

We at the City of Harlingen have recently become aware of a statement released by the Rio Grande Valley Humane Society (RGVHS) regarding the dissolution of our partnership and the future of animal welfare in our community. We feel it is important to address some inaccuracies in this statement.

First and foremost, the City of Harlingen remains deeply committed to the welfare of all animals in our community. Our decision to part ways with RGVHS after a long partnership was not taken lightly. In fact, the City granted RGVHS a 120-day extension upon their contract expiration to negotiate a new agreement in good faith. Unfortunately, RGVHS failed to provide a comprehensive financial report as required. The incomplete report raised concerns, particularly regarding the allocation of nearly \$1 million in payroll and labor costs. This lack of clarity made it difficult to ascertain how our annual contribution of \$400,000 in taxpayer dollars was being utilized. Additionally, RGVHS stated they would not provide the City with a budget for 2024, which is essential for the City to understand how the allocated funds would be used. This lack of financial transparency left the City with no viable option but to not renew the contract.

The claim that lifesaving is no longer a priority for us is misleading. Our commitment to animal welfare remains as strong as ever. We have issued a request for proposals for the operation of our shelter, to which RGVHS is welcome to apply, provided they comply with the necessary financial disclosures. We are seeking a new partnership that aligns with our values and commitments, including comprehensive care for all dogs and cats, foster and adoption programs, and a proactive approach to addressing pet overpopulation through spay and neuter initiatives.

Regarding the future of the animals currently housed at the Harlingen shelter, we assure the community that their welfare is a top priority. We are working diligently to ensure a smooth

transition during this period and are committed to finding humane and compassionate solutions for all animals affected by this change.

While it is true that the City has enjoyed a partnership with the Harlingen Humane society for over 30 years, we have observed significant changes in the organizational structure and operations of the shelter over the last few years. Including a complete overhaul of their board and operational methodologies, specifically becoming a limited intake facility and closing their doors to residents wishing to rescue animals off our streets or surrendering a pet. Unfortunately, these changes were made without collaboration or input from the City. The shift has led to a gradual but inevitable breakdown in our much valued partnership.

Currently, RGVHS is not fulfilling its contractual obligation to accept stray animals, which is a breach of their contract and a disservice to our community's needs. Just yesterday the City was forced to take two stray dogs to a shelter in a neighboring City because RGVHS refused to accept the dogs from animal control.

We appreciate the support and understanding of our community as we navigate through this transition and strive towards a bright future for animal welfare in our city.