

CIVIL GRAND JURY | 2017-2018

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

OUR LOVABLE PETS: DOGS AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO (June 27, 2018)— The 2017-2018 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury has released a report about dogs and public safety in San Francisco. The report discusses three city/county government entities that function reasonably well in protecting the safety of the public from dog attacks and bites. It also reveals several areas where those functions, and public safety, could be distinctly improved.

The SFPD Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit performs vital functions in this area and would benefit greatly from a staff increase from one to two people to help with investigating dog complaints and with the extensive record-keeping required in this Unit. Among other recommendations, the report calls for this unit to be given immediate direct access to the data in Chameleon, which is the database system for San Francisco Animal Care and Control. This data access will help the unit in their investigations.

The Vicious and Dangerous Dog Hearings operate under the City Administrator's Office and have extensive support from the SFPD Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit. These Hearings also function reasonably well, but the Hearings lack any formal support structure to make sure they continue to function at this level. A memorandum of understanding between the City Administrator's Office and SFPD to make sure that SFPD continues their support would be very useful. These informal Hearings also need monitoring and guidance to make sure they provide equal protection and due process of law to all parties.

San Francisco Animal Care and Control (SFACC) has a huge job and is chronically underfunded. This does not excuse them from performing their responsibilities of enforcing dog leash and dog license laws, and of providing public access to necessary information about dog attacks, dog bites, and vicious or dangerous dogs. Another recommendation is that they research ways to restore emergency coverage of Animal Control Officers to 24 hours a day, from the current 19 hours a day. The Civil Grand Jury is thoroughly convinced of the devotion of SFACC to the well-being of animals. Their current practices do not show the same devotion to public safety against dog attacks and bites. This report tries to show them some ways to improve in that area.

The public may view the reports online at <http://civilgrandjury.sfgov.org/report.html>

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