OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
City of Albuquerque

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Report of Investigation

FILE NO: 19-0006 I **DATE:** December 11, 2019

SUBJECT: Alleged reporting fraud as received by an anonymous complainant stating that the number of animals put down (euthanized) by the Animal Welfare Department is being under reported. Complainant further states that AWD Director and "Joel" are removing animals that were killed from the software to make it appear they were never at the shelter.

STATUS: FINAL - AMENDED

INVESTIGATOR: J. S.

KENNETH BRAMLETT, INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

EDMUND E. PEREA, ESQ
ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSON

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Director Council Services
City Attorney
Director of City Department
Members, Accountability and Government Oversight Committee

File

Executive Summary

On September 19, 2019, a referral for investigation was sent to the OIG via the Office of Councilor Jones, as they received this complaint by U.S. mail. There was no return address or identifying marks on the envelope or letter. The case was assigned to an investigator in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) by the Inspector General (IG). The anonymous letter stated:

I have this friend that works at the City of Albuquerque Animal Welfare Shelter and she's one of the few there that actually care for the animals and has been known to blow the whistle on some of those that work there. Last week she came over after work and was fuming about how the AWD {Animal Welfare Director} was defrauding the citizens of Albuquerque. I just laughed, but she went on and was so upset I said she should tell somebody. She asked who since it is her director that is lying to the public, the City Council, and all those trying to keep tabs on the shelters.

For the last few month the shelters have been advertising that their kill rates are at all time lows. Apparently that is because of the little fraud they are pulling on us all. My friend tells me they are going into the shelter's software and erasing animals they kill so it looks like they never were there. That sounds fishy to me, but if they are lying to the public and City Council, that's just pure fraud. I asked why she didn't just go to her boss, but apparently it's the director and some guy named Joel that are making this happen. I find it hard to believe if a director is doing this kind of stuff that his boss and the Mayor's office aren't AWD are too. Sounds like its all nice and tidy, and they are lying to the very people that pay their salaries.

I'm not familiar with the software the City uses, but from my experience every software keeps track of who does what so there should be an audit trail if anybody wants to look. Maybe the new State Auditor would like to come in and look at the operations of the last auditor…?

The City of Albuquerque (COA) has clearly outlined and detailed its position on staff reporting and fraud. The COA *Personnel Rules and Regulations, Section 300 Conditions of Employment* states in Section 301.3, *Standards of Conduct* that employees shall in all instances maintain their conduct at the highest personal and professional standards in order to promote public confidence and trust in the City and public institutions and in a manner that merits the respect and cooperation of co-workers and the community.

Further, in Section 301.9 *False Statements/Fraud*, it states that no employee shall willfully make any false statement, certificate, mark, rating or report in regard to any test, certification, appointment or investigation, or in any manner that would commit any fraud, conceal any wrongdoing or knowingly withhold information about wrongdoing in connection with employment with the city or in connection with the work-related conduct of any City Employee.

A review of COA staffing documentation identified the staff who are said to be involved in this allegation as the Director of the Animal Welfare Department, Danny Nevarez and Animal Welfare Department Operations Manager, Joel Craig.

After interviews were conducted with key staff, both telephonically and recorded in person, documentation reviews were completed, discussions with the state veterinarian auditor and national animal welfare non-profit organizations completed, and policy reviews concluded, the conclusion of the Office of the Inspector General is that the AWD has had some poor reporting and documentation practices throughout the years. AWD has demonstrated to the investigator and the OIG that they have self-identified some of these areas of poor documentation prior to this investigation and have been working to correct these selected areas. The Chief of Field Operations appears to be a great asset in the uncovering of these areas and in moving the department forward to rectify these processes.

The OIG did however find that, in some instances, documentation by the AWD was missing, lacking, and in error. The areas that need to be corrected or addressed, specifically, as identified by this investigation and documentation review, are:

- The most current Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the AWD was signed by the previous Director and is dated March 19, 2018. This SOP states in the Background section that "the necessity to euthanize unadoptable companion animals in the shelter is a product of over population and irresponsible breeding in our community. Selecting animals for euthanasia is one of the most stressful tasks animal shelter employees face. However, the constant influx of animals into animal shelters make euthanasia a necessary reality". Further, this section of the SOP states "Euthanasia is currently an integral part of shelter population management".

  This SOP was obtained by the Investigator from staff at the AWD and was also reviewed and printed from the employee SharePoint site. The language quoted above, as stated in the SOP, is against the principals of the No-Kill philosophy and are in contradiction to the pillars that were described to the OIG by the AWD Director during his interview.

  The OIG asked the AWD Director and Management on several occasions (October 2, November 18 and November 19, 2019) if there was a more current or updated SOP and to date has not received a response.

- The initial allegation referenced that animals are being 'deleted' or removed from the system to cover up large numbers of euthanizations. The OIG asked the IT department for a list of all staff who have access to 'delete' animals from the system. The list that was provided included nineteen (19) staff with this permission and a printout of each was provided. Further, IT provided a printout of all animal numbers that were ever 'deleted' or removed from the

system. After inspection, it was demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of these 'deletions' were in fact 'merges' or animals that were entered as duplicates and once the animal's chip was found or identity determined, the animal numbers and intake profiles would be merged together, thus not 'deleted'.

There was, however, six (6) animals in the system that were deleted from the system that were not for the reason explained above. Three were in the fiscal year (FY) 2018 and three were in the FY2019. The OIG has inquired in regards to the reason for the deletions to the Director and executive management about these six animals on numerous occasions (October 2, October 17, November 4,November 6 and November 22, 2019) and to date, has not received an explanation or response.

- A complete list of all animals who were euthanized was provided for both FY2018 and FY2019. The OIG selected twenty (20) animals from each list, at random, and requested from two staff members all documentation, whether behavioral or medical, in regards to their euthanization. The following questions or concerns still remain (a complete copy of this list and documentation review will be attached to this report as appendix A):

    1. Animal A1772669: There are no notes or treatments in the system, yet the reason is cancer in the Euthanasia Report.
    2. Animal A1764218: The animal was seen by the committee on 07/14 and approved for euthanasia if he did not test positive for Parvo until 07/17/2017?
    3. Animal 1776692: Animal only shows one day of training and he was deemed aggressive. There was no bite report completed.
    4. Animal 1771703: No medical history or parvo test in their medical file, there was only notes in his profiles stating he was just showing symptoms.
    5. Animal A1794605: This animal was only trained one time before being determined to be aggressive.
    6. Animal A1770216: No reason code entered into system for the euthanasia.
    7. Animal A1798950: Staff member AWD-1 sent a screen shot of animal notes and stated that there was "no medical or notes put in as to why we euthanized". However, staff member AWD-3 provided a medical history stating this animal had no function in hind limbs and no deep pain sensation. There is a difference between these two staff.
    8. A1587712: Animal notes say owner dropped off and could not keep animal since she was moving. Animal hissed at staff and was scared to come out of carrier due to emotional suffering. Reason noted for euthanasia is Aggression.
    9. Animal A1797179: Animal was vomiting and has diarrhea and tested negative for parvo. Euthanasia reason given was for parvo.

As indicated by the list above, details in the documentation lack consistency in some cases, details in others, and improper codes being entered. These documents were each review by management who was interviewed, and each admitted that there appears to be poor documentation and a need for better notes/documentation moving forward.

