

PS COMMITTEE #1
July 18, 2013

MEMORANDUM

July 16, 2013

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst *SJP*

SUBJECT: Update: Animal Shelter

Today, the Committee will receive an update from the Police Department regarding the Animal Shelter services. The following are expected to brief the Committee:

Chief J. Thomas Manger, Police Department
Assistant Chief Betsy Davis, Police Department
Captain Michael Wahl, Police Department
Deputy Director Paul Hibler, Police Department
Joy Nurmi, Special Assistant to the County Executive
Bruce Meier, Office of Management and Budget

The new Animal Shelter at the corner of Muncaster Mill and Airpark Road is scheduled to open in November 2013. At that time, the Police Department plans to take over adoption and shelter services currently performed by the Montgomery County Humane Society.

The FY14 approved operating budget for Animal Services Division (ASD) is \$4.2 million, with 23 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Executive staff advise that the current annualized estimate is that gross costs would increase by \$1.2 million to take over all shelter and adoption services currently performed by the Humane Society, although annualized net costs would decrease by \$50,000.

Background

The Police Department has had oversight for animal control since 1996. The ASD is responsible for responding to and investigating more than 9,000 complaints each year for cruelty

to animals, dangerous animals, and public nuisance animals. The ASD also has oversight for the County animal shelter, which provides care for more than 9,000 animals each year. Shelter and adoption services are currently provided under contract by the Montgomery County Humane Society.

As of July 1, the Police Department provides all Animal Services field operations, call taking, and dispatch. Adoption and other shelter inquiries still go to the main shelter phone number. Previously, the Humane Society assisted with various calls, dispatch, and certain functions in the field. The Police Department also plans to civilianize the current shelter director position.

Civilianizing Shelter Director Position

The Police Department plans to civilianize the shelter director position. According to the Department, it received 17 applicants for the position. Two individuals are currently undergoing the background check process. The Department hopes to have the new Director hired by August 1. The current Captain will remain in place to assist with transition (through March 2014).

Shelter Operations

Shelter and adoption services are currently provided under a \$1.6 million contract by the Montgomery County Humane Society. According to the organizational chart for the Humane Society (© 1), there are approximately 47 positions employed by the Humane Society, although many of these are part-time. The Police Department anticipates adding between 36 and 45 FTEs to take over shelter and adoption services.

The current contract with the Humane Society is a nine-month contract (July 1 to March 31), with a 90 day kick-out clause for services. Once the Police Department decides to move forward with bringing shelter operations in-house, it anticipates overlap of operations to ensure a safe and smooth transition, and will have two shelters in operation at the same time. Costs are expected to increase by \$1.2 million annually, although these increases will be offset by additional revenues, primarily from licensure fees. Executive staff indicate the current licensing revenues are extremely low compared to other jurisdictions, and with changes to operations, could be increased significantly. Currently, the County has an estimated 10% licensing compliance rate, which is very low. The following chart shows licensure revenues for the past three fiscal years:

	FY11 Actual	FY12 Actual	FY13 Actual
Pet License Revenues	\$410,298	\$356,007	\$395,700

The Department plans to offer online registration, as well as incentive programs to increase compliance (see licensing Plan attached at © 3-5).

