



CITY HALL
P.O. BOX 20000
LAS CRUCES, NM 88004

700 N. Main St.
PHONE (575) 541-2067

**Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 9:00 AM**

**Meetings can be viewed live at
lascruces.civicweb.net**

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1. <u>CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</u>	
2. <u>DETERMINATION OF QUORUM</u>	
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A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT
HIRING STEPHANIE LEWIS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
ANIMAL SERVICES CENTER OF THE MESILLA VALLEY.

[CAES #26-007 - Pdf](#)

8. **PUBLIC INPUT**
9. **CHAIR AND BOARD COMMENTS**
10. **ADJOURNMENT**

ANIMAL SERVICE CENTER OF MESILLA VALLEY
October 23, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Becki Graham - Chair
Christopher Schaljo-Hernandez - Vice-Chairman
Joan Campbell - Board Member
Becky Corran - Board Member
Gennifer Gates - Board Member
Patrick Peck - Board Member
Manuel Sanchez - Board Member
Mary Lou Ward - Ex-Officio Member

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Angelica Buehling Gardner- Board Member
Barbara Bencomo - Ex-Officio Member

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance (9:00 a.m.): Chair Graham called the meeting to order.

2. Determination of Quorum: A quorum was determined to be present.

3. Acceptance of the Agenda: Motion by Board Member Schaljo-Hernandez, second by Board Member Sanchez. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Minutes for Approval

4.1 Approval of the Minutes from the ASCMV Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting held on July 24, 2025: Motion to approve as amended by Board Member Campbell, second by Board Member Gates. The date was changed from April to July. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Reports/Presentations

5.1 Cat's Meow Adoption Center: Michelle Corella thanked Rick Hahn for his hard work. The idea of Cat's Meow started in 2013. The doors opened in October of 2014. The Center is at 2211 N. Mesquite Street and is open to the public on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00. The Center has two phone numbers, a website, and a Facebook page. The Facebook page links to the website and the website is linked to PetFinder. The social media has been very helpful. The Center has between 80 to 100 cats and volunteers work in shifts daily. The shift that works from 10:00 to 1:00 does all the cleaning and heavy work. Some volunteers stay for both shifts, some only stay for one shift. The cats are socialized and receive enrichment from the volunteers

1 spending time with them. Ms. Corella showed a slide that showed a how
2 much it has taken to run the Center for the last five years. The majority of
3 the expenses are for veterinary services. All the money is used for the
4 cats, as all the staff are volunteers. The adoption fee is \$70 for a fully-
5 vetted, sterilized, and chipped cat. The Center does not get much in
6 grants, but they also hold a few fundraising events and other things.
7 Since opening, the Center has found good homes for about 3,200 cats
8 and kittens. Some of them have been sent on rescue transports. The
9 Center does help sometimes with sterilizing TNR cats and sometimes
10 members of the public who do not qualify for other programs, as well as
11 sterilizing their own cats. They get roughly 900 cats per year sterilized.
12 The problem with intact cats has gotten worse over the years and Ms.
13 Corella feels that the only thing that will help with this is becoming more
14 serious about high-volume spay/neuters in the community. Due to the
15 mild climate, a cat can produce about four litters per year. The kittens will
16 be ready to reproduce at around six months of age. This causes the cat
17 population to rise quickly. There was discussion of the local TNR efforts.

18
19 **5.2 City and County ACO Reports - City and County Animal Control:**

20 Brian Hulsey reported the County's numbers with 863 reported stray
21 animals, 782 were picked up which included 284 cats and 498 dogs. This
22 included 35 sick/injured with 18 cats and 17 dogs. There were 55 owner
23 surrenders. A four-year comparison was shown, and the numbers are
24 very similar to last year's numbers. A four-year return to owner
25 comparison was shown; for July there were 43, August had 31, and
26 September had 27. Additional animals picked up were: No owner
27 surrender cats, 55 owner surrender dogs, 35 sick/injured animals, 32
28 welfare hold animals, and one cruelty case. There were 16 shelter
29 quarantines and six home quarantines. There were two court hold
30 quarantines and there are currently ten live evidence animals in the court
31 hold facility. There were two bats for rabies submission and both were
32 negative. There were 56 diverted intakes. There were 1,137 educational
33 and the total calls was 2,093. Some of the animals picked up were a ball
34 python and some guinea pigs. The breakdown per district was shown.
35 Reasons for owner release: 11 were vicious/dangerous; ten were
36 aggressive; one the owner was unable to provide medical care; ten were
37 sick/injured; one was too old and the owner did not know what to do with
38 it; 16 were unable to care for; one was an escape artist; two were
39 surrendered because the newborn baby was allergic to animals; one
40 owner just had no time for the animal; and two the owner had passed
41 away.