- To calculate the live release rate honestly and accurately, all live animals must be included, including those surrendered for "euthanasia," deaths in kennel, missing/lost animals, community dogs and cats, and all breeds, regardless of whether the shelter is located in an area where certain dogs are banned. Live release rate is calculated as follows: C divided by A. For example, if a shelter takes in 100 animals a year and 80 are adopted, reclaimed, transferred to No-Kill rescue groups or still on hand, the shelter live release rate is 80%. Conversely, its death rate (B divided by A) is 20%. The live release rate plus the death rate should always equal 100% of live intakes.

    A. All animals who were in the shelters custody at the beginning of the reporting year and all live intakes including those considered "owner requested euthanasia"** with only the following exception: animals brought to the shelters medical clinic for procedures such as vaccines or sterilization where it was understood that the person was going to retrieve their animal following the medical procedure.
    B. All deaths: animals who were killed (including "owner requested euthanasia" **), animals who died in the shelters custody or constructive custody (such as foster care) and animals who are missing and unaccounted for.
    C. All animals who are alive: those adopted, reclaimed by their families, transferred to No Kill rescue groups or other shelters (where they are not at risk for being killed) and those still in the shelters custody.

** COA AWD does not admit live intakes for owner requested euthanasia.

To calculate the rates of the COA AWD's live release late, the above formula was used with numbers provided by the AWD to the OIG:

	FY2018	**FY2019**
A	16,634 (beginning of year count plus all live intakes)	16,879 (beginning of year count plus all live intakes)
B	1,686 (all animal deaths)	1,499 (all animal deaths)
C	14,842 (all animals still in shelter and those who left alive)	15,002 (all animals still in shelter and those who left alive)

Based on these calculations and using these numbers provided by the AWD to the OIG, there is 106 animals unaccounted for in FY2018 and 378 animals unaccounted for in FY2019 in the Chameleon system.

AWD staff who were questioned in regards to these numbers, and provided copies, were unable to account for these animals. The following numbers and response were provided but staff still remain unsure if this is the reason for the gap in numbers:

The foster stats through FY2019 and missing pets report account for 259 of the 378 unreported pets in the reported numbers below.

The pets in foster care (241) will not show up on the in shelter report for in care as they are shown as an outcome in the system but not in the outcome data in our reports. This number was established by looking at the number of pets that went to foster during the fiscal year and subtracted those that had outcomes. The remaining pets were still in care as we moved in to the current fiscal year. The foster process was changed in November 2018 but was not fully utilized until January 2019.

The missing pets (18) had the following breakdowns:

- *4 stolen*
- *4 escaped from care*
- *1 no further contact from foster after surgery*
- *4 were intakes from previous years with no information showing them in care at all during FY2019 (one was from 2017)*
- *5 were truly missing from intakes during FY2019*

These numbers still do not provide a concrete or accurate explanation of the animals that are unaccounted for. Staff advised the OIG that until recently, the person who tracked the foster animals and who was in charge of the program did so by hand and on paper documents. When this staff member left the department, the files and documents were unable to be located.

It is the recommendation of the OIG that current executive management develop an SOP and detailed process documentation for these changes so that any turnover in staff does not create further delays, further backlogs of data, and any further appearance of misreporting or wrongdoings by the Department or the City of Albuquerque.

In addition, it is the recommendation of the OIG that both operational and clinical staff are trained on the importance of properly and thoroughly documenting interactions with all animals, namely the interactions that may ultimately lead to both adoption and/or euthanasia. AWD staff should also have a documentation review process, or self-audit, after an animal is no longer in custody to look for any inconsistencies, missing documentation or missing information, in an effort to remain thorough and transparent.

Lastly, it is the recommendation of the OIG that foster program and processes for tracking animals is reviewed, documented and staff trained to ensure that animals are not missing in the system. In the event that the staff assigned to this process leaves the department, the process will not have to begin again and the AWD will not further lose data.

Abbreviations

A list of abbreviations should be included if the report is lengthy or there are numerous abbreviations.

OIG – Office of the Inspector General
IG – Inspector General
AWD – Animal Welfare Department
IT – Information Technology
COA – City of Albuquerque
PMT- Population Management Team
RTG – Ready to Go
SOP – Standard Operating Procedure
FY – Fiscal Year

Introduction

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For the last few month the shelters have been advertising that their kill rates are at all time lows. Apparently that is because of the little fraud they are pulling on us all. My friend tells me they are going into the shelter's software and erasing animals they kill so it looks like they never were there. That sounds fishy to me, but if they are lying to the public and City Council, that's just pure fraud. I asked why she didn't just go to her boss, but apparently it's the director and some guy named Joel that are making this happen. I find it hard to believe if a director is doing this kind of stuff that his boss and the Mayor's office aren't Aware too. Sounds like its all nice and tidy, and they are lying to the very people that pay their salaries.
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Scope

The OIG investigation focused on the allegations asserted by an anonymous citizen against the AWD and two of its staff members, as previously described. The scope of the investigation addressed only the allegations. The methodology consisted of reviewing relevant documents and interviewing witnesses that could provide information regarding the allegations. The following activities were conducted as part of the investigative process:

- Review of pertinent documents to include best practices for animal shelters and animal electronic and paper files

- Interviews of relevant staff members

- Review of relevant City Ordinances, AWD SOP's and COA's policies and procedures

- Review of previous investigative reports relating to AWD

- Review of previous audit reports relating to AWD

Investigation, Documentation Review and Interviews

Initial Document Review

The City of Albuquerque (COA) *Personnel Rules and Regulations, Section 300 Conditions of Employment* states in Section 301.3, *Standards of Conduct* that employees shall in all instances maintain their conduct at the highest personal and professional standards in order to promote public confidence and trust in the City and public institutions and in a manner that merits the respect and cooperation of co-workers and the community.

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An article was published in the Albuquerque Journal on August 27, 2019 titled "*City's animal shelters earn 'no-kill' status*". The article states that the city earns this by having a save rate, which is the annual percentage of total intakes minus shelter-related deaths, of ninety (90) percent. This includes both euthanized animals and animals that died in the care of shelters. Further, the article states that euthanasia was reduced by

10.2% in the fiscal year (FY) 2019 over the previous year, and the number of animals that died while in the care of the city shelters was reduced by 15.9%.