Discussion Issues

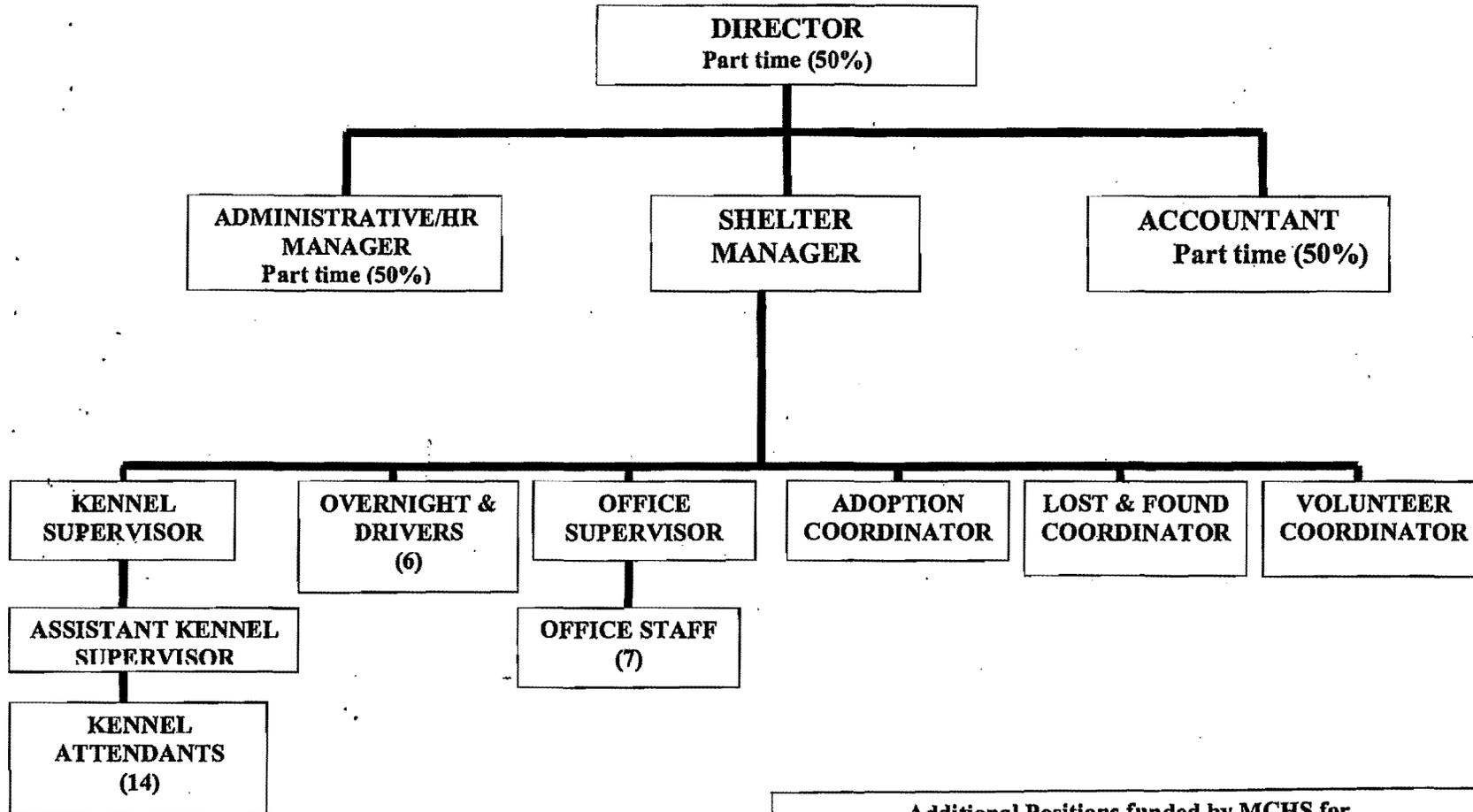
1. The Department has been working with a consultant to determine best practices and provide a needs assessment. When is the consultant's report expected?
2. What is the timeline for implementing the licensing plan? Is this something that can start before the new shelter opens? Will increased licensing compliance fully offset increased costs associated with taking over the shelter and adoption services?

This packet includes the following:

	<u>©#</u>
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Montgomery County Humane Society Shelter Operations
July 2013

