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[00:00:00] Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the safety and security meeting for February 11th, 2025. Delighted to have you here, and this is an opportunity for us to cover two main agenda items today. The first is we'll have an opportunity to be briefed by the staff on the wildlife management overview for 2025, and I think that's going to be done by Assistant Chief of Police, Bob Blakely.

[00:00:29] Following that, we'll have an opportunity to hear from the Director, Lisa Currier, for the Department of Animal Sheltering, our consolidated program that we've been talking about now for about two years. So excited about the opportunity to be able to get this update and then have the board ask any questions that they might have.

[00:00:51] So what I'd like to do now is go ahead and turn the program over to Tom Arnold, who is our Deputy County Executive. He will kick us off on the first agenda topic. So with that, Mr. Arnold. Thanks, Supervisor Lusk. Tom Arnold, Deputy County Executive.

[00:01:07] As you all know, during the FY25-26 budget guidance and through the budget process, one of the recommendations was that we would come back to the board again to update you on the consolidation process. And obviously, you gave us permission to hire the Chief Animal Control Officer with the FY25 budget.

[00:01:26] And so we're back today, and hopefully with timing, we were able to get most of the things here that we wanted to cover. The negotiations with the SSPBA are ongoing and have been very constructive, and so we don't have the MOU agreed upon yet, but we're working towards concluding that.

[00:01:44] But we are in a position where we're ready to bring forward some code updates in the March meeting and public hearings in April. And so we thought giving you the update on the consolidation process and also being able to speak about the changes that will be coming before the board in the near future, the timing was good to update you where we are today in hopes that knowing also the FY26 budget will be kicking off shortly, and so we wanted to try and put a conclusion to this as we work towards that transition.

[00:02:10] So our wildlife biologist, Dr. Edwards, would be here to present on the wildlife update, but she's out sick today, so Chief Blakely is going to handle that, but we broke the presentations into two components. As you all recall from public hearing and testimony and a lot of the feedback that you heard, one of the major concerns was with what would happen with wildlife.

[00:02:29] And so we thought it would be more appropriate just to give an overview of the wildlife program and then look for board feedback on what our recommendation is with how we handle wildlife. And then the second presentation will be on the update of the consolidation. So I'll turn it over to Chief Blakely, and he will cover our first presentation.

[00:02:48] Thank you, Deputy County Executive. Bob Blakely, Assistant Chief of Police. Mr. Chairman and members of the board, thanks for allowing us to provide you this update today. And I promised Dr. Edwards I would apologize on her behalf. I mean, she really wanted to be here today.

[00:03:03] She's truly an expert, second to none, when it comes to the county's wildlife management program. She was excited to get an opportunity to provide the board with an overview of that program. You know, several months ago, Dr. Edwards provided this presentation to us.

[00:03:20] And it's the things that you don't remember at times that are impressive about the wildlife management program in its entirety. So she prepared a script for me, essentially some really good notes. So I promise to deliver that request.

[00:03:36] What I'd like to do is just provide you a very brief overview of the county's wildlife management program, what we're really talking about when we say this piece that we're considering moving outside the police department. And then talk about the conversations that we've had mainly with the Fairfax County Park Authority about potentially moving this wildlife management program into the park authority or whether it should stay in the police department.

[00:04:04] So first, talking about the program in particular, the deer management program is a large part of the wildlife management program, and it was initiated in 1997 following a fatal motor vehicle crash.

[00:04:20] It's been managed by the police department for 27 years since it began. The program conducts deer population control through the use of archery, managed shotgun hunts, and sharpshooter operations on over 100 properties throughout the county. It really is designed to address safety and health hazards posed by deer, environmental damage, wildlife health, the ultimate goal of reducing human-wildlife conflicts while maintaining a healthy deer herd.

[00:04:48] Under FCPD, we've worked collaboratively with multiple landowners, including the Park Authority, Nova Parks, the Nature Conservancy, the Bureau of Land Management, to implement this program annually. Archery is the primary method that we've utilized with approximately 500 to 600 hunters that participate in this program annually.

[00:05:10] That program allows us to operate without interruption to the parks and the police department oversees the safety of that program and we have a robust safety record due to these strict protocols that we've always maintained. The deer management program is co-managed by Dr. Edwards and Sergeant Eric Powell of the animal protection police who oversees the program safety audits weapons use hunter screenings and enforcement and sharpshooting operations our wildlife staff works jointly with the park authorities ecologists using a science-based approach to evaluate program effectiveness

[00:05:45] and to inform management decisions throughout field surveys and analysis of our data in addition to management on county parkland and properties our wildlife team consults with community members HOAs about deer mitigation, population control on private lands, as well as other jurisdictions and state agencies that seek to develop urban deer management programs based on our top model.

[00:06:11] The Wildlife Office program also administers the county's Canada Geese Management Program. This program is implemented to reduce the growth of the resident Canada geese. We accomplish this primarily through egg oiling and nest destruction activities on county properties parkland and private lands under registration with u.s fish and wildlife services the park authority also provides support for ag oiling on county parkland we also consult with hoas and private residents on these mitigations and measures and i know many of you have had

[00:06:51] concerns and called into your office about beaver activity in the county we've actually heard quite bit about it and of course the conflicts associated with that which include damming streams blocking stormwater facilities flooding properties damaging trees and our wildlife team has received many consults about that as well and and works with private landowners and the parks on mitigation procedures we work jointly with stormwater urban forestry park authority fmd and other partners to do site evaluations and provide guidance on beaver coexistence measures where non-lethal

[00:07:28] mitigation measures are used to control that population. In addition to these wildlife management duties, our wildlife team serves as the county's subject matter experts. And I know we rely on Dr. Edwards and her team regularly to answer all of our questions, to talk to us about nationwide leading trends in conservation. And she certainly does that in the community with the media and other community organizations as well. This includes responding to questions concerning and relating to animal identification, animal behaviors, nuisance animals, human wildlife

[00:08:03] conflicts, damage prevention and mitigation, wildlife health concerns, wildlife regulations, hunting and trapping regulations, and population control. We are the primary contact for bear and coyote conflicts as well in the county and serve as the liaison with the Virginia Department of wildlife resources. The wildlife team tracks bear sightings from the community and also is the lead outreach organization to speak to the community on bear and coyote interactions and work closely with APP and the Department of Wildlife to determine best management practices related to

[00:08:42] this issue. Our wildlife team consults with the state and local health officials to keep a pulse on the wildlife disease issues affecting the county. We certainly have seen that recently, and we've talked to DWR regarding these health issues, including the chronic wasting disease and the hemorrhagic disease in

deer, rabies, distemper, West Nile virus, mange, and most recently the avian flu. We work closely with animal protection police and wildlife rehabilitators around sick and injured animals to monitor wildlife health and submit animals for testing