On the SharePoint website for the AWD through the COA, a posted document is signed by Director Danny Nevarez, dated March 7, 2019 titled *Criteria for Determining the Adoptability of Animals Housed at the City of Albuquerque Animal Welfare Department and Guidelines for Euthanasia Decisions.* Due to the topics being at the center of the complaint which was received by the OIG, the document will be copied below:

> Criteria for Determining the Adoptability of Animals Housed at the City of Albuquerque Animal Welfare Department and Guidelines for Euthanasia Decisions
>
> When an animal enters the Animal Welfare Department (AWD) shelters the adoptability of the animal needs to be determined. AWD understands that some animals may be a threat to public safety and should not be adopted by the public or transferred to other agencies. A Population Management Team (PMT) will determine if an animal is adoptable or unadoptable. The PMT is defined by the most current operation policies and procedures for AWD "Guidelines for the Population Management Team."
>
> The following definitions and criteria will be used to determine the adoptability of shelter animals and whether they are placed with an available status by the Animal Welfare Department.
>
> Adoptable – Animals that are behaviorally and medically healthy and that pose no imminent risk to animals or people based on formation currently available.
>
> Unadoptable – Animals that are a risk to the public or other animals, as defined below, based on information currently available.
>
> 1. Animals that have been deemed Dangerous by the City Animal Welfare Department, Bernalillo County Animal Control or any other Animal Control agency.
> 2. Dogs that have been committed a single act that meets the Angel's LAWD definition of "Dangerous Dog"." Whether or not the dog has been declared dangerous.
> a. "A dog that has, without provocation, caused serious injury, great bodily harm, or mortal injury to a person or companion animal." Angel's LAWD 9-17-3.
> 3. Animals that have killed the same species of animal.
> 4. Animals that have bitten a person to a degree of level 3b or higher on the Ian Dunbar Bite Scale

5. Bite case animal with a history of past bites or attacks on people.
6. Dogs that have killed or seriously injured livestock, defined as "horses, asses, mules, cattle, sheep, goats, swine, bison, ostriches, emus, rheas, camelids and farmed cervidae".
7. Animals that have medical issues including severe illness, contagious disease, severe injury, or conditions not able to be treated in the shelter situation (adoptability and/r treatment of these conditions may be at the discretion of AWD staff veterinarians).
8. Animals that have been determined and documented, by a majority vote of the PMT Core, to be unsafe to handle or unsafe to adopt out. The PMT core consists of AWD Kennel Supervisors, AWD Veterinarian staff and AWD Administrative staff. The majority vote will include at least one vote from each group.

Upon intake or during processing, any animal found to fall into one or more of the unadoptable categories will be considered high risk to the general public or other animals and will not be available for adoption. Unadoptable animals will not be placed into the shelter's general population, cannot have a hold placed on them by anyone, and should be euthanized in a timely manner. PMT may determine if the animal is a candidate for transfer to an approved rescue organization, or transfer to a sanctuary per Angel's LAWD Section 9-17-5. Any transfer to sanctuary must be conducted per this same sections of Angel's LAWD and prohibits future adoptions. If a viable transfer is not identified within 14 days, the animal should be euthanized in a timely manner. Euthanasia cannot occur until any holding period such as stray days, protective custody days, or Court holds expire. Standard intake procedures such as photographs and vaccinations will be performed whenever possible. These animals will be placed AWDay from public view or in a low traffic area of viewing by the public is required (stray animals).

Guidelines for Euthanasia of Animals Considered Adoptable

If an animal does not fall into the unadoptable category, and staff has not noted any concerning history or behavior, then the animal will be made available for adoption. If an animal does not fall into an unadoptable category, but the animal has a history or shows behavior that may make it unsafe for staff to handle or for the animal to be adopted, then it will be made "unavailable" and assigned a status of "EVALUATION," until it can be reviewed by PMT.

AWD understands that some animals that do not fall into one of the unadoptable categories can still be poor candidates for adoption and ultimately may be euthanized. Items considered during euthanasia decisions for these animals will include, but are not limited to:

Primary Considerations

- History as reported by previous owner(s) and fosters;
- SAFER behavior assessment results;
- Evaluations by AWD behavior staff;
- Behaviors exhibited while in the shelter system;
- Previous bites or attacks that do not by themselves meet unadoptable criteria;
- Medical conditions or concerns that, by themselves, are not immediate euthanasia candidates.

Secondary Considerations

- Length of current and previous stays;
- Overall adoption prospects;
- Behavior and history reported by volunteers;
- Any holds in place by staff or volunteers who are actively and constructively working with the animal;
- Potential harm to persons and/or damage to property.

Guidelines for Dog Treatment and Care After Behavior Assessments

Animals that have performed good or fair on their SAFER assessment will be able to participate in any of the AWD programs such as, but not limited to:

- Off-Site events;
- Foster programs;
- Rescue programs;
- Media Events;
- Off-site play days;
- Meet and Greet sessions.

Animals that have performed poorly on their SAFER assessment will not be:

- Taken to off-site events;
- Showcased as media pets.

Animals that have performed poorly on their behavior assessment will only be allowed in the following programs, with the approval given by: Kennel Supervisors, Program Managers, Operations Manager, Chief Veterinarian, or the Department Director.

- Pre-sterilized or made ready to go (RTG);
- Foster Programs;
- Rescue Programs;
- Off-site play days;
- Transfer to Lucky PAWs Adoption Center;
- Shy dog programs;
- Playgroups.

Animals who participate in Off-site play days such as "Doggy Day Outs" serve as ambassadors for the animals remaining in the shelter; therefore, the animal must be a good candidate to represent our shelter. An off-site play day occurs when a dog leaves the areas enclosed by the AWD secure shelter fence – this included the parking lot areas at the Eastside and Westside shelters, or the surrounding grounds. Volunteers must request approval from a Kennel Supervisor, a Program Manager, the Operations Director, or the Department Director to take an animal to an off-site play day. Volunteers who take animals to Off-site play days shall sign and complete the appropriate forms so that AWD knows when the volunteer and animal left the shelter and how we can contact the person by cell phone if necessary.

Guidelines for Volunteer and Staff Holds

Holds can be placed by staff or volunteers on any animal, despite any AFER results, but only after it has been determined that the animal is adoptable. Animals deemed adoptable can still be poor candidates for adoption and ultimately may be euthanized. A staff or volunteer hold will prevent euthanasia, but only as outlined in this document.

A volunteer or staff member can be an advocate for an animal in the Albuquerque Animal Welfare Department, in order to help the animal find a good home or rescue as quickly as possible and to reduce the animals stress and stay in the shelter. As an advocate for that animal, the volunteer or staff member accept certain duties and responsibilities.

- Volunteer & Staff Hold requests will be submitted by email for approval
    - Volunteer Hold requests are submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator or designee;
    - Staff hold requests are submitted to a Kennel Supervisor;
    - The individual noting the hold in the animals file must identify both the start and end date of the Hold.

- Holds will be in effect for no more than 21 days to allow time for socialization and promotion.

- Holds will not be placed on animals considered unadoptable, designated "No Adopt,", or animals with serious medical issues.
- Holds cannot be place on dogs by staff volunteers until the dog receives a SAFER assessment and the dog receives a medical evaluation.
- Volunteers and staff may place holds on a maximum of two animals at any one time.
- The staff member or volunteer with the hold in place is responsible for carefully monitoring the behavior of the animal and reporting any behavioral declines.
- A volunteer or staff member must submit status reports and progress notes to the Volunteer Coordinator or Kennel Supervisors for inclusion in the animals file – on a weekly basis – as well as when behavioral changes are noted
    - Volunteer comments will be used to update the animals profile in Chameleon.
    - Holds will be removed if more than one weekly report is missed.
- Euthanasia will not be an option for an animal with a volunteer or staff Hold, so long as the animal is healthy, dos not develop serious behavioral issues, and all hold criteria is being met.
- Holds can be revoked at any time by the PMT, by a majority vote.
- Holds shall be discontinued if the animal is placed in quarantine. However, holds may be reinstated once the animal is released back into general population.

Volunteer and Staff Member Responsibilities for Animals with Holds:

- Learn as much as possible about the animal's behavior and personality;
- Work with the animal on a regular and consistent basis to increase adoptability;
- Teach dogs basic manners, such as 'sit' and 'loose-leash walking';
- Provide the animal with regular kennel enrichment in order to help reduce shelter stress
- Promote a project animal to potential adopters.