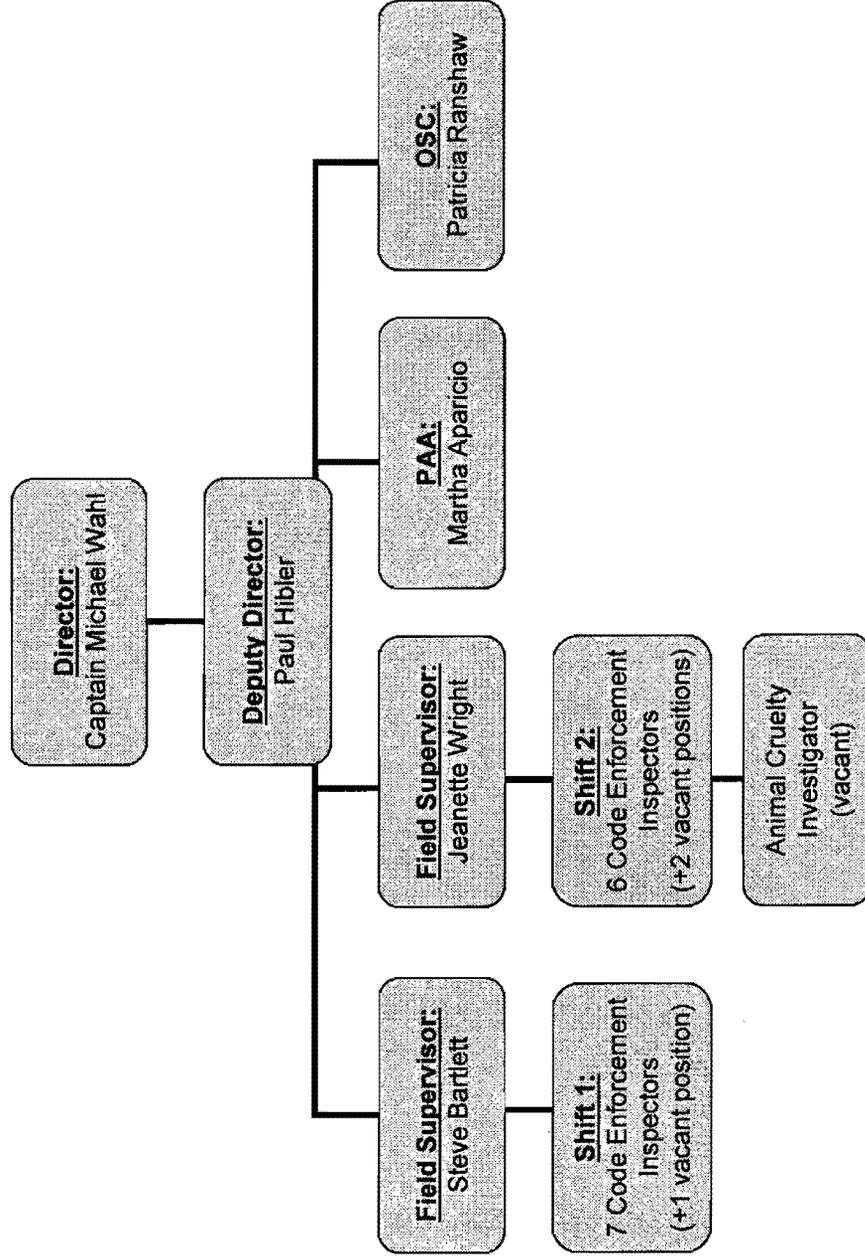


**Additional Positions funded by MCHS for
Basic Shelter Operations**

Lost & Found - 1 full time; **Adoption** - 2 full time & 3 part time;
Medical Coordination - 2 full time; **Behavioral Assessment** - 2 part time

Other MCHS-funded positions include: Foster, Rescue, Humane Education,
Community Outreach, Fundraising & Web Resources

Montgomery County Police Animal Services Division



Updated: 07/10/2013

Licensing Plan

The new director of Animal Services, once on board, will make recommendations on a new final licensing plan, however, the information that we have gathered from jurisdictions around the country demonstrates that significantly higher licensing compliance rates are readily achievable. This information also highlights the best practices for achieving compliance and developing innovative approaches, including a key new initiative – online registration.

Both pet owners and jurisdictions benefit when animals are properly licensed. Additionally, increased revenues from a successful licensing program provides funding to ensure lost pets are given appropriate attention and medical care while waiting to be reunited with their owners.

Benefits of licensing:

- Found pets are reunited quickly with their owner. The Animal Services number is on the license, along with the license number. Animal service officers can quickly match the license number with an owner and contact them;
- Helps to guarantee that pets and people are protected against rabies;
- Provides much needed funding for animal services, which provides food, shelter, and medical care for lost pets;
- License fees also help fund investigation of animal neglect or cruelty, spay/neuter programs to reduce pet over-population, and community education services.

There are innovative licensing practices used in other jurisdictions that provide additional benefits to pets and owners. Examples include programs such as:

- Vacation Pet Alert. Notifying Animal Services where the pet will be while the owner is on vacation, who will be taking care of the pet and where to reach the owner. Animal Services calls the number if the pet gets loose during the owner's vacation.
- Free ride home. The pet gets a free ride home the first time it is found. Animal Services staff attempts to immediately deliver the pet home, skipping a trip to the animal shelter.

Currently, Montgomery County has a 10% compliance rate for pet licensing of dogs and a 3% compliance rate for cats (Total compliance is 7.4%). Other jurisdictions have achieved significantly higher compliance rates:

Abilene, TX	35%
Fort Wayne, IN	42%
Sal Lake City, UT	22%
Wichita Falls, TX	30%
Tucson, AZ	57%

Savannah, GA 60%

Pet ownership in Montgomery County:

Based on the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Ownership statistics for 2012:

% of households owning dogs	36.5%	Average # owned per household	1.65 dogs
% of households owning cats	30.4%	Average # owned per household	2.1 cats

Based on AVMA estimates, there are **323,154** households in Montgomery County with pets in 2012 (not including Rockville or Gaithersburg) - **194,619 dogs and 206,302 cats**

Total pets - **400,921**

Currently, Montgomery County's licensing program is operated by the Montgomery County Humane Society.