42
43 Gino Jimenez reported the City's numbers. There were 3,954 stray calls
44 so far this year. Peak Performance goal is that 65% of reported animals
45 be secured; ACOs achieved 49%. The total field RTO for this year are
46 344; these animals had some sort of identification and ACOs were able to

return them to their owners without bringing them to the shelter. Peak Performance goal is 25% successful field RTO; ACOs have achieved 16.5%. Peak Performance measures include a 10% reduction of stray animal bites as there was a 56% increase compared to last year's numbers with 149 compared to 90 stray animal bites; 10% reduction in owner victim bites was also not met, with 1% decrease with 91 this year compared to 92 last year. Community cat program: ACOs responded to 70 cats in traps in September; 11 were community cats which were released. The total for the year is 611 stray cats in traps and 114 community cats were released. Reasons for being unable to field RTO: 20 dogs had no contact at home or by phone and one had a PO box only and another had an El Paso address; ten chips were not updated; six dogs the owners were at work and could not meet the ACOs; two the owners were out of town; two dogs the ACOs could not reach the microchip company; one dog the owner could not pick it up for unknown reasons; one dog's owner was in jail; and one cat had no contact at home or by phone. Reasons for owner release: 25 dogs for aggression; 24 dogs because owner had too many; 12 dogs the owner could not afford; 11 dogs for health issues with one euthanasia request; five dogs the owner was unable to care for; five dogs kept escaping; five dogs for behavioral issues with one euthanasia request; four cats the owner was unable to care for; three dogs the landlord would not allow on the property; two cats for bites; two cats for health issues with one euthanasia request; two dogs for owner's health issues; two cats the owner could not afford vet care; two dogs the owner was moving and could not take them along; one dog had killed a cat; one dog the owner was elderly and the dog was destructive; one dog was too big; and one dog for old age with euthanasia request. Monthly calls for service: July was 1,202; August was 1,149; and September was 1,178 for a year to date total of 10,562 calls.

5.2 Shelter Statistics/Activities - Liz Seely: Liz Seely introduced the new shelter veterinarian. Population at the Center was 365 as of yesterday with 299 dogs, 65 cats, and a chicken. The chicken was adopted at the end of the day. Intake for July through September was 2,655 animals with 1,586 dogs, 1,052 cats, and 17 other. Intake methods: ACOs brought in 49.3%; strays by public 25.1%; and owner surrenders were the third highest with 528 animals. Year to date intake is 7,569 which is about 500 animals more than this time last year. There were 700 adoptions for this quarter, which is phenomenal. There were 378 reclaims and rescues took 454 animals; community/TNR cats were 334; and euthanasia was 839. This makes the live release rate for this quarter 69.1% and the year to date live release rate is 67.4%. There were 27 dogs and one cat returned this quarter. Reasons include health issues, behavior problems, unable to afford, landlord did not allow, lifestyle changes, other pets incompatible, and not a good fit. There were 454 transfers to rescue organizations. Ms. Seely thanked all the rescue organizations who help so much. Euthanasia

reasons include timid/fear biter and respiratory signs/nontreatment. This quarter surgeries were 509 in July and year to date is 3,337. With the new veterinarian Ms. Seely hopes to increase those numbers drastically. There were over 10,000 visitors year to date. The July and August promotions brought in a large number. Marketing report for this quarter: The website had a "Clear the Shelter" page and there were over 6,000 visits to that page. The social media had over 32,000 visits and total web views were 115,000 with 15,000 new registered users. The photos of stray animals taken in are posted in real time, so many owners use that to try to find their lost pets. Volunteer hours have gone up due to the Volunteer Coordinator's exemplary efforts. There were 37 new volunteers signed up in September. Volunteers do cleaning, pet socialization, play groups, and many other tasks. The Foster Coordinator is also doing an amazing job. The foster program has around 200 animals in homes. Many pets are adopted by their fosters. The big event for this weekend is the drive-through vaccination clinic at the Field of Dreams from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Sunday. There will be free and low-cost vaccinations and sponsored microchips. The PetSmart Puppy-Palooza monthly adoption event will be on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Every other Saturday there are adoptions at Petco. Dog of the week is Champ. He was brought in as a puppy in March. Cat of the week is ModoModo and she has been adopted. Board Members Corran and Sanchez thanked Ms. Seely for her hard work. Ex-Officio Member Ward asked about the breakdown of types of surgeries done. "Other" surgeries are any surgery that is not a spay or neuter, surgeries done for members of the public, and rescue surgeries. Ms. Seely hopes to increase the number of low-cost public surgeries now that there is a new veterinarian.

6.3 Committee Reports

Finance - Josh Saffell, Committee Chair: Josh Saffell presented the unaudited financial statements as of September 30, 2025. Statement of Net Position: Current Assets including cash and investments is \$1,862,479; Receivables of \$550; and Capital Assets of \$299,157 leaving total assets of \$2,162,186. Total Liabilities are \$371,083. Fund balance in all funds is \$1,791,103. General Fund total revenues are \$1,763,328 at 34.3% of the budget; total expenditures are \$1,037,853 at 18.7%; budget parameter is 25%. The majority of the high percentage of revenues is due to the City and County providing a large upfront sum to cover cash outflows. The Change in Net Position is \$725,475. The Net Position at the end of the period should be about \$1.4 million; there is a typo in the presentation. Executive Director Program total expenditures are \$37,115 which is 18.1%, well below parameter. Medical Director Program total expenditures are \$248,114 which is 16.5%, again well below parameter. Kennel Director Program total expenditures are \$398,177 which is 18.9% of budget. Administrative Operations total expenditures are \$354,447

1 which is 20.6%, still below parameter. Grants and donations total balance
2 remaining is \$99,697. The Humane Society grant will be cleared by next
3 quarter. It got entered in the wrong subheading and staff is now fixing that
4 mistake.

