



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Committee Meeting Minutes

Internal Operations Committee

Supervisor Candace Andersen, Chair
Supervisor Diane Burgis, Vice Chair

Monday, October 27, 2025

10:30 AM

309 Diablo Rd, Danville
3361 Walnut Blvd, Suite 140, Brentwood
<https://cccouny-us.zoom.us/j/81079842919>
Call in: (888) 278-0254, Conference code:
845965

1. Call to Order

A problem occurred with the online meeting link and the meeting was delayed for 15 minutes until the link was corrected.

Chair Andersen called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. In attendance were the District III Brentwood office, Kara Galindo, Steve Burdo, Ben Winkleblack, Chrystine Robbins, Diana Oyler, Anna Cleese, Citizen for Equity, Unidentified Caller ending in 2708, Unidentified Caller ending in 1188, Unidentified Caller ending in 2909, Unidentified Caller ending in 1994, Unidentified Call in User 1, Holly, Jill Ray, Maureen Parkes, Vinoy Mereddy, Joellen Bergamini.

Present: District II Supervisor Candace Andersen and District III Supervisor Diane Burgis

2. Public comment on any item under the jurisdiction of the Committee and not on this agenda (speakers may be limited to two (2) minutes).

No one requested to speak during the general public comment period.

3. RECEIVE and APPROVE the Record of Action for the September 22, 2025 Internal Operations Committee meeting. (Julie Enea, County Administrator's Office)

Attachments: [DRAFT IOC Record of Action for 9-22-25](#)

Aye: Chair Candace Andersen and Vice Chair Diane Burgis

Result: Passed

4. INTERVIEW applicant for the Board of Supervisors 1 and 2 seats on the Airport Land Use Commission to complete the unexpired terms ending on May 7, 2028 and May 2, 2027, respectively and DETERMINE recommendation for Board of Supervisors consideration. (Julie Enea, County Administrator's Office)

Attachments: [Seeking Airport Land Use Commission Member News Release \(2025\)](#)
[Airport Land Use Commission Roster 10.22.25](#)
[Mereddy Vinoy \(ALUC\) 08-06-25 D3 Redacted](#)

The Committee interviewed Vinoy Mereddy and voted unanimously to recommend Mr.

Mereddy for the BOS #1 seat to complete the current term that will end on May 7, 2028.

Aye: Chair Candace Andersen and Vice Chair Diane Burgis

Result: Passed

5. CONSIDER accepting the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Animal Benefit Fund Report. (Steve Burdo, Animal Services Department)

Attachments: [ABF Presentation 2025_FINAL](#)
[Public Comment of ABF by Lisa Kirk_10-27-25](#)
[Public Comment ABF_Holly Cuciz_10-27-25](#)
[Public Comment ABF received at the meeting on 10-28-25](#)

Steve Burdo from the Animal Services Department presented the staff report, providing insights into the Animal Benefit Fund's activities and impact over the past fiscal year. The presentation highlighted the fund's purpose, allocation of resources, and success stories from various programs aimed at enhancing the welfare of shelter animals in Contra Costa County.

Overview of the Animal Benefit Fund

The Animal Benefit Fund was established in 1988 to accept donations for the care and well-being of shelter animals and to support humane welfare and education programs in Contra Costa County. The fund's allocations are divided into three main programs: medical assistance, spay and neuter, and shelter intervention programs, each designed to address specific needs within the community.

Medical Assistance Program

The medical assistance program provides emergency veterinary care for animals in the county shelter's care. In the last fiscal year, \$40,000 was allocated to support advanced medical needs, with funding distributed among three partners: Animal Fix Clinic, Cat Support Network, and Friends of Contra Costa Animal Services. These funds helped a total of 105 animals, exceeding annual goals for each organization.

Spay, Neuter, and Wellness Program

The spay, neuter, and wellness program aimed to provide low-cost surgeries and vaccinations to pets and community cats. With a total fund of \$100,000, six partners accomplished 913 surgeries and administered over 1,500 vaccines and microchips. This program not only helped control pet populations but also provided essential healthcare to animals in need.

Shelter Intervention Program

The shelter intervention program aims to assist residents in keeping their pets at home rather than in shelters. With \$200,000 allocated, this program helped 874 pets remain in loving homes. Various organizations contributed to this effort, providing essential services such as medical care and educational resources to pet owners.

Success Stories

Among the success stories, Joybound assisted a dog named Romeo, who received necessary medications for a skin infection, allowing him to stay with his family. The House Rabbit Society also provided educational resources in multiple languages,

enhancing care for rabbits in the community.

Challenges Faced

The presentation highlights several challenges faced by the programs, including rapid fund usage, scheduling difficulties for veterinary appointments, limited access to low-cost veterinary services, rising demand for shelter intervention, and staffing instability within partner organizations. These issues underline the need for continued focus and improvement in service delivery.

Future Directions

Looking ahead, the Animal Services Department aims to target high-need communities, expand outreach, leverage partnerships, and grow funding for the Animal Benefit Fund through strategic marketing efforts. The annual giving campaign in November is a key focus for increasing donations.