The AWD's most recent Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) were effective on March 19, 2018 and signed by the previous AWD Director, John Soladay. The SOP entitled *Euthanasia* states that "the necessity to euthanize unadoptable companion animals in the shelter is a product of overpopulation and irresponsible breeding in our community. Selecting animals for euthanasia is one of the most stressful tasks animal

shelter employees face. However, the constant influx of animals into animal shelters makes euthanasia a necessary reality". Further, the background section of the SOP stated that "euthanasia is currently an integral part of shelter population management".

Lastly, in preparation for the document reviews and staff interviews, the investigator conducted research in an effort to determine what, if any, was the nationally recognized standard or process governing a 'no kill shelter' status and calculations of statistics. It was discovered that there is no official licensing body nor organization that certifies a 'no-kill' title. There is merely guidelines and "widely accepted practices" to determine this status. The *No Kill Advocacy Center* created a publicized manual entitled "*Defining No Kill"*. From the manual, the following information was obtained:

- The principles of the No Kill philosophy apply to all species of animals, including, but not limited to, companion mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, aquatic animals, farmed animals, and wildlife. A No Kill shelter does not kill animals such as:
    - Community dogs and cats, regardless of whether they are perceived to be friendly or unsocial with humans ("feral");
    - Orphaned animals, pregnant animals, *in utero* animals, or animals with newborns;
    - Animals suffering from or exposed to a treatable, contagious illness;
    - Poorly socialized dogs, shy dogs, or traumatized dogs;
    - Animals surrendered for "euthanasia" (the animals must be independently evaluated by a veterinarian and determined to be irremediably suffering);
    - Treatable animals labeled "behavior" or "medical;"
    - Animals with "behavior" or "medical" impediments even if they have been signed over "for euthanasia;"
    - Animals based on arbitrary criteria such as color, age, or breed.
- In order to prevent shelters from misclassifying animals, the No Kill Advocacy Center, working with shelter veterinarians, has created a matrix of conditions, found on our website that would qualify as rehabilitatable. This is a "living" document, subject to continuous revision, as conditions that a few years ago would have had a poor prognosis, such as young puppies with parvovirus, are now highly treatable.

- To calculate the live release rate honestly and accurately, all live animals must be included, including those surrendered for "euthanasia," deaths in kennel, missing/lost animals, community dogs and cats, and all breeds, regardless of whether the shelter is located in an area where certain dogs are banned. Live release rate is calculated as follows: C divided by A. For example, if a shelter takes in 100 animals a year and 80 are adopted, reclaimed, transferred to No Kill rescue groups or still on hand, the shelter live release rate is 80%. Conversely, its death rate (B divided by A) is 20%. The live release rate plus the death rate should always equal 100% of live intakes.

    A. All animals who were in the shelters custody at the beginning of the reporting year and all live intakes including those considered "owner requested euthanasia"** with only the following exception: animals brought to the shelters medical clinic for procedures such as vaccines or sterilization where it was understood that the person was going to retrieve their animal following the medical procedure.

    B. All deaths: animals who were killed (including "owner requested euthanasia" **), animals who died in the shelters custody or constructive custody (such as foster care) and animals who are missing and unaccounted for.

    C. All animals who are alive: those adopted, reclaimed by their families, transferred to No Kill rescue groups or other shelters (where they are not at risk for being killed) and those still in the shelters custody.

** COA AWD does not admit live intakes for owner requested euthanasia.

To calculate the rates of the COA AWD's live release late, the above formula was used with numbers provided by the AWD to the OIG:

	FY2018	**FY2019**
A	16,634 (beginning of year count plus all live intakes)	16,879 (beginning of year count plus all live intakes)
B	1686 (all animal deaths)	1499 (all animal deaths)
C	14,842 (all animals still in shelter and those who left alive)	15,002 (all animals still in shelter and those who left alive)

Based on these calculations and using these numbers provided by the AWD to the OIG, there are 106 animals unaccounted for in FY2018 and 378 animals unaccounted for in FY2019 in the Chameleon system.

IT-1
Animal Welfare Office
8920 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112

On September 23, 2019 at approximately 1030 hours, OIG staff were onsite at the Animal Welfare Office located on the Eastside of Albuquerque. OIG staff met with IT-1 who has been assigned to the department and were given a demonstration of the Chameleon computer program. This program documents all of animal welfares activities for staff. Items logged and tracked include intake of animals, medical documentation of animals, release/exit of animals, adoptions, cash transactions, foster homes and screenings. After walking through the system, the investigator sent the following email to IT-1 and requested the following:

If you could, as we discussed, forward to me:

1. *The IPRA responses*
2. *FY2018 and FY2019 reports on intake numbers*
3. *FY2018 and FY2019 euthanasia numbers*
4. *List of staff with the 'DELETE' button access (I will then select some staff to run a report on to see if they 'deleted animals').*

On September 23 and 24, 2019, IT-1 sent the reports that included:

- A monthly breakdown of all animals in the facilities by type and location, intakes, euthanizations, live exits, adoptions and reclaims for FY2018
- A monthly breakdown of all animals in the facilities by type and location, intakes, euthanizations, live exits, adoptions and reclaims for FY2019
- A list of all staff who have access/permissions to 'Delete' animal from the Chameleon compute system
- Kennel statistics which include impound data and outcome data for FY2018
- Kennel statistics which include impound data and outcome data for FY2019
- Euthanasia break down for FY2018
- Euthanasia break down for FY2019

In response and after review of these documents, the OIG requested clarification and further documentation from IT-1, which included:

1. After a random selection of 4 staff, a breakdown of each time aforementioned staff 'deleted' animals from the system.
2. A 'key' to describe the codes used on the Euthanasia break down reports that define the 'reason codes'.

IT-1 contacted the OIG and asked that the investigator visit his office so IT-1 can walk complete an additional demonstration of the Chameleon system again, as the requested reports that were being completed were extremely complex and prior to sending any

further documents IT-1 wanted to ensure that the OIG was clear on the computer program and the report contents. Therefore, on October 2, 2019, two investigators from the OIG went to the AWD to learn these processes and details, provided by IT-1, to include:

- Kennel processes for all animals (entry into Chameleon, medical entries, foster care entries, etc.)
- Explanation and process for animals with multiple entries and numbers. This is due to an intake occurring and the animal being provided a new number upon intake, only to be found to have an existing number, and those numbers being deleted in the future or merged to create one file.
- Kennel History prompt which, as a living document, logs every time any staff member changes or adds information to a file.