5
6 **Executive – Becki Graham, Committee Chair:** Chair Graham reported
7 that the Executive Director Search Subcommittee has chosen three
8 finalists. Hopefully next month the finalists will come out next month.
9 Chair Graham asked Board Members to stay behind after the meeting to
10 compare calendars to help schedule those visits. Staff will have input
11 through a survey tool and some one-on-one visits. There will also be a
12 community survey and a meet and greet opportunity for each finalist. The
13 committee also talked about some upcoming funding that is expected.
14 Details will be released when those items are finalized. The committee
15 discussed the new veterinarian and various other personnel matters such
16 as job postings and temporary help. The committee also discussed
17 internal policy updates.

18
19 **Facilities - Mary Lou Ward, Committee Chair:** Ex-Officio Member Ward
20 missed some of the meetings, but got the reports from Ms. Seely. She
21 reports that some of the Facilities Committee items were flooding in the
22 new adoption building and a sealant was applied as a temporary fix and a
23 work order has been submitted; maintenance was discussed as the
24 manager is currently on medical leave for several weeks; there is flooding
25 in the play yard area and the City is considering some solutions; the
26 sidewalk between the adoption and medical buildings does not have an
27 ADA access ramp; the medical kennel area has had some repairs and
28 new kennels need to be obtained, and some repairs made to the concrete
29 floor.

30
31 **6. Discussion Items:** None.

32
33 **7. Action Items:**

34
35 **7.1 A resolution to accept state funding from the New Mexico Board of**
36 **Veterinary Medicine for the purposes of spaying and neutering, and**
37 **to adjust the FY2026 budget per exhibit "A" and exhibit "B":**

38
39 Liz Seely reported that the shelter had applied to the State for \$50,000 to
40 fund spaying and neutering and that has been awarded. It will be used to
41 spay/neuter reclaimed animals, as many families cannot afford to have the
42 animal sterilized before taking their animal home. ASCMV does not
43 enforce City ordinance; Animal Control does that. Vanessa Perez, Budget
44 Analyst called attention to a typo on exhibit "A" towards the bottom part, in
45 the expenditures, titled "Legislative Reserve" which is not the Legislative
46 Reserve but is actually the funding for the Animal Services Center.

1
2 Motion by Board Member Corran to amend exhibit "A" to switch the
3 "Legislative Reserve" and "ASCMV" rows to correct the typo. Second by
4 Board Member Sanchez. Motion passed unanimously.

5
6 Motion to approve as amended by Board Member Sanchez, second by
7 Schaljo-Hernandez. Motion passed unanimously.

8
9 **7.2 A resolution providing for determination of reasonable notice of**
10 **meeting date of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley**
11 **Board of Directors:**

12
13 Liz Seely reported that this is a resolution regarding the meeting schedule
14 for next year.

15
16 Motion by Board Member Sanchez, second by Board Member Corran.
17 Motion passed unanimously.

18
19 **7.3 A resolution approving the 2026 holiday/closure schedule for the**
20 **Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley:**

21
22 Liz Seely reported that this resolution sets the holidays and closures for
23 next year.

24
25 Motion by Board Member Schaljo-Hernandez, second by Board Member
26 Sanchez. Motion passed unanimously.

27
28 **8. Public Input:**

29
30 Gerri Wheelless, member of the public asked Ms. Seely about enforcing the
31 ordinances regarding sterilization of pets. ASCMV requires the owners to pay
32 the fees for the spay/neuter when they come to retrieve their pets after the third
33 admission to the shelter. Gino Jimenez discussed that the ACO is responsible
34 for noting how many times the animal has been picked up and checking up on
35 the animal later and citing or fining the owner if it is not sterilized. The owner is
36 required to pay the fee to the ASCMV, then when the animal is sterilized at
37 another veterinarian, the owner will bring proof to the ASCMV to get the money
38 refunded. Ms. Seely is looking forward to receiving the grant to help the families
39 who cannot afford the surgery.

40
41 Dina D'Argo, member of the public was pleased with the discussion of the need
42 for high-volume spay/neuter and the grant to help sterilize pets leaving the
43 shelter. She discussed that there is a need for another spay/neuter program in
44 addition to SNAP. She described programs she has participated in elsewhere.
45 Chair Graham requested that Ms. D'Argo e-mail information to the Executive
46 Committee members.

Someone from the County commented that spay/neuter is very important and discussed the County's work with SNAP. This last year the County provided \$140,000 to SNAP for spay/neuter services in the unincorporated areas. The new County veterinarian will be traveling in the unincorporated areas in the next few weeks providing vaccinations, chips, and spay/neuter services for free regardless of income. Board Member Gates asked for a more involved discussion of this program at the next meeting.

9. Chair and Board Comments:

Board Member Corran discussed the social media and advertising campaign to inform citizens of the new pet ordinances and the fees and fines associated with violations.

Chair Graham again asked Board Members to stay and discuss scheduling the interviews/visits and indicated that there should be a special meeting sometime in December to discuss the results of the visits.