[00:09:17] when needed and our team oversees and implements the chronic wasting disease surveillance program through the deer management program and we're able to coordinate that with parks and dwr and local hunters and bring it all together for the health department's caring insects program for tick surveillance and others the wildlife team assists with science-based inventory and monitoring surveys for wildlife in collaboration with the park authority dwr and other conservation partners we also work collaboratively with the park authority to conduct bat

[00:09:53] surveys breeding bird breeding bird surveys deer density reptile and amphibian and sensitive habitats to inform conservation and management decisions and of course our team also partners with many institutions throughout the state and nation leading research projects and others so needless to say we we have a team that is top-notch that is you know very much involved in all things related to our wildlife management program in the county not only do they assure that we are informed but they ensure that your

[00:10:31] offices have a point of contact they also ensure that the county as a whole remains in compliance with laws and regulations governing wildlife and as well as code compliance and zoning when it comes to the handling exotic and wild animals and finally we also provide department of animal sheltering information on regulations for the disposition of exotic animals that are brought into the shelter at times from community members so that brings us

[00:11:06] to you know our final slide here which is you know we have this premier service in our wildlife management program as you could see that nearly every aspect of this program we work in coordination with the fairfax county park authority and as we begin navigating you know this uh question of where does this program best fit um you know we we find ourselves at the probably at two conclusions one being that it stays with the police department who's managed it for 27 years along with our entire animal services division or does it belong with the park authority who certainly has

[00:11:45] a synergistic relationship already an ecosystem which i think would support it and allow it to grow and exist and also one where the the director has a strong familiarity with a program very similar to ours which was just across the river so those are the conversations we've been having And I know that there's lots of conversation to have about this, so we'll open the floor for questions.

[00:12:17] And we thought that, obviously, with the Park Authority having the Park Authority board, that the right thing to do would be first come to all of you to seek your feedback, given that this is the Board of Supervisors program. And then if there's support from the board, we could further engage the conversation with Director Cole, who could then have discussions with her board.

[00:12:34] Okay. Thank you very much for that presentation. And to Dr. Edwards, I hope she's feeling better. sorry she wasn't able to be here today she does an exceptional job in the work on behalf of the county and I'll acknowledge she's actually gotten me to go up on a deer stand climbing up there is a little bit of a challenge and I respect those who are up there for hours and hours trying to identify deer so just want to again acknowledge the presentation and thank you for stepping in here Deputy Chief Blakely I do have a couple of questions and I guess maybe

[00:13:13] you started to answer that I think a little bit Mr. Honor what Matt is the discussion with the park authority have you had any discussions with the park authority because I guess I'm trying to get a sense of where what were their initial thoughts at least around the idea of this possibly being transferred to the park authority yeah we have had obviously credit to Bob and Captain Eric Ivansek or Major Eric Ivansek who recently retired and now Major Farrar has taken on his place but from the the park authority standpoint they've got the ecologist series positions where in the

[00:13:50] wildlife program within police it's a naturalist position and you know that really comes down to the proprietary aspects of position classes in certain agencies and so our thoughts and discussions with the park authority that it Dr. Edwards is it's an ecological you know position that should be moved over or be better suited there versus the naturalist.

[00:14:08] And so the position fit would line up with existing ecology positions. And so we would be able to add capacity by moving over those positions, going from a naturalist to the ecology series, and then be able to build on, and Bob mentioned, I think the synergistic approach of it, of adding capacity and then also the familiarity with what the relationship with the park authority already is.

[00:14:33] So they are certainly open to that conversation. It would come down to with your support, ensuring that we are able to transfer, you know, positions funding to operationalize it. Okay, that's helpful. And then did we consider other departments for it to conceivably go to, or did we just?

[00:14:50] We talked internally with that. Obviously, Public Works has that series of classifications, but we think that rather than if it wasn't the park authority, we would probably be better off leaving it alone where it is within the police department. Okay. And I appreciate that you did list challenges for it to be retained in the police department. It might be helpful just on the opposite side, benefits. And then I felt the same way on the park authority. We have benefits, but then it might be helpful just from a comparative standpoint for informational purposes to know what the challenges would be on that side of it as well.

[00:15:29] I'll turn it over to the team, but I think one of the challenges that I know we were familiar with is we want to make sure that the community knows that this isn't the park authority's wildlife program, right, that this is the county's wildlife program. And so certainly with messaging and so forth, we would be able to do that effectively. But I think certainly, Bob or anybody that has any other thoughts?

[00:15:48] Yeah, I can add. You know, it's always difficult in conversation. This has been something that's been close to the police department for a long time, just like APP. And I know that, you know, with change comes tough decisions and, you know, tough analysis.

[00:16:03] And as we look at the program, the truth is, as APP leaves the police department, we'd have five, you know, wildlife biologists, naturalists left in the police department to look at herd issues and disease management and animals.

[00:16:19] And, you know, do I honestly believe that, you know, 10 years from now or five years from now that we will be giving that program enough attention with such a small team that's really so far outside of the scope of the PD's mission?

[00:16:35] So my fear, one of the largest con is that, you know, it's a mission set that would be left in the police department that would be so isolated and loosely connected into public safety in the way that we look at it, that it would be a program that doesn't get the attention it deserves.

[00:16:54] And so I think that was a big part. Our pros with it staying with the police department would be that, you know, I know worst case scenarios, we maintain status quo and we have a good program. I believe that Dr. Edwards would never accept status quo. So I know that she will always be an advocate to push hard and try to find ways to grow.

[00:17:14] And she has, even in the last few years, pushed a significant number of innovative change requests, and we expect that to continue. When we looked at the parks, for instance, I think the biggest thing was a director Cole's recent understanding of that program. And I think in her former life, you know, she really ran a very similar program.

[00:17:37] So it would be it would be a moment where not only do we think that the positions align and that wing of of the park authority is very much involved in this type of activity. But it's it's somebody at the top that also knows how to run a program in the way that we believe the board expects it to be run. So it had certainly more pros than cons when we looked at it. I think a con would be that it leaves the public safety side. So we have to rely on what we believe will happen.

[00:18:07] And so we're taking a little bit of risk there, but with the conversations that we've been having, we believe that the program would be run in the way that we all expect it to be. Okay. I appreciate that very much. So let me open it up first to the chairman and then I'll get my colleagues, and I'll start on the far end with Supervisor Bierman.