Citizen's pets are licensed under three different circumstances – those adopting a pet from the shelter, those licensing for the first time, and those renewing a current license that is set to expire.

Licenses are sold or renewed either in person at the shelter or by mail. A completed license application or renewal "stub" must be submitted, along with proof of current rabies vaccination and payment. Once the paperwork and payment are processed a metal tag with a unique number is provided to the pet owner. If licensing in person the tag is received immediately, if licensing by mail, the tag is returned by mail.

Information from the application or renewal "stub" and proof of rabies is then entered into the "Chameleon" database. This allows Animal Services Officers to verify if a pet is licensed when responding to a complaint about that pet; allow for the return of a lost pet that is wearing a license; and to mail renewal notices to those pet owners whose licenses are expiring.

Renewal notices are generated and mailed 60 days prior to the expiration of the license. Information is retrieved from "Chameleon" via Crystal reporting.

Currently there is no outreach to increase the compliance rate, and there is no follow up with those pet owners who failed to renew their expiring license.

To improve the compliance rate, the County plans to:

- Implement program that will allow pet owners to apply and pay for licenses online. While State regulations currently require a "paper rabies certificate" to obtain a license,

we are working with the State Veterinarian to explore the potential for self-certification of vaccination by affidavit so that the entire licensing process can be accomplished online. In the interim, the State will accept a scanned copy of the rabies certificate as the “paper” proof;

- Launch an education and information campaign on the benefits of licensing;
- Offer an amnesty program for currently non-licensed pets;
- Offer auto-renew, e-mail notifications, and other features that make the licensing process more convenient and faster;
- Utilize incentive programs that will encourage pet owners to license pets;
- Pursue additional outlets for license sales, including veterinarians, pet supply stores and community outreach events. Currently, the State of Maryland prohibits linking the sale of a pet license with a rabies vaccination. However, there are many jurisdictions that allow veterinarians to sell pet licenses. We intend to review this practice more carefully with the potential for pursuing State legislation that would allow veterinarians to offer licenses at time of vaccination.

From: Farag, Susan
Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 3:20 PM
To: MCPDChief
Cc: Davis, Betsy; Nurmi, Joy; Dise, David E.; Meier, Bruce
Subject: Public Safety Committee Update: Animal Services

The Public Safety Committee has scheduled an update on the Animal Shelter for July 18 at 10:am (7CHR). I'm including some questions about both operation and the shelter itself. Could you provide written responses to me by Monday, July 15? Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks!