10. Adjournment (10:20 p.m.)

Motion to adjourn and seconded. Meeting adjourned.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Member

Becki Graham, Chairperson

Christopher Schaljo-Hernandez, Board

Joan Campbell, Board Member

Gennifer Gates, Board Member

Manuel Sanchez, Board Member

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2 _____
3 Patrick Peck, Board Member

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6 _____
7 Angelica Buehling Gardner, Board Member

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10 _____
11 Barbara Bencomo, Ex Officio Member

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14 _____
15 Mary Lou Ward, Ex Officio Member

16 ATTEST:
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19
20 _____
21 Amanda Lopez Askin, County Clerk

ANIMAL SERVICE CENTER OF MESILLA VALLEY
Special Meeting
November 26, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Becki Graham - Vice-Chairman
Christopher Schaljo-Hernandez – Vice-Chairman
Joan Campbell - Board Member
Becky Corran - Chairperson
Gennifer Gates - Board Member
Patrick Peck - Board Member
Manuel Sanchez - Chairman

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Angelica Buehling Gardner- Board Member
Mary Lou Ward - Ex-Officio Member
Barbara Bencomo - Ex-Officio Member

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance (10:16 a.m.): Chair Graham called the meeting to order. All stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Determination of Quorum: A quorum was determined to be present.

3. Read Closed Meeting Statement of November 19 and 20, 2025 Closed Meetings: Chair Graham read the closed meeting statements for each meeting. November 19th began at 10:00 a.m. and included Becki Graham, Christopher Schaljo-Hernandez, Manuel Sanchez, Gennifer Gates, Patrick Peck, Joan Campbell, Scott Riley of Affion Public, Becky Corran joined at 10:45 and was present through 2:45 p.m. ASCMV executive director candidate Jamie Benfield was present from 10:30 a.m. through 12:00 p.m. And ASCMV executive director candidate Stephanie Lewis was present from 1:00 p.m. through 2:30 p.m. The session concluded at 2:55 p.m.

November 20th began at 10:00 a.m. and included Becki Graham, Becky Corran, Christopher Schaljo-Hernandez, Manuel Sanchez, Gennifer Gates, Patrick Peck, Elizabeth Seely of the ASCMV participated via phone from 10:02 through 10:12 a.m.. The session concluded at 10:40 a.m.

4. Action Items

4.1 Recommendation for Affion to begin negotiations with ASCMV Executive Director finalist: Chair Graham thanked the many people involved in the process to date, ASCMV staff, Affion Public, community members, fellow board members. The process has been interesting. She wanted to address some of the behind the scenes process, particularly

1 feedback and comments she received from last week for the community
2 meet and greet with the two candidates. There were questions about why
3 the board was not present for that meet and greet. Speaking for herself,
4 the board got to interview each candidate and the communities time was
5 not board time. In terms of recommendation, she believes they had a
6 great problem with two fantastic finalists. She gives the edge to Ms. Lewis
7 based on she has a little deeper experience on the municipal animal
8 welfare side, and experience with the scale of organization the board is
9 looking for.

10
11 Becky Corran agreed with Chair Graham stated. This is not an easy job
12 for whomever accepts the position. And not an easy task to find the right
13 person. She also supports Ms. Lewis. The community conversation was
14 great. They received 35 comments and that was wonderful.

15
16 Gennifer Gates echoes both Chair Graham and Becky Corran's
17 comments. She believes Ms. Lewis has extensive experience,
18 progressive viewpoints and supports her.

19
20 Patrick Peck thanked Affion for doing a fabulous job. There were two
21 great candidates, but he does agree with the consensus of the previous
22 board members in leaning towards Ms. Lewis.

23
24 Christophe Schaljo-Hernandez thanked both the candidates, their time
25 here, touring the center, talking to the ASCMV staff. Impressed with both
26 the candidates. He does support Ms. Lewis.

27
28 Joan Campbell is glad they hired a firm. They did an excellent national
29 search and brought two tremendous candidates. She thinks Ms. Lewis
30 can hit the ground running a little faster because her experience is more
31 spot-on to what is needed.

32
33 Manuel Sanchez echoed the previous sentiments shared by the board.
34 Both candidates brought some amazing experiences. Both were excited
35 for the opportunity, wanted to be here, wanted to bring their flavor to the
36 ASCMV. Yes, the board did read through the comments.

37
38 Motion to give Affion Public approval to begin negotiating with Stephanie
39 Lewis by Board Member Corran, second by Board Member Gates. Motion
40 passed unanimously.

41
42 Another special meeting will be held to ratify the contact upon completion.

43
44 **5. Adjournment (10:35 a.m.)**
45

1 Motion by Board Member Sanchez, second by Board Member Sanchez. Meeting
2 adjourned.

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5 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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13 Member

Becki Graham, Chairperson

Christopher Schaljo-Hernandez, Board

Joan Campbell, Board Member

Gennifer Gates, Board Member

Manuel Sanchez, Board Member

Patrick Peck, Board Member

Angelica Buehling Gardner, Board Member

Barbara Bencomo, Ex Officio Member

Mary Lou Ward, Ex Officio Member

42
43 ATTEST:
44
45
46

Agenda Item #4.1.

- 1 _____
- 2 Amanda Lopez Askin, County Clerk



26-01

ASCMV Action and Executive Summary

Type of Action:
☒ Resolution
☐ Ordinance
☐ TIDD Resolution

District:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
1st Reading:	Adopted: January 22, 2026
Drafter:	Amelia Corrales
	Department: ASCMV
Title:	RESOLUTION 26-01 A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT HIRING STEPHANIE LEWIS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ANIMAL SERVICES CENTER OF THE MESILLA VALLEY.