[00:18:28] Well, thank you very much, and thank Dr. Edwards, who's not here, for all the work that has been done to get to this point. I do think we have an opportunity here to be a national model if we do this right, and I know there were some hard decisions made to get to this point, but just doing things the same way you've always done them is not a forward-thinking jurisdiction.

[00:18:50] And so I appreciate, even as painful as it has been, some of the conversations that we had. I have two, I think, easy questions, and then I want to weigh in on the big one, which is where does this go. First, with regard to the deer calling, how do we get assurances that we are using the most humane practices and looking at new technology? You know, the humane elements were in there for everything else mentioned in the presentation, except I didn't see that in that part. And so how do we get reassurance that we're continually looking at that in the program.

[00:19:26] Yes, I know that Dr. Edwards would definitely relay that I think that she sees that as her chief responsibility as leading the program would be not, you know, and I know that if we just look at the simple program as a sharpshooting and archery and a shotgun program, that's ebbed and flowed over times to meet not only the demands, but also what is the best practices nationwide.

[00:19:53] So I think having her continue and leading that effort, I think she will continue to find the best ways and the nationally accepted models. And I know she's weighed in on that loudly at times. And so I think we can expect her to continue doing that.

[00:20:08] Yeah, I think that's helpful. And I think it would be helpful for us if we could get communication from her on what things we've looked at, what things we're continuing to evaluate, just to give us the reassurance and our constituents that we're constantly looking at that issue and, you know, new technologies that emerge and understand a difficult question for you to answer, but maybe something that she could follow up with us in more detail. The second thing is when part of this transition happened, you know, I know several people told us that, you know, only a trained police officer could take a threatening

[00:20:45] animal and in essence you know dispose of that animal what has changed since we made this this pivot and is that a concern at all of the program being considered for moving outside of the police department and that is just basically the lethal action against animals that you know we were told by advocates of the status quo that that's only something a trained police officer could answer some of this yeah and and so in almas you know I know they're very much connected but

[00:21:20] I look at this as a separate component to wildlife enforcement which I know is part of our our next presentation when we talk about the duties and responsibilities as they shift into the animal control model but but I would reassure the board is I believe based on our collaboration and the conversations how this program is going to look that our animal control officers in the field will have the tools to be able to immediately dispatch a dangerous animal that's threatening the community.

[00:21:48] Your police department will absolutely be prioritizing a call for safety where an animal is imminently putting our community at risk. That happens today. It happened 20 years ago. It will happen 20 years from now. That would be a whole-of-government approach, if you will, to there's something happening right now and people are in danger, and we will collaboratively go to deal with that.

[00:22:12] But even without the police department's assistance, the model that Director Currier has designed would allow for that to happen. I'll just add to that. Under Virginia law, our animal services officers can dispatch an animal by firearm or chemical injection.

[00:22:34] And as Chief Blakely said, we will prioritize public safety calls in the exact same way. So if there's a rabid animal, as we had in Lake Akatik not too long ago, and you saw APPOs and you saw the police department respond to that call, so that would continue in the same way.

[00:22:53] Okay. And I think, lastly, and this is just an observation, not a judgment, I think one of the challenges, and I'm still considering this question of where does it belong, one of the challenges I think is that our constituents will have is in thinking of the park authority there's a very defined terrain that people consider as part of the Fairfax County Park Authority universe whereas the county the terrain is every square inch of the county and so overcoming the challenge of what you know you would instinctively think is a park responsibility versus a county-wide

[00:23:31] responsibility is as you've acknowledged one of the biggest challenges we have is with wildlife in the community. And if they all stayed in the park all the time, we still would have challenges, but maybe a little bit differently. And so I think there's that perception issue. And then this is no judgment whatsoever of the quality of the Park Authority Board, because I think it is high quality. But I think one of the challenges we will have as a board is if we made that transition, there is a lack of direct oversight by this board and these elected officials into the activities that occur. And that's that's just a structural thing. It's not a judgment and personality or performance or anything else.

[00:24:10] It's just structurally speaking. Once you were to make that transition, you now have a separate fiduciary board at the park authority that would oversee that. And that's very different from a structural standpoint to what we have today. And I think is the underlying reason why some questions were asked about what other places did we look at and other things is, as I think everyone knows, The park authority is very distinctly different from most other county agencies in terms of the board's ability to provide direct oversight.

[00:24:40] And I think that's something that I think each of us will have to grapple with in making ultimately what we think is a good judgment call about where this would be housed. Okay. I'll recognize, yep.

[00:25:02] The chairman took my question. I mean, mine was going to be over governance and funding with respect to moving to the park authority. So you can move on from me. Thanks. Okay, thank you very much, Supervisor Beerman. Supervisor Jimenez. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for this presentation.

[00:25:19] I have just a quick question. Do you foresee any other county agencies having issues with moving this to parks? So we haven't identified any. I know, as you heard, we collaborate with so many county agencies, and I would expect none of that to change.

[00:25:35] So, you know, in our belief of if this program were to transfer out, Dr. Edwards would run this aspect of the program and her relationships and engagement with all of the stakeholders identified in these other private and county agencies, I think, would continue.

[00:25:55] So we don't anticipate that, and I have not identified any so far. Do you anticipate any hurdles with staff? So we have had that conversation with parks, you know, I think as they consider whether it would fit in the wheel there, you know, what would they need additionally or how would support and so I think they're thinking about that as well as you know what would they need yes it's certainly part of the conversation I appreciate thank you thank you Supervisor Jimenez I'm looking here okay Supervisor oh thank you

[00:26:34] supervisor loss so I guess one of the things I'm struggling with a little bit That is when we went through the APPO transition, this was pulled out. And basically, you know, the word was that this was going to be part of the police department for now.

[00:26:55] And the for now part, I guess I have to remind myself that was part of the discussion. Honestly, this change was probably the most controversial piece, at least for the people that talked to me about their concerns.

[00:27:12] change with the APBO. So I do want to make sure that we're thinking this through. I think the chairman's point about sort of the Board of Supervisors' role and responsibility, us as elected officials, for overseeing what is a pretty sensitive and, I would say, high-risk function of county government. It's something that resonates with me.

[00:27:44] I think we've got to think through this very carefully. I know there is the potential, and I'm not against the park authority stepping up and doing some other things, maybe even developing some sort of law enforcement capability with the park authority, but I'm not sure that connects with this cleanly.

[00:28:07] So I would hope we would look at this longer. And one request, when you come to the Board of Supervisors and you're presenting, you know, pros and cons, please don't just present one side. You know, this is, you know, Supervisor Les mentioned this.

