkeeper services. The City's support, through increased funding, will provide us the resources needed so our management can focus on long-term strategy, employee wellness, and ensure we continue to be the shelter space Saskatoon's citizens need us to be.

If an increase in funding does not take place, the Saskatoon SPCA will inevitably be forced to close its doors by this time next year, further diminishing the City's ability to take care of its people and their families – including the animals they love and care for.

Thank you for your consideration. Please see the attached financials which indicate the costs associated with meeting the Poundkeeper Agreement requirements.

Yours truly,



Trina Mortson
Acting/Executive Director
Saskatoon SPCA



Mallory Maloof, Lawyer
Co-Chair Saskatoon SPCA
Board of Directors



Christopher Gilchrist, CPA
Co-Chair Saskatoon SPCA
Board of Directors

Cc. Saskatoon Animal Control Agency

City of Saskatoon Director of Recreation and Community Development, Andrew Roberts
City of Saskatoon Recreation Services manager, Open Space Programming & Development, Brad Babyak
City of Saskatoon, Open Space Consultant, Animal Services, Melissa Meacham
Ward 1 Councillor, Darren Hill
Ward 2 Councillor, Hilary Gough
Ward 3 Councillor, David Kirton
Ward 4 Councillor, Troy Davies
Ward 5 Councillor, Randy Donauer
Ward 6 Councillor, Cynthia Block
Ward 7 Councillor, Mairin Loewen
Ward 8 Councillor, Sarina Gersher
Ward 9 Councillor, Bev Dubois
Ward 10 Councillor, Zach Jeffries
Reeve of Corman Park, Judy Harwood
Animal Services Working Group
Saskatoon Health Authority, Kristen Shymko
The Honourable Kevin Waugh, Member of Parliament
Dr. Ryan Meili, Leader of the Opposition, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon Meewasin
Ms. Jennifer Bowes, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon University
Mr. David Buckingham, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Westview
Mr. Ken Cheveldayoff, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Willowgrove
The Honourable Bronwyn Eyre, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
Stonebridge-Dakota
Mr. Marv Friesen, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Riversdale
Mr. Terry Jenson, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Martensville-Warman
Mr. Matt Love, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Eastview
The Honourable Paul Merriman, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
Silverspring-Sutherland
The Honourable Don Morgan, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
Southeast
Ms. Vicki Mowat, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Fairview
Ms. Betty Nippi-Albright, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Centre
Ms. Erika Ritchie, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Nutana
The Honourable Gordan Wyant, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
Northwest