TYPE OF ACTION: ☒ Administrative ☐ Legislative ☐ Quasi-Judicial

PURPOSE(S) OF ACTION:
To move forward with the hiring of the ASCMV Executive Director

BACKGROUND / KEY ISSUES / CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:
The previous Executive Director final day was December 27, 2024, this is to hire the replacement.

SUPPORT INFORMATION:
[Attachment A](#)
[Exhibit A 26-01](#)

PLAN(S):
None

COMMITTEE/BOARD REVIEW:
None

DOES THIS AMEND THE BUDGET?:
☐ Yes
☒ No

Does this action amend the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)?
☐ Yes
☒ No

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:
1. Vote "Yes"; this will approve the acceptance of the contract for the hiring of the new Executive Director
2. Vote "No"; this will reject the contract for the hiring of the new Executive Director
3. Vote to "Amend"; this will need further review and direction from the Board
4. Vote to "Table"; this will delay the hiring process of the Executive Director

RESOLUTION 26-01

RESOLUTION 26-01 A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT HIRING STEPHANIE LEWIS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ANIMAL SERVICES CENTER OF THE MESILLA VALLEY.

The Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley (ASCMV) Board of Directors is hereby informed that:

WHEREAS, the ASCMV board engaged in an internal process in a noticed closed session on November 19 and 20, 2025 to hire a permanent Executive Director as the position was vacated by Mr. Clint Thacker effective December 27, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Article 5, Section F of the Second Amended Joint Powers Agreement between to the City of Las Cruces, and the County of Dona ANa, and the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley provides the board of directors with authority to appoint the Executive Director at their discretion; and

WHEREAS, the ASCMV Board has determined that Stephanie Lewis possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to fulfill the duties and responsibilities for ASCMV Executive Director; and

WHEREAS, the ASCMV Board and Stephanie Lewis have mutually negotiated an employment agreement contingent upon approval in an open council meeting; and

WHEREAS, the agreement provides for a base salary of \$150,000 annually; and

WHEREAS, the agreement contains other provisions and benefits.

NOW, THEREFORE, Be it Resolved by the Governing Body of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley:

(I)

THAT the ASCMV Board are hereby authorized to sign and approve the ASCMV Executive Director Employment Agreement in Exhibit " A", which references the job description in Attachment A attached hereto and made a part of this Resolution.

(II)

THAT ASCMV staff is hereby authorized to do all deeds as necessary in the accomplishment of the herein above.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 22 day of January 2026

DONE AND APPROVED this day of

APPROVED

ATTEST:

Moved by:

Seconded by:

AYES

NAYS



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV)



About the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV)

The Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV) was established in 2008 through a joint powers agreement between the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, NM. This partnership provides a shared structure for funding, operating, and maintaining the region's municipal animal shelter and related services.

The ASCMV is overseen by a Board of Directors made up of representatives from both the Las Cruces City Council and the Doña Ana County Commission, as well as appointed public members and ex-officio representatives from city and county leadership. The City of Las Cruces serves as the fiscal agent, while the Executive Director leads day-to-day operations through a team of public employees.

As the only open-admission shelter serving both the City and County, ASCMV handles an exceptionally high volume of animals. However, it remains a progressive, community-focused organization committed to reuniting lost pets with their families and placing adoptable animals into loving homes.

ASCMV Mission

Our mission at the ASCMV is to provide safe shelter for all lost, mistreated, and abandoned animals of the Mesilla Valley and surrounding communities. The ASCMV utilizes all avenues available to it in placing each animal into a safe, loving, and permanent home whenever possible. We strive to meet the highest standards of humane animal care and husbandry, and to promote responsible pet ownership through public education and outreach.



The Position

The Executive Director of the ASCMV provides strategic leadership and day-to-day management of the region's only open-admission municipal animal shelter. Reporting to the ASCMV Board, the Executive Director is responsible for setting and implementing shelter policies, overseeing staff and resources, and ensuring compliance with City, County, State, and Federal regulations.

This high-impact role leads the development and execution of long- and short-term plans, program goals, and performance metrics that improve animal care outcomes and operational efficiency. The Executive Director serves as the public face of the organization, working closely with community stakeholders, volunteers, elected officials, and partner agencies to promote collaboration, education, and responsible pet ownership across the region.

Education and Experience

Qualified applicants will have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Business, Public Administration, or related field and five (5) years experience managing animal shelter, care, or advocacy programs or operations, including two (2) years supervisory/management experience. A combination of education, experience, and training may be applied in accordance with ASCMV policy.

Licenses/Certification(s):

A valid driver's license is required; this position requires an acceptable driving record in accordance with ASCMV policy.