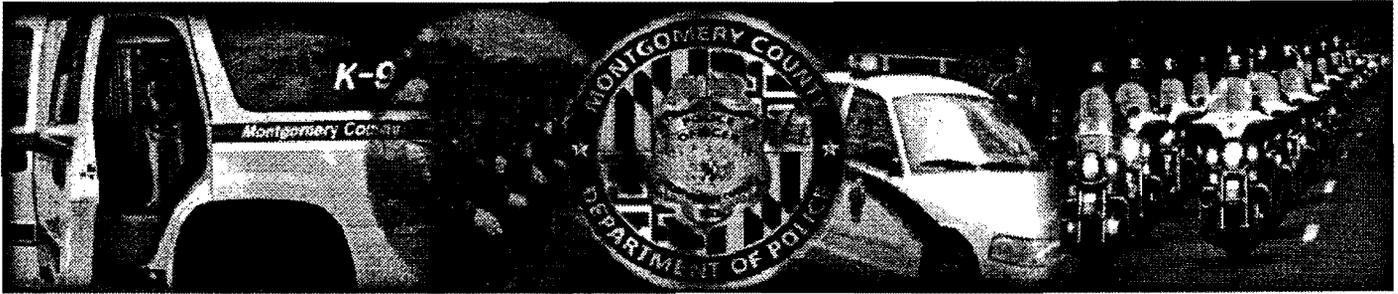
Susan
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1. **Please provide a projected timeline for bringing all shelter operations and staff in under the Police Department.** We hope to have all critical positions filled by September 15th /Oct 1 at the latest. Prior to that time we will follow up with DGS on a final opening date. The consultant and the New Director will discuss the transition time line and make a final decision on that date.
2. **Please provide a current staffing plan and/or organizational chart that illustrates current shelter staffing with both Police and Human Society staff.** See attached. None of the positions in the "ASD – Organizational Chart..." are Shelter staff, they are all Field Services staff.
3. **Please provide a proposed staffing plan and/or organizational chart that illustrates the proposed shelter staffing under the Police Department.** Executive staff is currently reviewing a report from a consultant in order to recommend a staffing plan to the Executive. The plan is expected to be between 36 and 44 FTEs
3. **What is the cost of the current contract with the Humane Society? How much are costs expected to increase by bringing all operations under the Police Department?** The current contract cost is \$1.65 million. We have recently received and are reviewing a report from a consultant on best practices and a needs assessment. Completion of that review may result in changes to the current draft plan. The current annualized estimate is that gross cost would increase \$1.2 million, annualized net cost would decrease by - \$50,000.
4. **What is the status of civilianizing the Shelter Director position?** The Position was advertised and closed we had 17 applicants from across the country and we have 2 individuals in the background process. Hope to have the New Director Hired Aug 1st. The Current Captain will remain in place thru the transition tentatively thru March 2014.
5. **What is the status of the contract with the Humane Society?** The Current Contract with MCHS and MC is a 9 month contract (July 1 to March 31) with a 90 day kick out clause for services. Once we have made a decision based on all operations then we will notify MCHS via the 90 day kick provision in the contract.
6. **How do you plan to transition operations (i.e. overlap between Human Society staff and new Police staff)?** MCP will review the Consultants recommendations and the New Directors recommendations and then make a final decision. We anticipate some overlap at this time for a safe and smooth transition. We will have 2 shelters in operation at the same time and we will need some overlap.
7. **Please provide licensure revenues for the past 3 fiscal years. Please describe your plan to increase licensure rates and revenues.**

Rev.	FY11 Act	FY12 Act	FY13 Act
Pet licenses	410,298	356,007	395,700

See attached for licensing plan.

8. What is the date the shelter is expected to open for full operation? 11/1/13



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Montgomery County Changes Phone Reporting for Animal Emergencies and Complaints

Published on June 26, 2013 by mcpnews in Press Releases

Effective Monday, July 1, 2013 at 6:00 a.m., calls to report animal emergencies and complaints in Montgomery County will be answered by Montgomery County Police Emergency Communications Center or MC311 call takers.

Call **9-1-1** to report animal-related emergencies:

- Animal attacks in progress
- An animal locked in a hot car
- Animal cruelty in progress
- An animal creating a traffic hazard

Call the **police non-emergency number 301-279-8000** to report animal-related complaints:

- A sick or injured animal or one that appears abandoned
- An animal neglect situation
- An animal in a trap issued by Montgomery County
- An animal in distress due to severe weather conditions (animals without shelter or water)

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- An animal threatening the well-being of a community member (not in-progress)
- An animal bite/attack (not in-progress)
- An animal nuisance such as a barking dog, or not cleaning up after a pet

The **MC311 Information Center** will handle reports of dead deer along the roadway:

- Call 3-1-1 or 240-777-0311 from a cell phone, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- To report a dead deer on a 24/7 basis, use the MC311 website www.MC311.com

Continue to call **240-773-5960** to reach the **Montgomery County Animal Shelter** to inquire about:

- Pet adoptions
- The low-cost spay/neuter program
- Pet licensing
- To report a lost pet
- Other animal shelter matters

Continue to call **240-773-5925** to reach the police **Animal Services Division**:

- To speak with an Animal Services Officer
- Follow up on a previously reported animal-related complaint
- Inquire about the Animal Matters Hearing Board
- Inquire about rabies vaccination clinics

Community members have become familiar with calling the police non-emergency number 301-279-8000 to report less serious crimes such as parking violations, noise complaints, a crime that is not in progress, and to report a suspicious person, vehicle, or situation. The police non-emergency number could also previously be called to report animal nuisance complaints.



Comments Off

Gazette.Net

Maryland Community News

Published: Friday, July 12, 2013

County to play larger role in managing animal shelter *by Agnes Blum*
Staff writer

Animals shivering in kennels in an old and outdated building — that is how some have described the Montgomery County Animal Shelter, which is run by the Montgomery County Humane Society.

But when Montgomery County moves its animal control and adoption services into its new \$20 million facility in Derwood this fall, it may also be leaving the Montgomery County Humane Society behind. Officials at the nonprofit say they will carry on its work to help animals with or without the county.