In conclusion, the Animal Benefit Fund has made significant strides in enhancing the welfare of animals in Contra Costa County, thanks to the support of donors and partners. The department expresses gratitude for the contributions that enable them to continue their vital work in the community.

Vice Chair Burgis asked about the department's intentions towards the ABF reserve. Steve replied that the department is gradually spending more and more of the reserve, but some funds must remain on reserve as a rainy day fund.

The following public comments were received:

Written public comment from Lisa Kirk, attached.

Written public comment from Holly Cuciz, attached.

Additional written public comment/notes, attached.

Speaker 1: One speaker voiced concerns about the allocation of shelter intervention funds, observing that large organizations like East Bay SPCA and Joybound, which have significant reserves, are receiving substantial funds. She emphasized the need for transparency in funding proposals and suggested that smaller groups, which achieve more with fewer resources, should be prioritized. They also noted the ongoing issue of turning away healthy animals and the lack of community funds for rescue services.

Speaker 2: Peter Wilson, who has been associated with Cat Rescue since 2011, addressed the failure of the County and its municipalities to effectively manage the care and well-being of stray cats. The County's shelters often turn away residents trying to surrender cats, leading to an increase in stray cat populations. Volunteers participate in a trap-neuter-return process to help control the population, but there are insufficient resources to meet the demand. Additionally, many municipalities have codes that prohibit feeding stray cats, creating a contradictory situation where residents are punished for trying to help. He recommended that the county develop a process to find solutions to this issue, including more spay-neuter programs.

Speaker 3: Linda Rogers commented that she and her spouse Peter Wilson co-founded Delta View Cats in Pittsburg. They successfully passed it on to others. During a discussion, concerns were raised about the allocation and transparency of Animal Benefit Fund (ABF) money. Specific complaints included:

- 1. \$50,000 given to East Bay SPCA, an out-of-county nonprofit, which helped 51 animals.*
- 2. Jelly's Place received \$14,000 and served 55,000 animals.*
- 3. PawSafe received \$30,000 and assisted 226 animals.*

Additionally, there were questions about large amounts of ABF funds given to well-funded organizations like Joy Bound, which she claimed has \$83 million in reserve, while smaller nonprofits received less support despite appearing to be more efficient.

Following public comment, the Committee concluded that:

- Animal Services funding decisions are based on the needs for medical procedures, housing, and food for animals.*
- Funding is allocated based on detailed invoices for services rendered, ensuring accountability and effective use of resources.*
- Funding determinations are made by a panel, sometimes including external members, and are based on the merits of each proposal.*
- The Animal Benefit Fund ensures that services are only provided to Contra Costa County residents, even if the organization is based outside the county.*
- The board aims to do the greatest good for the greatest number of animals, with a focus on both large and small organizations.*
- The board also encourages smaller organizations to take advantage of capacity-building programs to strengthen their operations and partnerships with larger organizations.*

The Committee suggested including representatives of smaller rescue organizations on the funding panel in the future. With the preceding, the Committee accepted the report and directed staff to forward the report to the Board of Supervisors on Consent, along with a listing of the types of services and procedures funded with ABF funds.

Approved, with direction to include in the report to the Board of Supervisors a listing of services and procedures funded by the ABF.

Aye: Chair Candace Andersen and Vice Chair Diane Burgis

Result: Passed

6. CONSIDER approving recommendations of the Fish and Wildlife Committee to allocate Fish and Wildlife Propagation funds totaling \$148,500.08 to 15 eligible projects that protect, conserve, propagate, and/or preserve fish and wildlife. (Dan Pellegrini, Committee Chair; Maureen Parkes, Conservation and Development Department)

Attachments: [FWC Report, Allocation Chart, and Grant Application Packet](#)

Maureen Parkes presented the report and recommendations of the Fish & Wildlife Committee.

- *The committee received 20 applications, recommending partial or full funding for 15 of them, with one application withdrawn.*
- *The Marine Science Institute requested \$5,096 but was not funded this year. The committee decided not to fund them to encourage finding alternative funding sources and to avoid dependency on grant funds.*
- *The Contra Costa Resource Conservation District's second request was not recommended due to insufficient information and preparation. However, they received funding for another project involving GPS loggers for tracking Western Pond Turtle Upland traversal.*
- *The Fish and Wildlife Committee's decision-making process usually involves thorough discussions and ratings over multiple meetings, often resulting in unanimous decisions.*
- *There was a suggestion to communicate Chair Andersen's concerns about the Marine Science Institute's funding to the committee in the next meeting.*
- *It was noted that supplemental recommendations for funding could be made later in the year, if necessary.*

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommendations and forward them to the Board of Supervisors for further consideration.

Aye: Chair Candace Andersen and Vice Chair Diane Burgis

Result: Passed

7. The next meeting is currently scheduled for November 24, 2025.

The Committee confirmed the November meeting date and acknowledged that the December meeting could be canceled in the absence of any new referrals from the Board of Supervisors.

Adjourn

Chair Andersen adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

For Additional Information Contact: Julie Enea, julie.enea@cao.cccounty.us