



**Esteban Rodriguez**  
Director

**Donna Gillesby**  
Deputy Director

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**Ventura County Animal Services Commission  
Regular Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes May 15, 2025**

**1. Call to Order at 9:03 a.m.**

**2. Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** Dee Dee Cavanaugh, City of Simi Valley; Renee Delgado, City of Moorpark; Martita Martinez-Bravo, City of Camarillo; Albert Mendez, City of Fillmore; Steven Gama, City of Port Hueneme; Leslie Rule, City of Ojai; Gabriela Rodriguez, City of Oxnard; Matt LaVere, County of Ventura Board of Supervisors.

**Members Absent:** Rryn Schumacher, City of Ventura.

**VCAS Staff present:** Esteban Rodriguez – Director of Animal Services; Phil Rarick – Administrative Services Director; Randy Friedman – VCAS Public Information Officer; and Sandra Ropes – Animal Services.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance led by Joseph D. Ayala.**

**4. Review/Reordering of the Agenda:** None.

**5. Consent Calendar**

A. Consider approval of the minutes of the regular Ventura County Animal Services Commission meeting of February 20, 2025

RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes of the regular Ventura County Animal Services Commission meeting of February 20, 2025.

Motion Made by Supervisor Matt LaVere, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Albert Mendez

Vote: 7 – YES, 0 – NO, 1 – ABSTAIN, Martinez-Bravo.

**6. Presentation, Proclamations, and Commendations:** None.

**7. Public Comments:** No Public Comments

## **8. Director's Report**

### **8.1 Seeking transport partnerships:**

- Continue to collaborate with National Organizations for possible transport
- In communication with a Humane Society in WA, that accepts transport
- Will continue to remain committed to transport while we get programs up and running

### **8.2 Enhancing the Foster Program**

- We are conducting interviews
- Foster Consultant will come once both positions have been filled
- Foundation-supported initiative to enhance foster care services

### **8.3 Enhancing Training for People and Animals**

- Meeting next week to ensure that participating parties are on the same page regarding partnership with local trainers
- Training initiatives funded through the Animal Services Foundation

### **8.4 Improving Language Access Services**

- Implementation of document translation services. Almost all documents have been translated.
- The introduction of a language line for verbal translation is ongoing as we are advocating to be put onto the Master agreement for Ventura County

### **8.5 Launching Public Spay/Neuter Program**

- Acceptance of a S/N trailer and funding for 4 staff members was approved by the BOS on April 29, 2025.
- The Trailer is currently being built, and we anticipate that the trailer will be delivered before our next meeting in August.

### **8.6 Engaged in Hiring staff/creating fixed term recruitments**

- Hiring Multiple full-time staff
- Hiring fixed term staff for S/N trailer

## **9. New Business:**

### **9.1 Virtual Public Access to VCAS Commission**

- Director Rodriguez reported that online access and live streaming are currently challenging for VCAS to manage. He noted the difficulties staff face when setting up commission meetings at offsite locations but acknowledged the importance of increasing community accessibility. Commissioners provided updates on potential use of their respective city facilities for future meetings: Commissioner Martinez-Bravo will follow up with Camarillo city staff regarding availability; Commissioner Gama reported that Port Hueneme is unavailable; Vice Chair Delgado confirmed

Moorpark can host the August meeting; Commissioner Mendez will inquire with Fillmore city staff; and Commissioner Rule stated that Ojai can host and is willing to contribute to live streaming costs. Chair Cavanaugh expressed support for rotating meeting locations to improve accessibility. The August commission meeting will be held in Moorpark. Director Rodriguez will consult with County Counsel regarding the need for an MOU

Action: No motion. Commissioners agreed to revisit after their respective cities provide input on available resources for those who did not provide an update at this meeting.

#### 9.2 New Animal Services Shelter

- Director Rodriguez presented an update on the new VCAS shelter build. He shared that the Board of Supervisor approved Public Works moving forward on the full schematic design. Director Rodriguez is expecting to have more information at the August commission meeting.

Action: No motion. Presentation received and filed.

#### 9.3 Overcapacity and Continued Overflow

- Director Rodriguez reported that VCAS is conducting research to identify the factors contributing to animal intake. He noted that animals may arrive at VCAS due to deportations, closures of shelters within Los Angeles County and City, the absence of an animal shelter in the City of Santa Paula, and rescues transporting animals from other counties. He also cited the recent Palisades Fire as an additional contributing factor.
- He emphasized the need for VCAS to collaborate with additional partners, noting that the scope of the work is too great for a single agency to manage alone. Director Rodriguez shared some of the tools VCAS is using to mitigate the influx and prepare the community. VCAS must identify and engage organizations that share its vision.
- He acknowledged the benefit of having city staff and members of the Board of Supervisors present at commission meetings and requested their assistance in communicating to the public the importance of having a plan for their pets, emphasizing that the shelter should not be the first option. He reported that, during the previous week, VCAS facilitated 45 adoptions while receiving 95 new animal intakes, resulting in a net intake increase of 50 animals.

Action: Commissioners will brainstorm with their staff and bring back ideas to next meeting.

### **10. Commissioner Comments:**

- A. Commissioner Gama shared that it is difficult for a beach city to enforce an ordinance that says no dogs are permitted on the beach but acknowledged the need to protect areas. He agreed that there is a need for education of pet owners.
- B. Commissioner Rule echoed Commissioner Gama's statement that education is the best tool to make the community aware of the need to be responsible owners.
- C. Commissioner Rodriguez thanked the Director for taking the time to meet with her.

**11. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

**Next meeting is scheduled for: Thursday, August 21, 2025, 9:00 a.m.**