[00:28:28] You know, we need to be able to actually think for ourselves and really consider the pros and the cons on both sides. but I I would hope that we might need a little more time to discuss this as a board and not have the decision made anytime immediately anyway so okay thank you mr. thank you supervisor

Alcorn supervisor Herdy yeah thank thank you Superman Luskin and supervisor Alcorn for pointing out the slide that that's just pretty disappointing it basically says we've already made the decision and

[00:29:05] we're moving on. My first question, what percentage of the land in the county is parkland? I think I know this, but I'm just checking. 10, both FCPA and other. And wildlife management is done on 100% of the land in Fairfax County? Correct. It is done a lot. What percentage of land is in the Ococon watershed? This is something this supervisor should know, but I don't. I don't know.

[00:29:39] But it is rural land, as it is certainly a big part of Drainsville and Great Falls, which is where we have a lot of our wildlife, and Mount Vernon, I'm sorry, and Sully, but it's where we have a lot of our wildlife issues. So this is very important to my residents and constituents.

[00:29:57] I don't have a problem with considering this move, but I would rather defer it until we look at the whole Park Authority versus Parks Department. I think I fear what the chairman noticed is losing direct control over something that is so important to certainly my residents.

[00:30:16] You know, as far as the positions, if we can't figure that out administratively, I don't know, we need a new HR department. We just need to figure out how to make the positions work. I mean, using position titles that can be changed as a reason to do something makes no sense to this supervisor.

[00:30:36] Of course, I'm in the private sector more than I'm in the public sector. So we just change things to where we want them and they make sense. So hopefully we can figure out how to do that. How does Dr. Well, let me start with, have we reached out to our wildlife professionals that work with wildlife management and have they weighed in on this?

[00:30:57] Have we told them it's coming and what is their response been? Supervisor Herodes, I know that our conversations, our public meeting conversations certainly were around this program and the integrity of the program the one thing that we have said from the very beginning and I still believe this right wrong or indifferent is this is not a police department program this is a board of supervisors program and that the expectation going forward that was that nothing would change meaning that the wildlife management program would be this good and better but it certainly we wouldn't sacrifice this or take away that it's

[00:31:34] not a we'll give you two parts and we'll keep one and you know so we made sure to approach all of our conversations was saying that we're very proud of the program today and whatever whatever agency it lands in the program should be administered and look exactly the same so in our early conversations which are not in any way at the point of a decision we we very much have said you know that's that's the goal whoever or wherever this lands it should look very much the same. So we don't expect the constituents to see anything different. I think it's important

[00:32:08] to reach out to them because they are a big part of how wildlife is handled in the county. It's not handled by the wildlife biologists. It's intermittently handled by the wildlife biologists until it gets to our wildlife partners. So I think it's important that they weigh in.

[00:32:25] Wherever we go with this, it's got to be a partnership. It's going to have to be between the police department and animal control and and the parks authority it absolutely has to be or to work wherever it ends up the partnership of those three and our wildlife partners is absolutely critical um is dr edwards weighed in on where she would like to see this be i mean honestly dr edwards prepared the

presentation before you i think dr edwards is doing a good job to weigh in i i think she loves her police department family and we we love her so we would

[00:33:01] And, you know, we certainly would not bat an eyebrow to have Dr. Edwards on our team and maintain this program. And, you know, I know what Bob Blakely thinks and I know what Dr. Edwards thinks. And I think I'm trying to be a little, you know, visionary to the extent that what happens when Dr. Edwards is gone and Bob Blakely is gone.

[00:33:19] And, you know, is there going to be a police commander somewhere who's been a SWAT team person and an investigator that is going to want to grow our wildlife biology program? And if I can, to take that one step further, because one of the things driving this, and I heard it three or four times in the presentation, is that our current parks director has experience doing this, but our current parks director may not be here forever either to go along with it.

[00:33:44] So that, to me, is not a reason to do it because the current one has experience doing it. Very true. It's kind of where does it belong. And, you know, again, they've got 10% of the landmass in the county, not 100%. So I guess we're going to have more conversations on this.

[00:34:03] Yes. Thank you, Supervisor Herity, Supervisor Smith, followed by Supervisor Palchek. I'm happy we took some time to have this discussion and you guys could look at it more. I think you do have to have the discussion with the parks that we need to have that knowledge and figure out where the best fit is.

[00:34:21] I appreciate the chairman's comments about the whole oversight piece and that perception with the whole county. So I think those are things to look at. And I know, you know, my concerns in the beginning was that we keep the DEER program safe. And so that's the kind of information I'll be looking for.

[00:34:39] But I think that we need to have discussions and we need to research and then make a decision about the best place to do this. So thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Smith. Supervisor Palchek. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really just wanted to follow that. to me, I was looking at the inventory monitoring, I counted deer pellets 25 years ago to try to assess the population. I appreciate what's here is that it says about collaboration, right? And that it is the county's program. So I think in addition to having that communication, I think our county agencies are their best when they are communicating and collaborating, right? And not

[00:35:18] siloed. So understanding the goals of the program, the things we want to keep that are benefits and then the challenges of those, which I think were mentioned. But then finally, you know, and in some ways we should be reviewing everything we do for improvement. But I think hopefully, as you've heard, not just with us, but with the community, I think there is some confusion now as to where to go when there are wildlife issues, whether it's in someone's front yard, backyard, their streets,

[00:35:52] whether it's a deer or a bear, right, how we address that. So through this, one of my goals really is to help us and the county better communicate to our constituents, right, where to turn to and also what could happen. I think some of my constituents have been concerned if I call about the beaver, if I call about the bear, will they be hurt? Who will come out? How will they address that? So I think all of those things we've been hearing from our constituents and the outcomes they're hoping for, which probably can't know 100% of the time, but

[00:36:27] how to help best meet those needs of our humans who come across wildlife and how we address that. Thank you. Thank you very much. Chairman McKay. Yeah, just quickly, based on my colleague's comments. I think it sounds more like lean towards leaving this in the police department.

[00:36:47] I think we can give some more talk to this, but I don't want to exhaust ourselves on this. And so if that is something that seems to be where people are, I would challenge you, Bob, with your team to help us structurally understand how we can prevent the things that you just described could happen if it stays in the police department. Because we talked here a lot about cross-agency collaboration. I think I can speak for most of my constituents and say they really don't care what department it's in. They just want to make sure that they get the simple information that they need to get. They know where to call. And I think as a board, we want the reassurance that

[00:37:24] the challenges that you very real stated here of keeping it in the police department help us understand what a path forward would look like that would help fend off those challenges. What could you do structurally within the department and with the concurrence and full participation of the other stakeholders in the county to help kind of fend that off, I think is what I'm hearing and I think probably the direction we should be going in this because, you know, if we go embark on a big, long dialogue, study, all this stuff, just help us understand that challenge a little bit better and maybe we can have a really clearer path forward.