After a thorough review of this information and learning these processes, a list of documents was provided to IT-1 to forward to the investigator, to include:

1. Number of all 'deleted animals' for FY2018 and FY2019
2. Number of all 'deleted animals' minus those that were deleted for being 'duplicates'
3. List/key 'reason' codes for animal euthanasia
4. FY2018 and FY2019, number of animals in the shelters custody at the beginning of the year (first day of each FY)
5. Number of live intakes for FY2018 and FY2019
6. All deaths, including animals who died in custody or foster care and animals wo are missing or unaccounted for
7. Those still alive at the end of FY2018 and FY2019 (adopted, reclaimed by their families, those transferred to a no kill shelter and those still in custody.
8. List/key of employee names and numbers (to decipher for on the previous lists)

The documents requested were all provided to the Investigator on October 15, 2019. The document review involved/included the following:

- FY2018/FY2019 lists of all animals that were euthanized and/or deaths. In FY2018, there was a total of 1686 and in FY2019 there was 1499. The reasons for each was detailed on this list and included the following codes (with explanations):

    - MEDICAL Any Medical reason Mics or listed below
    - PET ER Route 66 Euthanasia (offsite ER clinic)
    - GERIATRIC Older pet unable to function
    - RINGWORM Untreatable ringworm (ex feral cat)
    - URI Severe Upper Respiratory Infection - not responding to Medicine
    - AGREESION Behavior too Aggressive
    - CANCER Untreatable/Unmanageable Cancer

- EUTH U/U — Untreatable/Unmanageable Condition
- EMERG/INJ — Severe Injuries
- FEL/LEIKEM — Not usually used Leukemia
- FEL/PANLEU — Very Contagious feline viral disease panleukopenia
- INFANT/YNG — Failure to thrive too young
- MED SEVERE — Severe Medical Condition
- FEARFUL — Too afraid of humans to be adopted
- AGGRS/POSS — Too aggressive/possessive
- MED-MODERA — Not usually used, Moderate medical condition
- SEIZURES — Unmanageable Seizures
- EUTH T/M — Treatable/manageable outside shelter

From each of these two lists, the investigator randomly selected twenty (20) animals, by number, and requested their medical and behavioral documentation that illustrated the need for the euthanasia (or in some cases other death while in custody) for a total of forty (40) files. In addition, the investigator asked for the 'Kennel Record' sheet for each animal.

Upon receipt and review of the forty (40) records that were received, the following was noted by the investigator for follow-up questioning during the interview process:

1. Animal A798950: No medical or notes in system as to why he was euthanized. On the euthanasia breakdown list, euthanasia reason was listed as MED SEVERE.
2. Animal A1797179: Notes say "vomiting and diarrhea, possible parvo. Parvo test=NEG. Scan=NEG. Per Dr. Kat, ok to humanely euthanize for disease control". On euthanasia breakdown listed as 'healthy, aggression'.
3. Animal A1772669: No medical notes were ever entered as to the type of cancer or the reason. The outcome was listed as 'euth' with 'Cancer' subtype.
4. Animal A1791349: Animal was adoptable, was adopted but the family had a personal reason and asked for one week to pick up dog. Family was told no and so the family stated that they could not get the dog then. Dog was listed as needing family with older kids due to high arousal, then they working with him to see if he would settle, then dog was euthanized. No notes of continued aggression or problem. On euthanasia breakdown listed as 'healthy, aggression'.
5. Animal A1587712: Animal's owner was moving and could not have animal go, animal had 'emotional suffering', poor appetite due to emotional suffering, and staying in box. Animal was euthanized within twelve days of entry to facility. On euthanasia breakdown, the animal was listed as 'healthy, aggression'.
6. Animal A1791771: On 02/03 the animal was listed as aggressive towards other dogs but can be adopted as a single dog home; it was also noted that AWD will offer free dog classes. On 02/07 he was listed as adoptable, then on 02/09/2019 the animal was euthanized.

7. A1771703: The animal came in with diarrhea, dehydrated and lethargic. Animal was negative for parvo. Dr. was suspicious of parvo so recommended euthanasia for disease control. No note of who entered. Listed on euthanasia breakdown as aggressive.

AWD-1
Kennel Supervisor
Animal Welfare Department

After email exchanges and requests for information with the investigator and AWD-1, the following clarifications were received in regards to the documents that were provided by both AWD-1 and IT-1, after a telephone discussion/interview:

- If an animal is euthanized for a medical reason, it is listed in a medical record. If an animal is euthanized for behavioral reasons, it is listed as a memo note and not in the medical screen.

- Animals with behavioral concerns do need a second opinion prior to being euthanized. However, medical euthanizations only need a veterinarian to sign off on.

AWD-2
Director
Animal Welfare Department

An interview was conducted with the Director of the Animal Welfare Department on October 22, 2019 in the Office of the Inspector General. Prior to beginning the interview, AWD-2 was advised that the interview was being recording and that this is a confidential investigation. AWD-2 was instructed not to discuss it with anyone other than a legal representative or a member of the Office of Inspector General. Failure to comply with these instructions may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The following is a summary of statements made by AWD-2:

- As I understand no kill status, it is a nationally utilized term to be a no kill shelter, primarily through an organization called Best Friends. It means that you are above a ninety (90) percent save rate. They will update their website next year with us on it. If you take total intakes versus anything that dies in care and the euthanasia rate, with some division, you get that rate. It is nationally accepted based on this simple equation.

- The OIG provided AWD-2 with samples of the seven animal files that were provided by AWD department staff that each had inconsistent, incorrect or

missing information for clarification. Selected animals summaries noted below:

a. Animal Number 1: Why were there no notes or details placed into the system or file?
b. Animal Number 2: Was going to be adopted out (did bite the original owners other dog, but not bad) on 01/10-01/13), they couldn't pick up. 01/19, made a one and only. 02/01 entered as one and only. 02/09 euthanized.
c. Animal Number 3: Was going to be adopted on 02/3m free training class offered. 02/09 euthanized
d. Animal Number 4: Listed as Aggressive. In chart, symptoms of parvo, negative parvo test. Euthanized.
e. Animal Number 5: listed as aggressive. Cat was having problems eating and coming out since owner left. Euthanized in 12 days.
f. Animal Number 6: Listed on the medical history sheet as being negative for parvo. However, it was euthanized for disease control.
g. Animal Number 7: No medical notes or euthanasia reasoning listed except for the selection from a dropdown box of 'cancer'.

- AWD-2 stated that he agrees there is poor notes and documentation for some of these animals. In addition, AWD-2 concurs that there is not an explanation as to why some animals have codes for aggression yet notes for disease control. Again, AM-2 states that there is poor documenting of the notes.

- AWD-2 states that while the ninety (90) percent number, utilized to determine no kill rate, is quoted and used, that the AWD is a lifesaving organization and the number is merely one part of that. AWD still has lots of work to do. But in his time with the department, in conjunction with the percentage number, AWD developed five pillars that are focused on maximizing lifesaving:

    - Medical capacity: This includes making sure medical staff is focused on the homeless pets in care. AWD went to a public spay and neuter program and will increase our internal treatment for those in our care.
    - Intake Prevention: AWD purchased a mobile clinic so they can target neighborhoods with large numbers of strays and owner surrenders and care for them there to include spaying and neutering and thus reducing intake
    - Disease control: the mobile clinic will help that with less intakes that may come in with disease that could result in spreading.
    - Behavior Modification: AWD started kennel stress teams and animal handler training. They also designated more space for behavior enrichment.

- Public Perception: AWD is really trying to change public perception and help every adoptable pet find a forever home. Many still think of us as a 'pound' which is not true.

- Walking into this job, AM-2 states that their customer service 'sucked' and they are working on improving that with training and trying to improve employee morale.

- One of the things that the AWD-2 is looking at now is a good drop down list for the Chameleon system of euthanasia reasons so it is more descriptive but AM-2 agrees there should be detailed notes that match the description.

- AWD-2 states that he has been pushing the AWD documentation to get better. "We definitely need to work on this. This is how I adopted the shelter but in the past four or five months we have been getting better."