Duties and Responsibilities

- Develops and implements ASCMV strategies and tactical goals to meet strategic plans and objectives; reviews and approves complex solutions for animal sheltering and care issues; reviews strategies and determines resource requirements and program goals and deliverables; determines scope and priorities of projects; develops programs and policies to support present and future needs.
- Provides leadership, direction, and guidance to operations; evaluates and analyzes issues, and recommends and implements solutions; identifies and monitors long and short range goals and objectives; manages shelter performance and productivity; directs the continuous improvement of the work products; assures the overall integrity of the support and functionality of the shelter services; develops, evaluates and manages overall budgets; maintains current and accurate financial and resource information on shelter operations.
- Manages and coordinates assigned staff; develops goals and priorities, assigns tasks and projects; develops staff skills and training plans; counsels, trains and coaches professional, administrative and technical staff; responds to complaints about employees, volunteers and facility procedures; assists customer service representatives when dealing with difficult situations and resolves problems of a unique and/or sensitive nature; responds to community concerns regarding animal issues; implements corrective actions and conducts performance evaluations; provides leadership, direction and guidance in program management, technical strategies and priorities; reviews and approves status reports prepared by Department personnel and directs schedule and plan modifications.
- Develops, implements and monitors department budget, approves budget expenditures; prepares and reviews operational analyses of program costs, revenue streams, fees, fundraising and revenue enhancement opportunities; prepares and presents various special and recurring reports.
- Monitors regional and national animal care and sheltering program trends; recommends operational improvements; interprets user concerns, defines desired results, develops solutions, and recommends direction of new strategies; directs long range planning for animal shelter program development; addresses growth and quality of care issues; assures effective communications with City and County executive management and other departments; assures compliance with state and Federal policy and regulations.
- Manages, allocates, and coordinates numerous internal and external resources; represents the shelter as the chief spokesperson; assures effective communication of issues and strategies between animal shelter and City and County management team; serves as animal shelter advisor and liaison between the City and various regional organizations, state and Federal agencies; participates in meetings with government officials, civic organizations, and community groups.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- *Knowledge of:* Principles and practices of administrative management, including personnel rules, cost accounting, budgeting, strategic planning and effective employee supervision; principles, practices and procedures of animal care and sheltering activities; Federal, State and local laws, rules and regulations affecting animal shelter programs; business and personal computers and standard software applications; City organization, operations, policies and procedures.
- *Ability to:* Assess and prioritize multiple tasks, projects and demands; communicate effectively in verbal and written forms; establish and maintain effective working relations with employees, officials, other agencies and the general public.
- *Skills in:* Analyzing animal care and sheltering issues, evaluating alternatives, and making logical recommendations based on findings; presenting and defending animal sheltering program information in a public speaking setting such as neighborhood meetings and public hearings; prioritizing ASCMV programs to meet the City and County's community service strategies; developing and implementing long-range plans and procedures for cost effective management of allocated resources; effectively managing and leading staff; delegating tasks and authority; interpreting qualitative and quantitative instructions and analyzing complex variables; using initiative and independent judgment within established procedural guidelines.





The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate should be a strategic and compassionate leader with deep experience in animal sheltering and a strong understanding of best practices in animal welfare. They should bring a proven ability to manage high-volume operations, develop and implement policies, and build effective partnerships across agencies and communities.

The ideal candidate should be a skilled communicator who can advocate for the ASCMV's mission while navigating the complexities of local government, public expectations, and limited resources. Experience managing staff, budgets, and regulatory compliance in a municipal or nonprofit environment will be essential.

Above all, the ideal candidate must be a collaborative leader and problem-solver who leads with integrity, fosters a culture of accountability and care, and is committed to continuous improvement in both animal and community outcomes.

Salary

The ASCMV is offering a salary between \$117,589 – 172,224, commensurate with experience, and a comprehensive benefits package. Relocation assistance will be available for the successful out-of-area candidate.

How to Apply

Interested applicants should forward a cover letter and resume to:

resumes@affionpublic.com
Reference: ASCMVED

Affion Public
PO Box 794
Hershey, PA 17033
717-214-4922
www.affionpublic.com



 [Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley](#)

 [Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley](#)

Attachment A



EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT AGREEMENT FOR THE
Director of Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this 22nd day of January 2026, by and between the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley (or ASCMV) a public agency ("Employer"), and **Stephanie Lewis** ("Employee"), in consideration on of the terms and conditions stated herein.

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, the Employer is a New Mexico quasi-government entity organized pursuant to the New Mexico Joint Powers Agreement Act for the purposes of providing animal shelter services throughout Doña Ana County, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Employer is created by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) dated December 2023 between the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County;

WHEREAS, the JPA sets forth certain powers and obligations of the ASCMV Board, including the requirement to employ an Executive Director to oversee the day-to-day operations of the ASCMV; and

WHEREAS, the Employer desires to retain the services of Stephanie Lewis as Executive Director of the ASCMV as provided in the JPA; and

WHEREAS, the Employer desires to provide certain benefits, establish certain conditions of employment, and to set general working conditions of Stephanie Lewis; and

WHEREAS, the Employer desires to secure and retain the services of Stephanie Lewis as Executive Director and to provide an inducement for Stephanie Lewis to remain in such employment; and

WHEREAS, Stephanie Lewis desires to accept employment as Executive Director in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement and the JPA of the ASCMV.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained the parties agree as follows:

I. DUTIES

Employer hereby agrees to employ Stephanie Lewis as Executive Director for the ASCMV. Stephanie Lewis agrees to accept employment and act as Executive Director of the ASCMV, and to carry out to the best of their ability all the duties ASCMV upon that office by the JPA, federal and state laws and regulations, and those other legally permissible and proper duties and functions as the Board of the ASCMV, from time to time, may require and assign to

that office. Duties include, but are not necessarily limited to, those set forth in the Job Description which is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

II. STATUS AND TERM

A. The term of this Agreement begins February 17th, 2026, and shall terminate February 17th, 2028, unless extended in writing. Employee shall be considered an at-will employee of the ASCMV. As an at-will employee, appointed by the Board, Employee is not entitled to the grievance procedures set forth in Employer's personnel manual. The rights, obligations, and procedures applicable to the Parties are contained in and governed by this Agreement. This Employment Agreement shall become effective upon approval by the Board of the ASCMV and employment shall commence on the date stated above.

B. Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent, limit, or otherwise interfere with the ASCMV Board's right, granted in the JPA, to terminate this Agreement, with or without cause, at any time, subject only to the provisions set forth in Section 4 of this Agreement.

C. Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent, limit, or otherwise interfere with the right of the Employee to resign and terminate this Agreement at any time, subject only to the provisions set forth in Sections 4 and 6 of this Agreement.

D. Employee agrees to remain in the exclusive employ of the Employer for the term of the agreement and shall neither accept other employment nor become employed by another employer without the prior written approval of the Board of the ASCMV or upon written notice of resignation is given by the Employee. The term "employed" (and derivations of that term as used in the preceding paragraph) shall include employment by another legal entity or self-employment, but shall not be construed to include occasional teaching, writing, consulting, or military reserve service performed on Employee's own time and with the advance approval of the Board of the ASCMV.

III. JOB SUPERVISION AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A. The Board of the ASCMV shall be the Employee's sole supervisor and job performance evaluator.

B. Employer will make reasonable efforts to conduct an annual review of the performance of the Employee ("Performance Evaluation"). Performance evaluations will not be conducted more than once per year. Employer will provide Employee with at least 30 days notice before initiating Performance Evaluation. Employer may also initiate a Performance Evaluation by submitting a written request to the Board Chair that the evaluation be conducted. In the event Employer requests a Performance Evaluation, the evaluation should commence within 30 days. If Employer is unable to commence within 30 days, the Board Chair will advise Employee of a date when the evaluation will commence.

C. A Performance Evaluation by the Board of the ASCMV will determine an overall rating of the Employee's performance. The rating may be a factor in determining the appropriateness of

providing an annual merit pay increase. Merit pay increases are not guaranteed. The process, at minimum, shall include the opportunity for both parties to:

1. Prepare a written evaluation;
2. Meet and discuss the evaluation in closed session;
3. Present a written summary of the evaluation.

D. Should the performance of the Employee be deemed deficient by the Board of the ASCMV, the Employee may be placed on a minimum three (3) and maximum six (6) month Performance Improvement Plan, with specific required steps for satisfactory improvement, before the Board can move to terminate the Agreement. Any ongoing assessment and evaluation of Employee during the Performance Improvement Plan should not be construed as the Performance Evaluation.

E. The final written evaluation should be completed and delivered to the Employee within sixty (60) days of the evaluation meeting.

F. In effecting the provisions of this Section, the Employer and Employee mutually agree to abide by the provisions of applicable law.

IV. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND SEVERANCE PAY

A. Except as provided in Paragraph B of this section, in the event Employee is terminated by Employer during such time that Employee is willing and able to perform Employee's duties under this Agreement, then Employer agrees to pay Employee a severance package as describe in Paragraph C of this section.

B. The following reasons shall constitute grounds to terminate this Agreement without payment of the severance package provided in Paragraph C of this Agreement:

1. A willful breach of this Agreement or the willful and repeated neglect by Employee to perform the duties Employee is required to perform under this Agreement or failure to correct identified deficiencies during a Performance Improvement Plan pursuant to Section 3(D); or
2. Conviction of any criminal act relating to employment with the ASCMV; or
3. Violation of the ASCMV personnel rules which constitute misconduct; or
4. Violation of the ASCMV's or State of New Mexico's rules of ethics or conduct; or
5. Conviction of any felony offense.

C. Except as provided in Paragraph B of this section, in the event Employee is terminated by Employer during such time that Employee is willing and able to perform Employee's duties under this Agreement, Employer agrees to pay Employee a lump sum cash severance payment equal to three (3) months aggregate salary and benefits including cost of health and dental if such termination occurs on or before February 17th, 2028. Employee will not be entitled to demand payment of the balance of this Agreement. Employee shall also be compensated for all earned vacation, holidays, and other applicable accrued benefits, if any, to the date of separation. Sick leave accrued to that date shall be paid out in accordance with Employer's

Personnel Policies & Work Rules, as they may be amended from time to time. The benefits provided as a part of termination shall not include the continued accrual of leave benefits beyond the date of termination. The severance payment and benefits shall be an entitlement accrued under the conditions reference herein and shall be paid without regard to whether the Employee has secured other employment.

D. Payment of severance will not occur without Employee's execution of a written release agreement, releasing Employer from any claims Employee may have under state and federal law against Employer.

E. In the event the Employee voluntarily resigns the position with Employer, Employee shall give at least sixty (60) calendar days advance written notice, unless the parties agree otherwise, and such agreement is in writing. In the event of resignation, Employee will not be entitled to severance.

F. It is understood that after notice of termination or resignation in any form, Employee and Employer will cooperate to provide for an orderly transition. Specific responsibilities during such transition may be specified in a written separation agreement.