[00:38:04] Thank you, Chairman McKay. What I will do on this topic is provide you a NIP in the next two weeks, and then we can move from there. I think that would be really helpful. Okay. Thank you. Any other questions or comments?

[00:38:20] Okay. Thank you very much for that first presentation, and we will now move to our second item on the agenda, which is on the consolidation update for 2025. So I will turn this over, I think, to Lisa Courier. So, Lisa.

[00:38:37] Hello. Good morning. I'm Risa Currier, Director, Department of Animal Sheltering. Thank you for the opportunity to be here so we could provide an update on where we're at with the consolidation of animal services. Over the last three years, the Department of Animal Sheltering has shifted our focus from beyond the shelter walls into providing resources and programs into neighborhoods throughout Fairfax County to address the root causes of animal homelessness in our county.

[00:39:11] So in just the past year, we've cared for nearly 5,000 animals in our two shelters, providing them with exceptional care while they're with us. And then we've provided care and support for an additional 5,000 families and their pets throughout Fairfax County.

[00:39:30] And we've done that through a variety of programs, vaccination clinics, spay and neuter vouchers, free pet food and supplies, other services that help keep families together with their pets. We've done this through a growing network of community partnerships, both in private and public sector. So we work with private sector, private practice veterinarians to administer our spay-neuter vouchers. We work with organizations like Rising Hope Community Church and Lorton

[00:40:03] Community Action Center to remove barriers to our services that we provide. We are confident that this field services division and the consolidation of animal services is only going to increase our capacity to reach families with their pets and increase public safety and enhance the animal health and

welfare of animals in our county. So as part of our expanded focus, we are excited to announce that we are making a name change. So moving forward, instead of the

[00:40:41] Department of Animal Sheltering, we are going to be the Department of Animal Services to better reflect this growing mission. So this is a few highlights of what we've been up to since we were last year. So following the adoption of the FY 2025 budget and the transfer of position from the police department, we hired a chief field services officer, Thomas Engel, just seated down here. He also serves as the deputy director of the shelter. Chief Engel brings significant

[00:41:19] experience in animal field services. He was most recently at Montgomery County, Maryland, where he oversaw the field services division and also the dispatchers. In Montgomery County, they transitioned their animal services out of the police department and successfully, and so Thomas was participated.

[00:41:42] He oversaw many aspects of that implementation. So his experience has been both timely and very helpful as we go through this process. So in October, the county engaged in discussions with the Executive Board of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association, I'm going to say SSPBA going forward, and related to the effects bargaining of this transition.

[00:42:11] And then in November, the county presented the SSPBA with a memorandum of understanding to capture those effects. This month, we began advertising for the Animal Services Officer 1.

[00:42:28] We presented a NIP to you a few months ago with that change. The police department had ceased recruiting for APPOs back in July. And so by starting recruitment for the Animal Services Officer, we wanted to ensure continuity of operations during this transition.

[00:42:48] We are continuing negotiations with the SSPBA and finalizing that MOU, and we are looking forward to getting that done very soon. Let's see.

[00:43:03] So this is the structure for the new Field Services Division, and it greatly mirrors the current model employed by the Animal Service Division of the Police Department with the core hours and the service hours also remaining the same. This structure includes two teams operating with an AM-PM shift, and so this structure ensures timely call response and appropriate coverage. But most importantly, this structure ensures consistency for the

[00:43:39] APPOs transitioning to the Department of Animal Services. This structure creates 12 leadership positions with ample opportunities for staff specialization and growth. And it includes both supervisory and non-supervisory leadership roles. So we are going to continue to analyze call data to deploy our resources effectively and are actively working towards adding an overnight shift in the near future. So our field services team includes two types of positions. The animal

[00:44:19] services officer. They have the power to fully enforce state and local codes pertaining to the animal care treatment and control. That includes investigating cruelty, bites, enforcing rabies control. They will partner with state and local law enforcement, work with the Fairfax County Police Department. But in addition to performing all those functions that the Animal Protection police do. They are also, as employees of the Department of Animal Services, they are going to be able to connect our community with resources from the shelter. And that includes our Safe Haven

[00:44:57] program, which we support victims of domestic violence, behavior and training support, vaccinations, just to name a few. Our field services team will also include animal services investigator positions. These will have the training of the ASOs. They'll go to the academy, but they will have additional training and investigations and will be specializing in complex cruelty investigations and liaisons with the Fairfax County Police Department and the Commonwealth Attorney's Office.

[00:45:31] So because these positions require specialized training, we are hopeful this is an opportunity for our APPOs who enjoy that investigative aspect of their job to move into this position and operate within a leadership structure within this new structure.

[00:45:51] So the Fairfax County Police Department is going to continue to support our department for complex investigations, including executing search warrants and making custodial arrests, just as they do with the Animal Protection Police today.

[00:46:09] And then our officers are going to receive comprehensive training. Initial training will take about three months to complete. They will go to a state-mandated academy overseen by the state veterinarian, and then they will have extensive field training, and we are working with other departments, including the police department and other human services agencies to ensure they're receiving training to make them very cross-functional individuals out in the field.

[00:46:39] a summary of all of those trainings has been provided for you as a reference as a handout. So one of the most important questions I know you have is what's going to change for our residents when they need assistance with an animal-related matter?

[00:47:00] And the answer is that placing a call for service with an animal-related issue is going to happen the same way. So they will call the police non-emergency number, and our officers will be dispatched in the same way that APPOs are. They will be equipped with a portable radio and mobile dispatch terminal.

[00:47:21] And then our ASOs are empowered to respond to the same calls that the APPOs have been responding to. We are working with all of our public safety agency partners, so DPSC and FCPD, to ensure that we have agreements regarding training and equipment sharing to ensure that we can maintain consistent operations through this transition and going forward.

[00:47:52] So as we all recall, wildlife was a big topic of discussion when we were moving towards this decision. And so, under the consolidated structure, our response to wildlife calls will remain unchanged, but with a strategic focus on enhancing the county's support for wildlife services now and into the future, ASOs will respond to calls for injured, orphaned, and sick wildlife, and they will be assessed, triaged, and transferred to a veterinarian when that is appropriate, or to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

[00:48:31] And if the animal cannot be rehabilitated, our ASOs will euthanize those animals, whether it's through chemical injection or the officers will have access to a small caliber rifle that is intended for deer dispatch. We are currently working with the Department of Wildlife Resources and also the state veterinarian through the Virginia Department of Agriculture to review all of the current SOPs in place for handling wildlife and wildlife euthanasia.