- AWD-2 stated that he thinks that that some of those notes that do not match may still in fact be correct. He stated that since there is not notes, there is not an explanation but maybe there is one but it is just not documented. For example, the animal may have come in lethargic and with diarrhea then became aggressive.

- AWD-2 stated that he wished to be candid with the OIG and that these are situations where people do not know or understand what happens in the shelter. Until you do, AWD-2 does not think people should jump to conclusions. AWD-2 does fully recognize that "our documentation needs an upgrade but people do not see what I see. From an audit perspective, I agree we will need to up our documentation game but you all don't know." AWD-2 described a very sick animal to the investigator that required euthanasia for humane reasons that he had just seen in the past weeks.

- AWD-2 was asked about an animal that had no notes in the system but was euthanized for 'cancer' with no documented visits or care. In response to the animal listed above, AWD-2 stated, "Isn't cancer a good enough reason?", the OIG investigator then asked 'well, are no cancers treatable?". AWD-2 provided no further responses.

- AWD-2 stated that the save rate involves looking at the number of euthanized and those who died in care versus total intakes.

- When AWD-2 was shown other documentation on daily roster numbers and how the OIG calculated some of the rates that were arrived at, AWD-2 stated that they can never get an animal inventory for a specific day. He stated that he has asked and been told no numerous times.

- AWD-2 stated that the reports that AWD-1 provided 'bug him', since we may have all have the wrong numbers and criteria is wrong. "We have to look at the criteria in the crystal report. This is all on the backend to give you desired output".

- In regards to the foster programs, AWD-2 stated that AWD-4 is tracking animals to ensure that all are entered into the system. Fosters not being in system is one of the projects he has been working on.

- AWD-2 stated that he does not think any of that documentation shown or discussed during the interview is inconsistent. "I struggle with that, I think it is a lack of notes to outline the reason, even if it does not match. One is a euthanasia reason and one is a medical record and the two are not tied to each other."

- When asked about the unaccounted for animals and the numbers not adding up, AWD-2 stated that he is unaware of why that is occurring and referred the OIG to other staff members (AWD-3 or AWD-4).

- AWD-2 stated that not many people have the ability to delete animals from the computer system. When the OIG showed him the list detailing nineteen staff (19) with delete access, AWD-2 stated he does not know why but maybe it is needed and that the OIG can ask his supervisors for the reasoning.

Documentation Review

As stated above, when asked about the unaccounted for animals and the numbers not adding up, AWD-2 stated that he is unaware of why that is occurring and referred the OIG to other staff members (AWD-3 or AWD-4).

However, the OIG is in possession of an email thread dated December 2/3, 2018 in which the Chief of Field Operations, the Animal Program Analyst and the Director are all involved in. This email thread stated that data can be adjusted afterwards and that there is inconsistencies in the data. In the email thread, the Chief of Field Operations states:

Attached are two reports for the month of November. The one Nov18_ain was run yesterday morning, _main2 was run this morning and the data changed. A third pet has shown to die in care. Can you run the of the three pets so that we can look in to why the data changed and if the added third died in care is in fact from November. I have previously observed other changes like this before with AWD.

Having been watching the data it does have the tendency and capabilities to be adjusted afterwards given it's open system.

The last part of the email thread, again written by the Chief of Field Operations with a carbon copy to the Director, states:

All of our data is way off then.

We need to create a single report to do determine Save and Live Release Rates.

AWD-3
Operations Manager
Animal Welfare Department

An interview was conducted with the Operations Manager of the Animal Welfare Department on October 22, 2019 in the OIG. In this report, this staff member will be recorded as AWD-3. Prior to beginning the interview, AWD-3 was advised that the interview was being recording and that this is a confidential investigation. He was instructed not to discuss it with anyone other than a legal representative or a member of the Office of Inspector General. Failure to comply with these instructions may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Some of the major discussions/statements from this recorded interview include the following:

- The title of no-kill is not an actual 'award' or something that is given. It is based on the accepted practice nationwide. The ninety (90) percent metric the standard. We utilize the protocol from the Best Friends Association as he believes they spearheaded the standard and the goals.

- Since the AWD is open admittance, we can never absolutely be no-kill. Any organization who is open will accept any animal, such as those who may be hit by a car and need to be euthanized immediately for pain and suffering, and cannot achieve that rate.

- When showed the animal reports and the rosters of euthanasia that were ran, AWD-3 stated that he is familiar with most of the codes. The above referenced seven animals selected at random were reviewed as well.

    - Maybe the easy reason why so many have 'Aggression' as their reason code is because it begins with A and it is first so they typed quickly and entered it incorrectly.

    - These mostly seem to be errors by clinical staff. We are not on the clinical side (AWD-3 and his staff), we are operational.

- Maybe some of these lack notes, ie: maybe the emotionally suffering for a long time and it was not documented so that is why it appears he was euthanized the next day. There is time gaps here and the computer program prints these out of order.

- The Population Management Team (PMT) was developed to review the euthanasia list. The list was often scrutinized for being too long. We now have two lists, behavioral and medical. Long ago, the two lists would often disagree as to which list an animal should be on. So an SOP was developed to create the PMT. They walk and review together to make the list, and then the three members will vote on disagreements and majority will rule. They walk four times per week, two at each location. After they make the list, the euthanasia list goes to AWD-3 to check to make sure they are accurate, not to question their decision. AWD-3 looks to see if they make it but have an owner, if there is accuracy in the documentation, etc. The list then goes to the kennel staff, then the euthanasia technician on duty. It is a handwritten list.

- The check and balance on these can be if you pull the 'original euthanasia list' and the PMT list. It is a criteria document. If the OIG can review the handwritten list, that may provide the clarity needed on the seven animals above. AW-3 asked that the OIG send him all the documentation that we had so he can see if any is missing.

- There is a minor difference between no-kill ratings and numbers and live release rate numbers and formulas; One includes died in care and one does not, AWD-3 forgets which one is which but they are close but a little different.

- Clinical decisions are turned in to me and I do not question them since they are medical professionals. OIG then asked, that since you are an Operations Manager, 'do you not review for accuracy or notes and have oversight to ensure that the clinical staff are doing their job? No second guessing, but requiring documentation". To this question, AW-3 stated 'I only look at the behavioral list. I am not sure who looks at the clinical list'. OIG asked again that since so many of these files with medical notes are listed as aggressive on the roster, they would in fact would have went to AM-3 to review and thus AM-3 could catch these. AM-3 stated that 'no, those reason codes in Chameleon are entered after the fact'.

- AW-3 thinks these errors are because you do not have the complete file. I guarantee you that they are on the handwritten euthanasia lists.

- AW-3 stated that only very few people have delete access. When shown the list with nineteen staff having access, AWD-3 stated that 'oh, I didn't know that there was this many'. There are various permissions in Chameleon and many of these could be merged. You can have, merge access, delete or both.

- I have no clue why the system is not capturing the 378 unaccounted for animals. You need to talk to our numbers guy, AW-4.

- We did have foster pets with problems. Let's say a dog in impounded but then fostered, it is then changed to a location of foster. But still listed as an impound in our system. This all changed maybe about one year ago and has been corrected.

- AW-3 stated that he AWD has inventory problems. He described that if an animal went to Clarks or PetSmart, they will still be in our system and on our inventory. Should the animal be adopted from there, if we do get the paperwork, we would only at that point change them to adopted and change the inventory. There has always be problems with that system. I would imagine if I ran a report to see who was at Clarkes right now it may show up to 50 animals but in actuality, it is at 4. The PMT is supposed to be catching this.

