

Budget Public Hearing Meeting Talking Points for 9/10/26 & 9/24/26

Bring bodies!! Invite anyone. People near the Premier Sports center were able to have the proposed Ice Rink completely shut down simply by showing up in large numbers & wearing red shirts. Only a few people spoke but MANY were there to show it wasn't just a random few.

ANIMAL WELFARE MUST RECEIVE PROPER ANNUAL FUNDING

- Increase the annual animal welfare budget to reflect the size of Manatee County. It is currently approximately 0.4% which translates to approximately \$6 million. Of that, roughly \$3.76 million is dedicated to personnel and the rest to operations. The \$6 million dollar budget is not enough to provide the community with the public safety services required. They should be budgeting at least 0.7% (approx. \$9.5 million) of the General Fund now for 2027.
In contrast, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), also a public safety service, receives nearly 42% of the entire General Fund which translates to approximately \$269 million.
- Tie future annual increases in the animal welfare budget to be a percentage of the General Fund indexed for county growth.
- Increase issues to be addressed by animal welfare
 - Cat colony explosion
 - Invasive species
- Pay current kennel staff a living wage
- Budget for a sufficient number of staff all earning a living wage OR contract the work out
- Budget for a Director of Animal Services
- Budget for animal control officers OR contract the work out
- Budget for frequent spay and neuter clinics
- Budget for frequent vaccine clinics
- Budget for maintenance of buildings every year.
- **Budget now for a concrete block kennel building**