[00:49:01] We want to ensure that our county's wildlife protocols are up to date and we are meeting best practices. We have also established a wildlife advisory committee, and this is to ensure our program aligns with our community needs.

[00:49:18] And that committee includes a wildlife veterinarian, Fairfax County's wildlife management specialist, two Fairfax County licensed wildlife rehabilitators, one of which is an animal control officer for a neighboring jurisdiction, a Fairfax County health department official, and Fairfax County's shelter veterinarian.

[00:49:40] So in addition to assisting us with reviewing and updating our SOPs and ensuring that we're utilizing our resources effectively, Our advisory commission is also working with us to identify some really key obstacles we have facing wildlife. Most importantly is our region is experiencing a significant decline in licensed wildlife rehabilitators. Many of these professionals have served our community for decades and they are starting to retire. And there are too few individuals stepping into those roles. So we're

[00:50:17] looking forward to collaborating with this committee and looking how we can proactively address this challenge so our county remains well-equipped to address wildlife needs now and into the future. And as Supervisor Paul Cech was referencing, we want to make sure there's no confusion around wildlife, and there has been in the past for our community. We often have individuals calling the shelter with wildlife questions and bringing wildlife into the shelter.

[00:50:45] So having a consolidated model where all things animals are under DAS will help alleviate confusion. Right now when we have residents call with a wildlife concern, they have to be redirected to the police department.

[00:51:02] And so now having a lot of those wildlife services in-house and being able to assist with the direct care of wildlife will be able to ensure that we are providing more efficient and comprehensive care for our wild neighbors.

[00:51:20] So going next steps in the transition, we as Deputy County Executive Arnold shared with you, we are working right now with the Office of the County Attorney on updating some very minor updates to Chapter 41 where we just have to really update titles and definitions to reflect the use of the ASO.

[00:51:48] ASO. And so those updates will be forthcoming, as well as updates to the retirement code to accommodate the ASO staying in the URS system. The other things we're working on is interagency agreements with all of the different departments we're going to be working with. So both in public safety, but also on the human services side. We want to ensure that our officers are looking beyond basic welfare and that we're promoting the overall health and well-being of all households.

[00:52:21] Our officers are going to be going into homes and interacting with families. And so we want to be looking at families holistically. And so those working groups and those operating agreements are in the works. And then let's see, did you want to talk about the CEOs? So over the last several months county staff has been working on with the SSPBA to negotiate the effects of this change on our animal protection police officers. And we're almost at the point of having a completed MOU

[00:53:01] where essentially every APPO employee will be provided with kind of a fact sheet that lays out their decision to either stay with Department of Animal Services on the ASO path or remain a sworn law enforcement officer with the FCPD and move into a traditional law enforcement role. So the most important thing that we started with was no employee will lose anything that they currently have. There are zero scenarios where that is even possible. In many cases,

[00:53:35] The situation can be better when it comes to pay and benefits, but it can't ever be one small piece worse, if you will. Upon making that decision, the police department has designed an on-the-job

training model to refresh some of those law enforcement skills that our animal protection police officers haven't used in a while, like investigating domestic violence or similar criminal event.

[00:54:00] And our goal will be to get them up to speed and on a path to working in traditional law enforcement role. We have even designed training models for the APP supervisors if they wish to stay on FCPD as sworn police supervisors.

[00:54:17] They will go through that on-the-job training and then into a supervisory training path to where they will develop the skills needed to be prepared to lead in the police department. So again, do no harm was our model.

[00:54:33] And if a sergeant with APP wants to be a sergeant with FCPD on the sworn side, then we have developed a model to make that happen. And likewise, after those conversations happen with the individual APPOs and they will be able to select what direction they want to go, whether it's DAS or FCPD, then we will be able to start making our decisions regarding whether we what positions we need to fill and

[00:55:07] vacancies we will have and then at that point we'll have a better sense of a timeline for the transition. FCPT has maintained that we will work side by side until this transition is complete and until our staff are we're fully staffed and our staff are fully trained and we are ready to go to just ensure that there is no disruption to any services for our residents during this transitional process.

[00:55:35] Okay. Thank you very much for that presentation. And I'll say, really appreciate the comment that you made, Chief Blakely, as it relates to really causing no harm to those who are in the position today, ensuring that they have the same level of opportunity and benefit that they had in the current system if they decide to make a change.

[00:56:03] So I think that's an important point. Can I ask a question, though, about the next steps, number two, retirement code updates? Do we have a sense, I mean, I know we're still in negotiations with a number of items in collective bargaining, but do we have a sense of when we might come to the board with those revisions to the retirement code?

[00:56:24] Sure. We'll be coming forth in March to the board for both Chapter 41 as well as the retirement code updates with a public hearing in April, knowing that the MOU still needs to be signed and adopted, but we know which direction we would want to go with offering their options so that can come forth.

[00:56:40] Okay, that's helpful. I think that's important for the folks who are in that position, knowing that that's going to happen relatively soon. I wanted to ask about, I know we talked a little bit about the APPOs doing training of the ASOs. Can you explain to me what that expectation is and specifically what is the thought around it?

[00:57:02] Yes, Supervisor Les, so currently our APPOs perform this mission on a day-to-day basis. They're the subject matter experts and the pros. Many of them are field training instructors as certified by the police department and train new APP recruits when they come out of the academy.

[00:57:19] So I think our goal is, you know, I think our vision was we would get at the point where employees would make their decision in terms of which direction they're going we expect to have a pool of individuals who are continuing with animal services and from those use those folks to help train our new aso hires obviously this you know we have said this is this is our mission collectively and together and we expect over the next several months for app's and asos to work

[00:57:52] shoulder to shoulder as if we were one agency until the point in time is that we're able to completely leave. So our expectation is that everyone will be helping each other. And the way that we conduct field training, especially like for the first few that are hired, will be not much different than the way that we would train a new recruit APP coming out of our own police Academy. That's helpful. Thank you. And then I wanted to ask, how will the ASO's charge or investigate certain crimes? And thinking more about the wildlife crimes that currently have

[00:58:32] state code kind of conditions around them, if they're in the civilian animal enforcement authority, how will they be able to do that? Yep, that's a great question. And the number one question that came up, and the best example to use is a hunting or fishing violation. So today's ASOs don't have the authority to cite for illegal hunting violations.

[00:58:54] But the one example that we gave is, well, A, they're extraordinarily rare, single digits per year, if that. And what we would expect is that if dispatched to a call of perhaps a property owner says that there's evidence of an illegal hunting operation on my property, the ASO would respond and say, you know, maybe I see a baiting instrument.

