



THE SUNRISE CITY
ANIMAL CONTROL

FORT PIERCE
Florida

TO : Nicholas Mimms, City Manager
FROM : Peggy Arraiz, Director of Community Response
CC : Johnna Morris, Finance Director
SUBJECT : ARPA Funding Request
DATE : March 7, 2023

I am respectfully requesting your consideration of utilizing the \$300,000.00 of the American Rescue Plan Act funds that have not been allocated to fund two specific programs for the Fort Pierce Animal Adoption Center.

ARPA Eligibility

1. The United States Department of the Treasury allows local governments that lost revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic to use ARPA funds for "government services". This category is extremely discretionary and allows for funds to be used for any service traditionally provided by a government to address public health and negative economic impacts.
2. The Fort Pierce Animal Adoption Center provides essential help to homeless, unwanted, and abused animals, and requires government funding to assist with the operation of the shelter, provide veterinary care to the shelter animals as well as to provide veterinary services to the public, who have been negatively impacted due to Covid-19.
3. Other jurisdictions have approved similar programs under the public sector category including:
 - a. Spartanburg County, South Carolina – approved \$200,000 to identify the cost and scope of building a new animal shelter.
 - b. Scranton, Pennsylvania – approved \$200,000 to cover the costs of supplies, medicine and general operations.
 - c. Great Falls, Montana – approved \$35,000 to cover the costs of completing a Cattery at their shelter.
 - d. Vigo County, Indiana – approved \$250,000 to expand their humane society and provide additional access and accommodations for their animal control drop-offs.

Funding Request – FPAAC Surgery Center

For many years, the Humane Society of St. Lucie County provided one of the few veterinary options for people with limited income to afford the necessary care for their pets. The City of Fort Pierce not only supported this program through direct funding to the HSSLC, but also through efforts such as our spay and neuter program. The relocation of the HSSLC to Port St. Lucie removed this option for many of our residents.

Since then, residents' access to affordable pet care continued to diminish, requiring long waits for the few remaining options within our city or for those with available transportation, long drives to Vero Beach or Port St. Lucie. This access took an even harder hit due to Covid-19 when many veterinarian offices closed completely or severely limited access.

With the departure of the recent shelter operator, the city lost another of our low-cost options and the animals housed at the facility no longer have direct veterinary care. They must be transported to local veterinary offices to have all their medical needs (intake vaccinations, sterilization surgeries, general welfare issues such as skin rashes) addressed. This causes additional stress to the animals, who are already in a stressful condition, that can negatively affect their well-being, is not cost effective and fails to provide consistency of care to the animals.

Providing an affordable option to our City residents and providing the necessary medical care to our shelter animals are essential government services. It will help those that were negatively impacted from Covid 19 – through both loss of income and loss of access to the necessary veterinary care required to ensure the wellbeing of their pets and it will provide direct, cost effective and consistent care to the shelter animals.

I am requesting funding of \$200,000 to cover the cost of redesigning the old surgery suite at the shelter located at 100 Savannah Road and equipping it to provide care for the animals housed at the shelter as well as to provide an affordable veterinary option for our pet owners.

Funding Request – FPAAC Repairs and Upgrades

In October 2022, the City of Fort Pierce was required to take over the operations of the animal shelter located at 100 Savannah Road. When the former operator of the facility left, they removed all the supplies and equipment needed to properly care for the many animals that were left at the shelter. This included medical supplies, office supplies, furniture, computers, phones, etc. The City was required to replace everything to ensure that the shelter continued to be operational and that the animal care continued uninterrupted. This takeover also required, and still requires, numerous repairs and alterations to the structures and grounds to address both the health and safety of the animals, the staff and all who visit the facility.

These repairs, replacements, and alterations to the shelter facility – both past and future – are an essential government service in that it provides humane care of our stray or impounded animals. Additionally, the transfer of the shelter is the direct result of loss of funding to the prior operator that relied upon donations and similar sources of income due to Covid 19.

I am requesting funding of \$100,000 to help cover the costs associated with the repair, replacement and alterations of the shelter facility including, but not limited to:

- Equipment replacement and upgrade to city specifications: telephones, computers, security systems, etc.
- Furniture replacement: desks, chairs, tables, etc.
- Structure repairs and improvements: replacing doors, installing new windows, repairing leaking AC, repairing damaged ceilings, replacing light fixtures, installing new signs, repairing dog kennels, painting, etc.
- Site improvements and repairs: electronic gate repairs, fence repairs, parking lot drainage issues, etc.

Summary

Addressing the deficiencies caused by the abrupt departure of the previous shelter operator will provide for a safe, clean and healthy environment for the shelter animals, staff and visitors. Establishing an on-site veterinary clinic will also benefit the shelter animals directly, reduce the risk of increased medical needs due to the to stress related to being transported to and from off-site vets, and provide a low-cost veterinary care option to our residents.