V. SALARY

A. Effective February 17, 2026, Employer agrees to pay Employee for services rendered a starting annual base salary of \$150,000 per year upon employment, payable in biweekly installments at the same time as other employees of the ASCMV are paid. The ASCMV's budget will contain all salary and benefit amounts.

B. A one-time stipend of up to \$5,000 will be paid to the Employee for relocation expenses as part of the first full payroll processed after the date of hire.

C. The Employee shall be provided an annual car allowance of \$3600.00 which shall be paid out bi-weekly as part of the regular payroll process. The Employee may be provided a vehicle for use conducting official ASCMV business related activities.

D. The ASCMV shall provide the Employee with a monthly allowance of \$80.00 for cell phone expenses.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE, VACATION, HOLIDAY, AND SICK LEAVE

A. Employee shall accrue, and have credited to their personal account, vacation and sick leave on an annual basis at the highest rate provided to any other employee.

Employee shall be entitled to accrue 240 hours of annual leave per year and 400 hours of sick leave per year. The Employee is also entitled to take sixteen (16) hours of personal leave each year. The Employee is entitled to take and sell back annual (vacation), sick, bereavement, jury, or court and military leave in accordance with the City's Personnel Manual, as amended.

B. The Employee shall be entitled to take holidays in accordance with the Fiscal Agent's annually approved holiday schedule.

C. Upon termination of the contract or other departure of the Employee from employment with the ASCMV, the Employee shall be entitled to be compensated for accrued annual and sick leave in accordance with the City Personnel Manual, as amended.

VII. DISABILITY, RETIREE, HEALTH, AND LIFE INSURANCE

A. Employee is entitled to participate in employee benefits that regular ASCMV employees participate in and the ASCMV shall be responsible for paying any matching contributions. The Employee benefits include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Employee shall be entitled to participate in Fiscal Agent's health, dental, vision, and life and disability insurance plans and Section 457 deferred compensation plan(s).
2. In-state and out-of-state travel and per diem shall be paid on the same basis as regular ASCMV employees.
3. Employee shall be covered under the ASCMV's Workers Compensation Plan.

VIII. RETIREMENT

A. The Employer is a public employer as defined in the Public Employees Retirement Act as an entity created by a JPA between the City and County. The Employee shall be a member of the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) and is subject to the mandatory member withholdings set forth in the Act. The Employer agrees to contribute to the Public Employee's Retirement Association of New Mexico (PERA) in an amount equal to the contribution the ASCMV makes for all other unrepresented ASCMV employees. Such contribution will coincide with the pay schedule.

IX. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Employer agrees to budget and to pay for the professional dues and subscriptions of Employee necessary for continuance on and full participation in national, regional, state, and local associations and organizations necessary and desirable for continued professional participation, growth, and advancement, to better serve the interests of the Employer.

B. Employer hereby agrees to budget for and to pay the actual travel and subsistence expenses of Employee for professional and official travel, meetings, and occasions necessary and adequate to continue the professional development of Employee, and to adequately pursue necessary official and other functions for Employer.

C. Employer also agrees to budget and to pay for the travel and subsistence expenses of Employee for short courses, institutes, and seminars that are necessary for professional development to better serve the interests of the Employer.

D. Employer hereby agrees to provide Employee with tuition reimbursement benefits to the same extent provided to other ASCMV employees.

X. NOTICES

A. Notices pursuant to this Agreement shall be given either by hand delivery or by deposit in the custody of the United States Postal Service, postage prepaid, certified, return receipt requested, addressed as follows:

1. EMPLOYER: ASCMV/City of LC

2. EMPLOYEE: Stephanie Lewis

B. Alternatively, notices required pursuant to this Agreement may be personally served in the same manner as is applicable to civil judicial practice. Notice shall be deemed given as of the date of personal service or as of the date of deposit of such written notice in the course of transmission in the United States Postal Service.

XI. AMENDMENT

A. This Contract shall not be altered, changed, or amended except in a written amendment signed by the parties.

XII. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. The text herein shall constitute the entire agreement between the parties.

B. If any provision, or any portion thereof, contained in this Agreement is held unconstitutional, invalid, or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement shall be deemed severable, shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

C. In performing the provisions of this Agreement, Employer, and Employee mutually agree to abide by the provisions of applicable law.

XIII. APPROPRIATIONS

A. No commitment of ASCMV funds will be made prior to the approval of this Agreement. The terms of this Agreement are contingent upon sufficient appropriations being made by the Board for the performance of this Agreement. If sufficient appropriations are not made, this Agreement shall terminate subject to the conditions subsequent concerning severance payment being provided by Employer to Employee as provided in Section 3. Termination pursuant to the terms of this Agreement shall not result in any claim for payment or damages by Employee or Employer.

XIV. APPLICABLE LAW AND VENUE

A. This Contract shall be governed by and constructed in accordance with the laws of the State of New Mexico. Any action arising under this JPA shall lie exclusively in Doña Ana County, New Mexico.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the ASCMV has caused this Agreement to be signed and executed on its behalf by the Chair of the ASCMV Board, by the ASCMV Legal Counsel, and the Employee has signed and executed this Agreement, both in duplicate, the day and year first above written.

Employee:

Stephanie Lewis, ASCMV Executive Director:

Chris Schaljo-Hernandez, Chair of the ASCMV Board of Directors

Attested to by
and Approved as to form:
Ben Young, ASCMV Attorney