[00:59:17] appears to be a tree stand it looks like you know maybe there's some illegal hunting occurring and at that point they would engage their state and local law enforcement resources to determine the best investigative entity and I'm sure director courier had something to add to that but we you know it would be no different than if an ASO discovered an illegal organized crime ring around dog fighting for instance you know they would get there and discover this evidence and say well we should we should have detectives from our police department's organized crime unit Come and investigate that that's what occurs today and that would occur in the future as well

[00:59:53] Also helpful. Thank you for that. And then last I'll ask in terms of oh, oh, yes. I just wanted to add that We looked at Call volume and calls related to wildlife crimes tend to be about one percent of overall calls So as chief Blakely reference, it's a very small Percentage of what the ASS are handling and those calls often overlap with things that the police may be responding to already right with discharging a firearm and so And in surveying our our colleagues that use the animal control officers in neighboring jurisdictions

[01:00:32] They regular part regularly partner with their local police department and the Department of Wildlife Resources and other respective to handle those calls appropriately okay thank you for that additional comment and feedback I wanted to ask about the staffing levels because I know today we have the ability to use temporary police assignments to address the staffing needs so how will we sort of handle that in the future with the ASS yes thank

[01:01:07] you for that question again we we're going to be as chief publicly mentioned side-by-side on this until we are fully staffed and ready to respond and we feel confident with the personnel that we have we will be able to meet all the calls for service just looking at the calls coming in versus the staffing levels all right I will now turn it over to term okay thank you thank you great presentation and update I think this is exactly what we were we're

[01:01:44] looking to get, and this looks very orderly, and certainly appreciate the point that was made by Supervisor Lusk and you about the transition and what we're offering to current employees. I mean, you know, frankly, it's really nice to be in an organization that values public workers right now, and clearly we do, so that's great. I guess the question I have on your slide where you were talking about trainings and

certifications, you mentioned state mandatory training, and I'm just curious as to is that something we were doing before and will continue to do?

[01:02:21] Is that something new? Because when I look at the sheet that you have that has the training program, the only state training that I see on here is the humane animal euthanasia training, and then maybe, maybe, if I'm reading it right, the wildlife identification and triage.

[01:02:38] And so I'm trying to understand where that intersection with the state is and how that may or may not be different now than it was before. Yes. Excuse me. So the Animal Control Basic Academy is the state-required training for all animal control officers, and our APPOs currently go through that training, and our ASOs will continue to go through that training.

[01:03:02] so that's the main state piece then is that training because i i mean what i appreciate about this is all the varied you know when i look under the instructors all the different various viewpoints and entities that are involved in and holistic training um of our staff and i just wanted to make sure what it was if there was anything different with regard to the state but it sounds like that's what we have been doing and that's what we will continue to do and then What, if anything, in this list under the job critical training or essential skills training is new or different than the training that our folks have been under in past years?

[01:03:41] I will actually turn that question over to Chief Engel to answer. My name is Thomas Engel, Chief of Field Services for the Department of Animal Sheltering. Just to go back to the first question, the euthanasia training and the animal control officer basic training, those are state required through VDACS, Virginia Department of Agricultural Services, as well as the safe capture chemical and mobilization training.

[01:04:13] Those are also the training required for chemical capture that's approved by VDACS as well. A lot of these trainings are already done by the Animal Protection Police currently, especially the ones that are required at the top.

[01:04:31] The essential skills training, a lot of those are also trainings that the Animal Protection Police get something similar to these type of trainings as well. But we selected these just to make sure that we could show that our officers are going to be well-rounded.

[01:04:48] I think one of the big ones that we really wanted to highlight was that we're going to be working with the Department of Family Services to try to create, like, a human services element with our training. One of the big things that we're trying to do right now is really integrate and try to solve the big problems going on in the community, not just the animal welfare issue, but be able to identify, okay, there's some food insecurity here and things like that.

[01:05:12] So I think that's a really important point and why I was drawn to, you know, the sheet that you gave us, because there were some things that, you know, might jump out at you a little bit differently and certain certainly also the mental health crisis training component of this that is increasingly important.

[01:05:31] And, you know, I know that as recently as last week on a police ride-along with a mental health call, there were a lot of animals in the house. And you begin to wonder, you know, what's happening with them when someone is having a mental health emergency and how do we make that connection?

[01:05:47] And so I really appreciate that holistic look and the piece of the human services element that gets added into the training protocols because I think that's exactly what we're looking for moving forward. So, thank you. Okay.

[01:06:03] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will now move to my colleagues starting on this side of the room. So, Supervisor Herity, please. A couple of questions. On slide four, I see investigator.

[01:06:19] Is that new? How was -- who did the investigator? So, in my position, that's the -- or in my presentation, that's the animal services investigator that I referenced. We have two of those positions and those are positions where our officers will have the baseline ASO training, but also enhanced training where they will be focused on doing complex investigations and related to animal welfare.

[01:06:53] And our goal is that this would be a great opportunity for an APPO that enjoys the investigative part of their job to transition into those roles. Do we have investigators now within our current APPO structure?

[01:07:08] We do not, no. Because they all do it themselves. So this is going to be them referring, I'm just trying to understand this, they'll be referring cases to this investigator. That's correct. So the ASIs will serve as the liaisons to FCPD and also the Commonwealth Attorney's Office.

[01:07:29] As we presented last time, criminal investigations isn't a big part of the job. So having two individuals that are focused on this, but all animal services officers are equipped to and empowered through Virginia law and through code to lead investigations into animal cruelty and neglect.

[01:07:50] So these will be for the more complex situations that we have once in a while. So we're pretty sure two is enough. Yes. Okay. And slide three, and I think this has kind of been answered, but I'm going to just kind of -- at what point do these decisions get made and do we have enough?

[01:08:12] I'm just worried about service delivery during that transition period, and I don't see on here what the APP's got to make their decision and how many ASOs are we going to have at that time. I'm just trying to -- if you don't have those answers yet, that's okay, but that's my big concern is the middle window.

[01:08:34] How are we doing service delivery now? Because I'm sure some are looking and probably leaving and going to other departments. Right. No, that's a great question. And I think that's where we had hoped. I mean, you know, we scheduled these meetings many months in advance. We're like, well, we should have everything ironed out by the time we get to here. And lo and behold, we had a meeting the other day and we're still working on the MOU.

[01:08:52] So our hopes would be that once the MOU is signed and then that we want to make sure that we afford the opportunity for the APPOs to make an informed decision for themselves. And so they've obviously been thinking about this ever since the budget was adopted, but until the facts are in front of them with what their options are, as soon as the MOU is signed, we want to be able to give them adequate amount of time, whether that's a month or two months, to make that decision.