- When asked why two people are not signing off on euthanasia, as per the SOP, AW-3 stated that it is because in many instances in the computer two are not listed but he believes it would be seen on the handwritten list.

After this meeting, the OIG provided AWD-3 with the same list of forty (40) randomly selected animals and asked for any and all documentation regarding that animals and their subsequent euthanasia. AWD-3 returned this documentation to the OIG on November 8, 2019. Attached as Appendix A table comparing what was sent between the documentation request (which was the same request) with AWD-1 and AWD-3.

AWD-3 also provided the OIG with copies of the State of New Mexico Board of Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy Facility Inspection Reports for the years of 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 to review. The State Board of Veterinary Medicine occurs every two year. The 2018 audit was conducted on April 14, 2018 and reviewed sixty-eight (68) standards for professional plant and standards for professional services. All standards were listed as satisfactory during this audit, which includes controlled substances and pharmaceuticals used in the euthanasia process. The documentation provided for the Pharmacy Inspection Report consisted of only the notice. The OIG has requested complete copies of this report.

AWD-4
Chief of Field Operations
Animal Welfare Department

On Thursday, November 7, 2019, at the direction of AWD-2 and AWD-3, AWD-4 came to the OIG to speak with the investigator and review the documentation that was being discussed with other staff. The previously interviewed staff each stated, on numerous occasions, that if it has to do with the numbers, processes and calculations, the OIG needs to speak with AWD-4, as he is the person in charge of these functions.

All animals that were listed above as having inconsistencies and missing information or improperly labeled information were shown to AWD-4. AWD-4 read through this documentation and admitted that some of this information appears to be in error and admits that the department has had problems with documentation and they were working to correct these and improve.

AWD-4 provided the OIG of the background of the department and detailed the morale and other concerns that existed from the previous administration. AW-4 listed, in detail, all of the positive changes to both operations and in an effort to boost or morale that have been occurring.

Follow up Document Review

Throughout numerous emails, interviews and conversations, staff assured the OIG that the numbers should be improving and the foster program inconsistencies in tracking and logging have been addressed. In an effort to verify this improvement, the OIG asked for the numbers from the most recent completed three month period, June, July and August 2019, to illustrate the improvement.

	June, July, and August 2019
A	5,602 (beginning of period count plus all live intakes)
B	360 (all animal deaths)
C	5,116 (all animals still in shelter and those who left alive)

Utilizing the same formula detailed above for the live releases rates, for this time period there is 126 animals that are unaccounted for in the computer system.

Conclusion

The initial allegation stated that the Director and 'Joel' were deleting animals from the system and 'putting them down' to deceive the public. After interviews were conducted with key staff, both telephonically and recorded in person, documentation reviews were completed, discussions with the state veterinarian auditor and national animal welfare non-profit organizations completed, and policy reviews concluded, the conclusion of the Office of the Inspector General is that the AWD has had some poor reporting and documentation practices throughout the years. AWD has demonstrated to the investigator and the OIG that they have self-identified some of these areas of poor documentation prior to this investigation and have been working to correct these selected areas.

The OIG did find that, in some instances, documentation by the AWD was missing, lacking, and in error. The areas that need to be corrected or addressed, specifically, as identified by this investigation and documentation review, are:

- The most current SOP for the AWD was signed by the previous Director and is dated March 19, 2018. This SOP states in the Background section that "the necessity to euthanize unadoptable companion animals in the shelter is a product of over population and irresponsible breeding in our community. Selecting animals for euthanasia is one of the most stressful tasks animal shelter employees face. However, the constant influx of animals into animal shelters make euthanasia a necessary reality". Further, this section of the SOP states "Euthanasia is currently an integral part of shelter population management".

  This SOP was obtained by the Investigator from staff at the AWD and was also reviewed and printed from the employee SharePoint site. The language quoted above, as stated in the SOP, is against the principals of the No-Kill philosophy and are in contradiction to the pillars that were described to the OIG by the Director during his interview.

  The OIG asked the AWD Director and Management on several occasions (October 2, November 18, and November 19, 2019) if there was a more current or updated SOP and to date has not received a response.

- The initial allegation referenced that animals are being 'deleted' or removed from the system to cover up large numbers of euthanizations. The OIG asked the IT department for a list of all staff who have access to 'delete' animals from the system. The list that was provided included nineteen staff with this permission and a printout was provided. Further, IT provided a printout of all animal numbers that were ever 'deleted' or removed from the system. After inspection, it was demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of these 'deletions' were in fact 'merges' or animals that were entered as duplicates

and once the animal's chip was found or identity determined, the animal numbers and intake profiles would be merged together, thus not 'deleted'.

There was, however, six (6) animals in the system that were deleted from the system that were not for the reason explained above. Three were in the FY2018 and three were in the FY2019. The OIG has inquired in regards to the reason for the deletions to the Director and executive management about these six animals on numerous occasions (October 2, October 17, November 4, November 6 and November 22, 2019) and to date, has not received an explanation or response.

- A complete list of all animals who were euthanized was provided for both FY2018 and FY2019. The OIG selected twenty (20) animals from each list, at random, and requested from two staff members all documentation, whether behavioral or medical, in regards to their euthanization. The following questions or concerns still remain (a complete copy of this list and documentation review will be attached to this report as appendix A):

    10. Animal A1772669: There are no notes or treatments in the system, yet the reason is cancer in the Euthanasia Report.
    11. Animal A1764218: The animal was seen by the committee on 07/14 and approved for euthanasia if he did not test positive for Parvo until 07/17/2017?
    12. Animal 1776692: Animal only shows one day of training and he was deemed aggressive. There was no bite report completed.
    13. Animal 1771703: No medical history or parvo test in their medical file, there was only notes in his profiles stating he was just showing symptoms.
    14. Animal A1794605: This animal was only trained one time before being determined to be aggressive.
    15. Animal A1770216: No reason code entered into system for the euthanasia.
    16. Animal A1798950: Staff member AWD-1 sent a screen shot of animal notes and stated that there was "no medical or notes put in as to why we euthanized". However, staff member AWD-3 provided a medical history stating this animal had no function in hind limbs and no deep pain sensation. There is a difference between these two staff.
    17. A1587712: Animal notes say owner dropped off and could not keep animal since she was moving. Animal hissed at staff and was scared to come out of carrier due to emotional suffering. Reason noted for euthanasia is Aggression.
    18. Animal A1797179: Animal was vomiting and has diarrhea and tested negative for parvo. Euthanasia reason given was for parvo.

As indicated by the list above, details in the documentation lack consistency in some cases, details in others, and improper codes being entered. These

documents were each review by management who was interviewed, and each admitted that there appears to be poor documentation and a need for better notes/documentation moving forward.

- To calculate the live release rate honestly and accurately, all live animals must be included, including those surrendered for "euthanasia," deaths in kennel, missing/lost animals, community dogs and cats, and all breeds, regardless of whether the shelter is located in an area where certain dogs are banned. Live release rate is calculated as follows: C divided by A. For example, if a shelter takes in 100 animals a year and 80 are adopted, reclaimed, transferred to No-Kill rescue groups or still on hand, the shelter live release rate is 80%. Conversely, its death rate (B divided by A) is 20%. The live release rate plus the death rate should always equal 100% of live intakes.

