



TO: Mayor Shaun Sipma
Members of the City Council

FROM: Jennifer Burdick, Board President, Souris Valley Animal Shelter
Shelbi Waters, Executive Director, Souris Valley Animal Shelter

DATE: June 19, 2020

**SUBJECT: SOURIS VALLEY ANIMAL SHELTER DOD DEFENSE COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE PILOT PROGRAM (G&A023)**

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Souris Valley Animal Shelter (SVAS) requests approval to apply for the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), Department of Defense Program entitled “Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot” (DCIP) utilizing the City of Minot as a pass-through entity. The primary purpose of the program is to improve the quality of life for military families. The SVAS will request funds to remodel and rebuild the current structure located at 1935 20th Ave SE, Minot, ND 58701. If the organization is approved to move forward, all future agreements and sub-awards will be brought forth to the council for approval.

II. DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSONS

Jennifer Burdick, Board President, board@svaspets.com, 701-852-6133
Shelbi Waters, Executive Director, ed@svaspets.com, 580-704-0948

III. DESCRIPTION

A. Background

The Souris Valley Animal Shelter (SVAS) is a nonprofit organization that shelters animals in the Northwest region of North Dakota. Over a span of 40 years, we have helped approximately 100,000 animals and people through adoptions, emergency services, community programs, and county contracts. The organization serves over 11 counties (Ward, Burke, Mountrail, Dunn, McLean, Bottineau, Renville, Wells, Pierce, McHenry, Ramsey, and Divide) including a current 40-year contract with Minot Air Force Base. Whether we are providing services through our community engagement programs or providing emergency care in situations such as Hurricane Katrina or the 2011 North Dakota flood, our goal is to make our community the very best. We envision a North Dakota that practices modern-day care, shows compassion, and provides opportunities for shelter pets and the community.

B. Proposed Project

The Souris Valley Animal Shelter is a unique part of the Minot community. However, all of the organization’s services cannot be sustained unless we have the tools to effectively serve the community and operate on a day-to-day basis. The proposed grant will allow SVAS to create a state-of-the-art animal shelter by expanding and updating the current building to provide the highest quality of care for animals and capacity for programs for Minot and the military families we serve. The current shelter no longer meets the modern-day standard for proper care. Several issues include:

- Absence of indoor space to provide healthy exercise for shelter pets

- Black mold in the back corridor of the building
- Rotting window frames
- Ineffective plumbing
- Minimal to no natural sunlight
- Pest infestation due to internal rotting in the walls
- Increased stress to animals due to lack of space
- No means to fully isolate ill or contagious animals
- Lack of sufficient airflow

IV. IMPACT:

A. Strategic Impact:

The Souris Valley Animal Shelter has a track record of success in both Minot and Minot Air Force Base. Over 52% of the organization's services provide assistance to military families stationed in Minot through volunteerism, low cost veterinary care, project implementation for children k-12, owner surrender, and emergency housing for deployed active-duty. Furthermore, over 88% of the SVAS services are utilized by citizens of Minot. The impact of a new shelter includes the expansion of current programs, the prevention of mass ill and contagious disease spread through a low cost and free veterinary clinic, and space for population control at a no-kill shelter. The SVAS is the only animal welfare organization that serves Minot Air Force Base, which is reflected in a 40-year contract for services. Furthermore, SVAS is the only animal welfare organization designated in the Ward County Emergency Plan, allowing the organization to play a significant role during the 2011 flood.

B. Service/Delivery Impact:

Our current programs that create an impact in Minot and Minot Air Force Base include:

- Rescue Readers, which promotes confidence in literacy for children and adults by allowing individuals to read to an animal of their choice on a weekly basis. This program also allows shelter pets to socialize prior to adoption, raising the adoptability of the pet significantly. Rescue Readers has a participation rate of approximately 768 children per year, with every elementary school in Minot participating.
- Pet Therapy, the SVAS program that advocates for mental health by promoting companionship to the most vulnerable citizens in Minot by taking pets to facilities such as nursing homes, domestic violence centers, the YWCA, and homeless shelters throughout the community. Pet Therapy is run entirely by volunteers in the community and allows the shelter pets to experience new environments prior to being adopted, while also providing companionship during the harsh winter months. Roughly 3,499 individuals have participated in Pet Therapy, 32% representing active-duty military and 79% representing individuals residing in Minot city limits.
- Emergency Housing, the largest program at SVAS which allows the animal shelter to provide care and shelter for animals whose owner is fleeing a domestic violence situation, or a situation in which homelessness is the result of unforeseen circumstances. The Emergency Housing program has helped over 100 families in the community and continues to be a program that works directly with the Domestic Violence Crisis Center, YWCA, MAFB, and Ward County Sheriff's Department. The current program was extended to assist individuals who were enrolled in drug

addiction counseling, and was extended again to assist military families during COVID-19. In 2020 alone, 80% of Emergency Housing was utilized by active-duty military families.

- Community Pantry, which provides free pet supplies to individuals struggling financially. During this time, many of our community members are having to make difficult decisions on whether or not to surrender a pet in order to afford the basic needs for survival. Our goal with this program is to allow pet owners the opportunity to keep their pets in the home and not in our shelter. Since the launch of this program, over 360 pet owners have utilized the community pantry, with 20% being active-duty military and 88% being residents of Minot (this includes active-duty residents of Minot).

Aside from the community programs that bring joy to the residents of Minot and Minot Air Force Base, SVAS is the only large-scale shelter in the region that is able to intake cats and dogs. The organization regularly assists the Minot Pound with overflow, and continues to provide boots on the ground services through microchip clinics and adoptions. The lack of veterinary services in town will be combated by the SVAS building a community clinic within the shelter to allow services to be provided at little to no cost.

C. Fiscal Impact:

The building project in its entirety costs \$3.2 million without acquiring the appropriate furniture, and with \$487,000 already spent on architecture and engineering fees, floorplans, construction bid process, site topographic testing, building inspections, etc. The organization has \$742,000 remaining in cash donations and has acquired \$150,000 in in-kind donations in the form of contracting labor. To stay compliant with city zoning requirements, the organization is unable to phase out the building project. Therefore, the Souris Valley Animal Shelter is requesting a grant amount of \$3 million, to bridge the gap between funds already expensed and funds needed for furniture and equipment. Current cash, in-kind donations, and pledges will be enough to sustain construction into 2021, but without a complete plan, construction cannot begin.

V. ALTERNATIVES

The Souris Valley Animal Shelter is not eligible to apply for funding without the support of the City of Minot.

VI. TIME CONSTRAINTS

The deadline for submission of the proposal for the DCIP is Friday, June 26th at 5:00 PM.

VII. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Finalized Project Budget from Ackerman-Estvold
Award Notice to Hight Construction
Finalized Floorplans developed by Ackerman-Estvold