[01:09:15] And then from that point, we can begin the hiring process. And the likelihood is we would have a bifurcated model for a while where we would have APPOs as well as ASOs working collectively together as we work through the transition of onboarding the ASOs and offboarding the APPOs that are going to be going to police.

[01:09:33] So we can continue the staffing levels where they are today. And we hope that the training would take around three months. But giving you the date, we will follow up with that once the MOU is decided. and they have made their elections, but we aren't sure exactly when that will begin at this point.

[01:09:50] So if I'm an APPO that's decided to go police, you're not going to move me right over? Exactly. It'll be a deferred as they see. Okay. Yes, sir. So that's how you're planning. I was just curious how you're planning to handle that. On the Wildlife Advisory Committee, I didn't hear the wildlife biologist. I didn't see the list.

[01:10:06] I assume they saw it. She's on it. All right, good. I would hope so. The only other thing that kind of struck me as strange is on the training sheet, it says the animal police protection officers and animal control officers from neighboring, the training will consist of ride-alongs with APPOs and ACOs from neighboring jurisdictions, as well as time training in the animal shelter.

[01:10:33] It just struck me as strange that we would be going outside a jurisdiction and when we've got people trained and know our terrain and know where the issues are. And I know when I go out with the bike group, they know what houses are.

[01:10:48] I mean, I would think our APPOs know what to watch and what not to watch. Why we're pulling in people from outside to do that didn't make any sense to me. And are we paying them and all that other. Yeah, I'm happy to explain that.

[01:11:04] That's a great question. So as you might imagine, animals don't know when they're crossing into different jurisdictions. So animal welfare is very interjurisdictional.

[01:11:22] In fact, this Friday, I have a call with all of the directors of the National Capital Region shelter directors because we talk about things in a very much a regional perspective. And the model that we are working towards is also a model employed by all of our neighboring jurisdictions.

[01:11:40] And so we want to ensure, one, that our officers are aware of their policies and procedures and how they respond to calls, but also that we have those relationships in place because very often we are working across county lines and collaborating and sharing resources.

[01:12:02] And often, you know, people are moving across boundaries with animals. So we want to ensure that we can continue those great relationships. And I think that your question specifically, the field training aspect is certainly what we rely on with our APPOs, right?

[01:12:20] So what Bob spoke to with those that remain doing the baseline field training part? But this would be the next step of that, of exposure, relationship building with the other jurisdictions. also getting to work with and seeing that's out of that perspective of the other jurisdictions that have deployed a different model.

[01:12:38] So I think if you were asking why would we have the field training being conducted by people from other counties, that's not what the purpose of it is. Okay, so it's an additional piece. Mm-hmm, yeah. All right, I just, when I saw that, I didn't get the second piece that you say is in there, but I think knowing the county is as important as knowing the region.

[01:13:02] Exactly. Okay, thank you, Supervisor Herity. Other colleagues who would like to ask a question or a comment? Supervisor Stewart. I was looking at the field services organization chart, and there's a high amount of supervision and management.

[01:13:24] Can you give me some sense of why that intensive level of oversight is important or critical in this job? Because in the private sector, flatter is better generally, and we're hiring people for their abilities and their knowledge and ultimately their skill.

[01:13:42] And we would hope that they would be able to operate and be fairly independent, but obviously there's a structure that you still want them to be in. So maybe some sense of why the level of leadership focus that's in here. Well, first of all, I'll just say that, you know, we want to ensure that there's opportunities for growth and specialization for our officers, and that's important for longevity in the job, and that's something that when we've had conversations with APPO's that they've identified, that is something that's a priority to them.

[01:14:21] So that's one piece of it. And then just for the operational and the call response aspect, I will respond to Thomas in terms of, or I will defer to Chief Engel, and how that works in terms of team organization. Yeah, one of the big points is that this is actually very similar to the model that the Animal Protection Police have currently, and a lot of time was spent into, you know, they had a data analyst, like, review their call volume and determine minimum staffing and things like that.

[01:14:55] I think that this structure that the Animal Protection Police have employed for so long is a very good structure for oversight and management and ensuring that the staff get the supervisory support that they need, while also, like Director Carrier said, ensure proper oversight. So I think that this would be -- I think continuing this structure would be very good and ensure good continuity of operations with the APP currently.

[01:15:25] And one of the things, just to add, that, you know, it has been made clear to us that they want to continue with this structure, and that's something we've been responsive to is we don't want to disrupt a shift structure and an organizational structure that's already working for them. And Supervisor Short, one thing I would just add also, given that this is shift work, you know, you have essentially two shifts and then a day and a night for both. So, you know, effectively when you look at an org chart and you see 12 supervisors, but when that's spread out over the course of four shifts, we want to make sure that the

[01:16:00] supervisor lined up with the ASOs. And so you have to have an allotment of supervisors and redundancy built in there over the course of the four, as opposed to if it was one organizational structure where they were working money through Friday 8 to 4, you might only need three supervisors because that group's always together. But we've got effectively like the A and B shift like police have as well as day and night. So supervisors are coming and going as the animal services officers are, then the other ones would obviously be off. And that's not reflected in your chart where you have five ASOs, a lead ASO, and then you have a lead ASO that also reports to a supervisor.

[01:16:35] So you have what I would view as two leadership individuals that are overseeing, if you will, five other ASOs. And then you have another whole section which has similar kind of leadership and management structure. So I understand why this may be what it is currently, and I understand that I don't know how many of the existing IPOs are going to transfer over, But I would think that we would want to at least be putting together what is best practices.

[01:17:02] And maybe this is best practice, and that's part of my question. But it's also, for me, it seems pretty top-heavy. So help me understand that. I will say that the lead ASO position is more of like a team lead, not necessarily a supervisor. But it's like a, you know, it's the officer that's like a senior officer who you talk to about calls and things like that.

[01:17:22] So it's a non-supervisory leadership position, too. And it's kind of similar to the MAPPPPO that they currently have in the police. Just to point that out. Thank you. I have a hard time accepting it as the best structure, even though I'm not in public safety and I don't have that knowledge experience.

[01:17:45] But as a layperson overseeing this, it doesn't make a lot of sense to me. So thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Stork. Any other colleagues that would like to ask a question or make a comment? Supervisor Herity. I'm going to make a comment. I shouldn't. I just love all the references to the way it's already working so well.

[01:18:04] Thank you. MR. Okay, no problem. So, thank you to the staff for that presentation, and I will adjourn our meeting today at 12:29. Thank you very much.



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