



Office of the City Manager

**RECESS ITEM**  
**CONSENT CALENDAR**  
 January 20, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager  
 Submitted by: Peter Radu, Assistant to the City Manager  
 Subject: Contract No. 32100053 Amendment: Orsolya Kuti, DVM to Provide On-site Veterinary Services for Berkeley Animal Care Services

**RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a Resolution ratifying action taken by the City Manager during recess to amend Contract No. 32100053 with Orsolya Kuti for on-site veterinary services for Berkeley Animal Care Services (BACS), increasing the contract amount by \$45,000 for a new total not to exceed amount of \$273,000, and extending the contract term to June 30, 2028.

**NEGATIVE EFFECT IF ACTION IS DELAYED UNTIL AFTER COUNCIL RECESS**

Berkeley Animal Care Services does not have a full-time staff veterinarian and critical veterinary services at the shelter are provided through this contract. Veterinary expenses have risen sharply since the pandemic, up 40% since 2020. Amending this contract to bring it in line with market costs is critical if BACS is to retain this veterinarian's services into the future.

**FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Ratifying this contract will result in a total increase in NTE of \$45,000. In FY 2026 \$9,000 is available in the Animal Care Services General Fund budget (011-21-203-000-0000-000-424-612410). The remaining amount of the NTE will be appropriated in the FY 2027 and FY 2028 biennial budget.

**CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS**

On September 1, 2020, the City of Berkeley entered into a three-year contract ending August 31, 2023, with Orsolya Kuti, DVM to provide on-site veterinary care at the Dona Spring Animal Shelter. The contract was amended and extended on September 13, 2022, increasing the hourly rate to the current rate of \$85/hr. Incorporating significant annual increases to veterinary expenses over the past several years into the hourly rate, as described below, results in an adjusted rate of \$105/hr.

## BACKGROUND

BACS is a full-service municipal animal care and control agency, enforcing local and state laws throughout the City of Berkeley (COB) and the City of Albany. BACS is also contracted to provide shelter and field services for the City of Emeryville, and shelter services for the City of Piedmont. BACS is an open-door facility which experiences a constant influx of animals that need to receive affordable veterinary care, treatment, and spay/neuter services. The BACS shelter is open to the public seven days a week to receive stray, surrendered and confiscated animals. Additionally, field services are provided seven days a week, during which Animal Control Officers impound stray, surrendered and confiscated animals. Many animals arrive at the shelter sick or injured and in need of immediate veterinary care. On-site veterinary services include but are not limited to:

- Examining and diagnosing shelter animals,
- Treating sick or injured animals,
- Performing spay/neuter surgeries, and
- Performing other routine surgeries.

To ensure that BACS euthanasia rate remains below the national benchmark of 10%, sick or injured animals must obtain necessary treatment so that they have a much better chance of rescue or adoption.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects or climate impacts associated with the subject of this report.

## RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Dr. Kuti has been a practicing veterinarian since 2017. Her first contract with BACS was signed on July 15, 2020, at an hourly rate of \$75. She received her only raise during her five years with BACS on September 14, 2022, when her hourly rate was increased to \$85. Throughout this time, she has taken significantly less money to work at BACS. Meanwhile, the cost of veterinary care has increased 40% since 2020<sup>1</sup>, This averages to an annual rise of around 8%, translating to a 24% increase since the last adjustment in 2022. Applying this increase since Dr. Kuti's last contract adjustment results in a \$105 hourly cost. This is commensurate with Bay Area veterinary costs and remains significantly lower than those in comparable positions.

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<sup>1</sup> See: [Why are veterinarian bills getting so ruff on the wallet? : The Indicator from Planet Money : NPR](#)

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Failure to bring Dr. Kuti's contract to a rate that is more consistent with current market pricing risks a loss of her services altogether. Were this to happen, BACS would be forced to outsource surgeries (which will result in significant and unavoidable cost increases to the organization of up to an estimated \$90,000 annually) or to find a relief vet (again resulting in unavoidable cost increases of up to an estimated \$18,000 annually).

CONTACT PERSON

Mike St Pierre, Manager, Berkeley Animal Care Services, (510) 981-6603.

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT NO. 32100053 AMENDMENT: ORSOLYA KUTI, DVM TO PROVIDE ON-SITE VETERINARY SERVICES FOR BERKELEY ANIMAL CARE SERVICES (BACS)

WHEREAS, BACS has a constant influx of animals that need to receive immediate and affordable veterinary care and treatment; and

WHEREAS, sick or injured animals that obtain necessary procedures and/or treatment/s have a much better chance of rescue or adoption; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Orsolya Kuti is a highly qualified veterinarian with extensive experience and expertise in shelter medicine, and has been providing on-site veterinary services to BACS since 2020; and

WHEREAS, the costs of veterinary expenses have risen significantly in the past several years, necessitating an adjustment to Dr. Kuti's hourly rate to remain competitive with comparable market pricing; and

WHEREAS, the contract will be funded as a General Fund allocation, the full funding for which will be subject to the City's FY27-28 Biennial Budget adoption and annual appropriation process.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council ratifies the action taken by the City Manager to execute an amendment to Contract No. 32100053 with Orsolya Kuti for on-site veterinary services for Berkeley Animal Care Services (BACS), increasing the contract amount by \$45,000 for a new total not to exceed amount of \$273,000, and extending the contract term to June 30, 2028.