“We’re very proud of the work we do,” said Cris Bombaugh, who has been president and CEO of the organization since 2009. “We love the animals and serving the community.”

And the nonprofit may continue to do so, but in a different capacity, said Montgomery County Police Chief J. Thomas Manger. The county is going to have a larger role in running and overseeing the shelter’s operations, he said.

The county’s Animal Services Division, under the auspices of the police department, is responsible for enforcing animal control and anticruelty laws, among other things.

“The recommendation has been made to me to try to do this internally,” County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) said. “We had sort of a mixed operation where we had both county employees, under the police supervision and leadership, and with an outside contractor doing some of the other work.”

A panel of five people, including an expert in the subject matter, has interviewed 17 candidates for the position of agency director, which no longer will be filled on a rotating basis by a sworn police captain, but will be a non-sworn permanent position in the police department. Of the 17 candidates, the panel has selected four to be interviewed by Manger.

The county’s employment website also lists postings for adoption manager, volunteer coordinator, adoption counselor and behavior evaluation specialist.

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In the fiscal 2014 budget, which was approved in May, the police department gained 40 extra personnel: 120 new sworn officers and 14 police civilian employees. Although the above positions were not specified, Leggett mentioned adding officers dedicated "to animal cruelty calls."

Manger described conditions at the county-owned shelter on Rothgeb Drive in Rockville as "deplorable." The new Animal Services and Adoption Center is at the corner of Muncaster Mill Road and Airpark Drive.

Manger, who hired consultant Renee Harris of the San Diego Humane Society, has been scouring the country looking to integrate "best practices" into the new facility, he said.

For example, some shelters pair up with running clubs to ensure that every dog gets a daily dose of socialization and exercise.

Lucille Baur, a county spokeswoman, said the county has not made any official decisions about whether it will continue to partner with the Montgomery County Humane Society, or perhaps another nonprofit.

Currently the Humane Society, which has operated the county's animal shelter since the 1960s, provides animal services such as adoption, neutering and licensing on a \$1.6 million budget, according to its 2012 annual report.

The organization has had problems in the past. Amid declining donations, three board members resigned in 2008 citing conflicts with J.C. Crist, who was the organization's chief executive and president. Crist, who himself later resigned, died in January this year.

In 2010, Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-Being, or MCPAW, an independent nonprofit, was founded to provide a source of supplemental funding for the new center.

President and co-founder Allan S. Cohen, who once served on the Montgomery County Humane Society board, said that "the quality of management is crucial."

Montgomery County and its animals deserve a state-of-the-art shelter, he said, along with a team of professionals who know how to run it.

"This facility is a shame," he said of the current shelter.

On the MCPAW website, board member Kenneth Kelley wrote that a "few short years ago, it was considered a farfetched dream that the current 30-year-old,

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dilapidated Montgomery County Animal Shelter would ever be replaced ... and with radiant heated floors so the animals will no longer shiver and feel desolate on the cold winter nights.”

Whatever role the county decides the Montgomery County Humane Society should play in the new center, the nonprofit has no plans to disband, Bombaugh said.

“The Montgomery County Humane Society is not going away. There’s so much work to be done,” Bombaugh said. The Humane Society plans to continue focusing on its privately funded programs such as foster care, veterinary care for special-needs animals, enrichment and training, pet care and behavior seminars, humane education and community outreach.

And if county financing dries up, Bombaugh said she is not concerned.

“We have a huge community of very generous donors,” she said. To help run the Humane Society, 240 volunteers were recruited, trained and supported in 2012, a 20 percent jump over 2011, providing nearly 8,700 hours of time to help with animal care, adoptions, clerical work and special events, according to the organization’s annual report.

The Montgomery County Humane Society adopts out about 3,000 animals every year, according to the annual report, and helps return about three pets a day to their owners. The nonprofit handled a total of 8,227 animals in 2012, including 1,827 wildlife. The Montgomery County Humane Society stated mission is to place all adoptable animals in appropriate environments and aim toward no euthanasia.

In fiscal year 2010, 1,372 animals were euthanized. That number dropped to 1,250 for fiscal year 2011 and further to 879 for fiscal year 2012, according to b.j. Altschul, spokeswoman for the Montgomery County Humane Society. Those numbers do not include wildlife, she said.

“We are encouraged with the decrease in euthanasia, which mirrors a national trend,” Altschul wrote in an email to The Gazette.

A no-kill or no-euthanasia shelter is one that does not euthanize animals that are healthy and adoptable.

Staff Writer Daniel Leaderman contributed to this report.

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