    D. All animals who were in the shelters custody at the beginning of the reporting year and all live intakes including those considered "owner requested euthanasia"** with only the following exception: animals brought to the shelters medical clinic for procedures such as vaccines or sterilization where it was understood that the person was going to retrieve their animal following the medical procedure.
    E. All deaths: animals who were killed (including "owner requested euthanasia" **), animals who died in the shelters custody or constructive custody (such as foster care) and animals who are missing and unaccounted for.
    F. All animals who are alive: those adopted, reclaimed by their families, transferred to No Kill rescue groups or other shelters (where they are not at risk for being killed) and those still in the shelters custody.

** COA AWD does not admit live intakes for owner requested euthanasia.

To calculate the rates of the COA AWD's live release late, the above formula was used with numbers provided by the AWD to the OIG:

	FY2018	**FY2019**
A	16,634 (beginning of year count plus all live intakes)	16,879 (beginning of year count plus all live intakes)
B	1,686 (all animal deaths)	1,499 (all animal deaths)
C	14,842 (all animals still in shelter and those who left alive)	15,002 (all animals still in shelter and those who left alive)

Based on these calculations and using these numbers provided by the AWD to the OIG, there is 106 animals unaccounted for in FY2018 and 378 animals unaccounted for in FY2019 in the Chameleon system.

AWD staff who were questioned in regards to these numbers, and provided copies, were unable to account for these animals. The following numbers and response were provided but staff still remain unsure if this is the reason for the gap in numbers:

The foster stats through FY2019 and missing pets report account for 259 of the 378 unreported pets in the reported numbers below.

The pets in foster care (241) will not show up on the in shelter report for in care as they are shown as an outcome in the system but not in the outcome data in our reports. This number was established by looking at the number of pets that went to foster during the fiscal year and subtracted those that had outcomes. The remaining pets were still in care as we moved in to the current fiscal year. The foster process was changed in November 2018 but was not fully utilized until January 2019.

The missing pets (18) had the following breakdowns:

- *4 stolen*
- *4 escaped from care*
- *1 no further contact from foster after surgery*
- *4 were intakes from previous years with no information showing them in care at all during FY2019 (one was from 2017)*
- *5 were truly missing from intakes during FY2019*

These numbers still do not provide a concrete or accurate explanation of the animals that are unaccounted for. Staff advised the OIG that until recently, the person who tracked the foster animals and who was in charge of the program did so by hand and on paper documents. When this staff member left the department, the files and documents were unable to be located.

It is the recommendation of the OIG that current executive management develop an SOP and detailed process documentation for these changes so that any turnover in staff does not create further delays, further backlogs of data, and any further appearance of misreporting or wrongdoings by the Department or the City of Albuquerque.

In addition, it is the recommendation of the OIG that both operational and clinical staff are trained on the importance of properly and thoroughly documenting interactions with all animals, namely the interactions that may ultimately lead to both adoption and/or euthanasia. AWD staff should also have a documentation review process, or self-audit, after an animal is no longer in custody to look for any inconsistencies, missing documentation or missing information, in an effort to remain thorough and transparent.

Lastly, it is the recommendation of the OIG that foster program and processes for tracking animals is reviewed, documented and staff trained to ensure that animals are

not missing in the system. In the event that the staff in charge of this process leaves the department, that the process does not have to begin again and lose data.

After this thorough review and investigation, it cannot be conclusively determined the reason that the six (6) animals were deleted from Chameleon program, however, in two years that were reviewed, this in no way is the large number that was believed through the allegation. However, since animals are 'unaccounted for' in the computer system (believed to be in foster care but still not certain as numbers are still not matching), the investigator is unable to decisively state the whereabouts of the animals. Documentation dating back to December 2018 illustrates that the Executive Management team was well aware of the numbers and errors.

In addition, based on all of the information reviewed and detailed above, it is believed that adequate documentation and records do not exist to answer the questions outlined above: the 'deleted' six animals and the unaccounted for 106 animals in FY2018 and 378 animals unaccounted for in FY2019 in the Chameleon system. With that being said, it is unclear how the reported numbers were gathered prior to being reported, with the large numbers of 'unaccounted for animals".

The additional areas identified in this review were previously identified by the AWD as needing addressed and were/are in the process of being corrected.

Additional notes:

The initial claim brought forth by the anonymous complainant is categorized as unsubstantiated. This is due to the inability to verify numbers or accuracy of reports at this time with the errors in data entry and reports.

This report was presented and approved by the Accountability in Government Oversight Committee on December 11, 2019. Since that time, the AWD has begun the process of making changes to their Chameleon program in an effort to reduce the likelihood of errors in entering animal outcomes or euthanasia reasons. In addition, some of the menus/options that staff can use to select have been edited to eliminate the possibility of adding conflicted information or reason codes. Lastly, the Euthanasia SOP was edited and resigned by the Director on December 27, 2019.

The Director referenced in this report is no longer employed by the AWD or the COA. An Interim Director was appointed who immediately welcomed the recommendations, agreed with the findings, and met with the OIG and provided areas of Corrective Action (see attached Exhibit One).

It is the recommendation of the OIG, that a follow up audit be conducted to ensure adherence to the newly implemented processes and to ensure that all animals are properly tracked and logged in the system.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
City of Albuquerque

Ken Bramlett
Inspector General

P.O. Box 1293, Suite 5025
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103
Telephone: (505) 768-3150
Fax: (505) 768-3158

Certification

Date: November 26, 2019

Case Number: 19-0006I

I hereby certify this case was investigated in compliance with the Association of Inspectors General Principals and Standards and all applicable Federal, State and local laws. I further certify that I have no conflict of interest regarding this investigation.

Investigator: _____

Inspector General: _____

ONE ALBUQUERQUE animal welfare

Date: **February 25, 2020**

To: **Kenneth Bramlett, Inspector General**

From: **León Espinoza, AWD Interim Director**

Subject: **Corrective Action Memo (File 19-006 I), Animal Welfare Department**

The Animal Welfare Department (AWD) wants to thank the Office of the Inspector General for allocating your department's resources to review and identify further areas of improvement for our shelter operations. The results of your report will be used to help review and improve AWD operations and transparency. AWD has taken action on the following items:

- Provided remote network access to Chameleon support team in preparation for the onsite visit and identified system areas in need of improvement.

- Executed a contract with Endel Jurman, Executive Director HLP Inc. / Chameleon Animal Shelter Software Products, to provide consultation, system revisions, and improvements.

- Creating an internal advisory team to review and approve any proposed Chameleon software system changes.

- Working with the Chameleon team on developing a standard operating procedure for the input, operations, and maintenance of data entry & capture in the revised system.

- Developing and instituting a Chameleon training program based on the Chameleon software system company's recommendations to account for upgrades and changes to the system.

- Revamping authorizations for employee access controls within the Chameleon software system.

- Working with the Chameleon team to develop a new simplified automated reporting system with built in checks and balances to ensure data consistency.

- Creating a quarterly internal audit process to review animal outcomes and supporting information.

With the development and implementation of the action items listed above, AWD is confident that the department will be able to compile timely and accurate reports on its operations. These corrective actions will further our efforts to improve AWD operations.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

León Espinoza
Interim Director
Animal Welfare Department