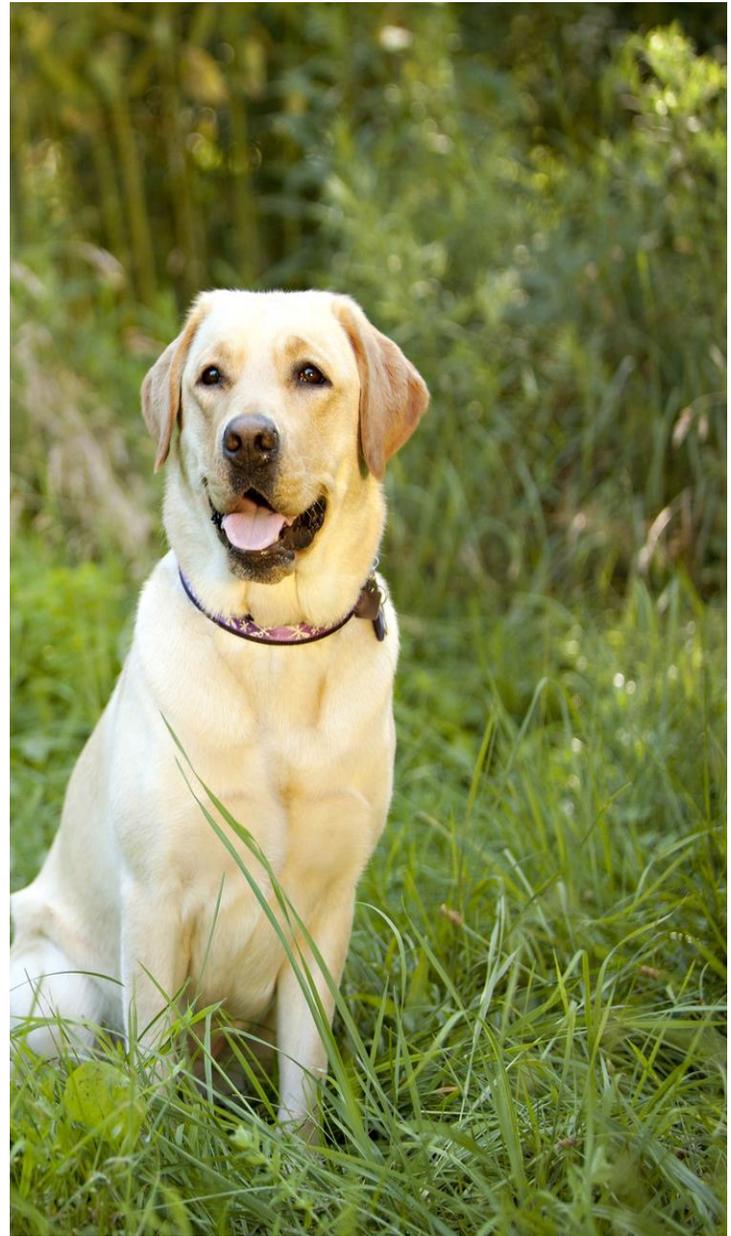

Animal Services Advisory Board Report 2018-2019



OCTOBER 20, 2020

Regional Animal Services Advisory Board



**REGIONAL
ANIMAL SERVICES**

2018-2019

The Animal Services Advisory Board (“ASAB”) is committed to enhancing information and idea sharing between Washoe County Regional Animal Services (“WCRAS”) and the community through consistent dialogue. The ASAB continues to work collaboratively with Regional Animal Services and the community to explore and develop recommendations on essential departmental goals.

The ASAB was formed by the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners in 2016. The ASAB is comprised of local governmental stakeholders and various members of the public and constitutes a public forum to promote information about Washoe county Regional Animal Services’ programs, operations and animal -related issues.

Washoe County provides staff to support the ASAB, including a Recording Secretary, Legal Counsel, the Director of WCRAS and other supportive staff as applicable. The Director provides updates on departmental programs and services, emerging developments, financial and budgetary updates, events and accomplishments as well as goals and objectives. The Director also prepares this periodic report to be provided to the Board of County Commissioners, including an overview of the ASAB recommendations and actions during a specified time period.

The ASAB met in February, May and August of 2018 and January, July and November of 2019. Two additional meetings were scheduled between 2018-2019. However, those meetings did not have a quorum, and were subsequently cancelled.

During the meetings in 2018 and 2019, the ASAB learned about WCRAS through quarterly presentations by the Director of WCRAS and other departmental staff. The ASAB heard updates on statistics and programs operated by the department and provided feedback. As it is important to the constructive role of the ASAB, a comprehensive understanding of WCRAS was the focus of the meetings during the first two years of this body.

At every ASAB meeting, the Director of WCRAS provides the Director's Report, which includes a quarterly update on incoming/outgoing animals, return to owner percentages for stray animals, and animal welfare and cruelty statistics and other time sensitive information as it relates to the interest of the ASAB. The report generally includes notable stories that reflect the behind the scenes work by field, kennel and administrative staff that highlight WCRAS's efforts.



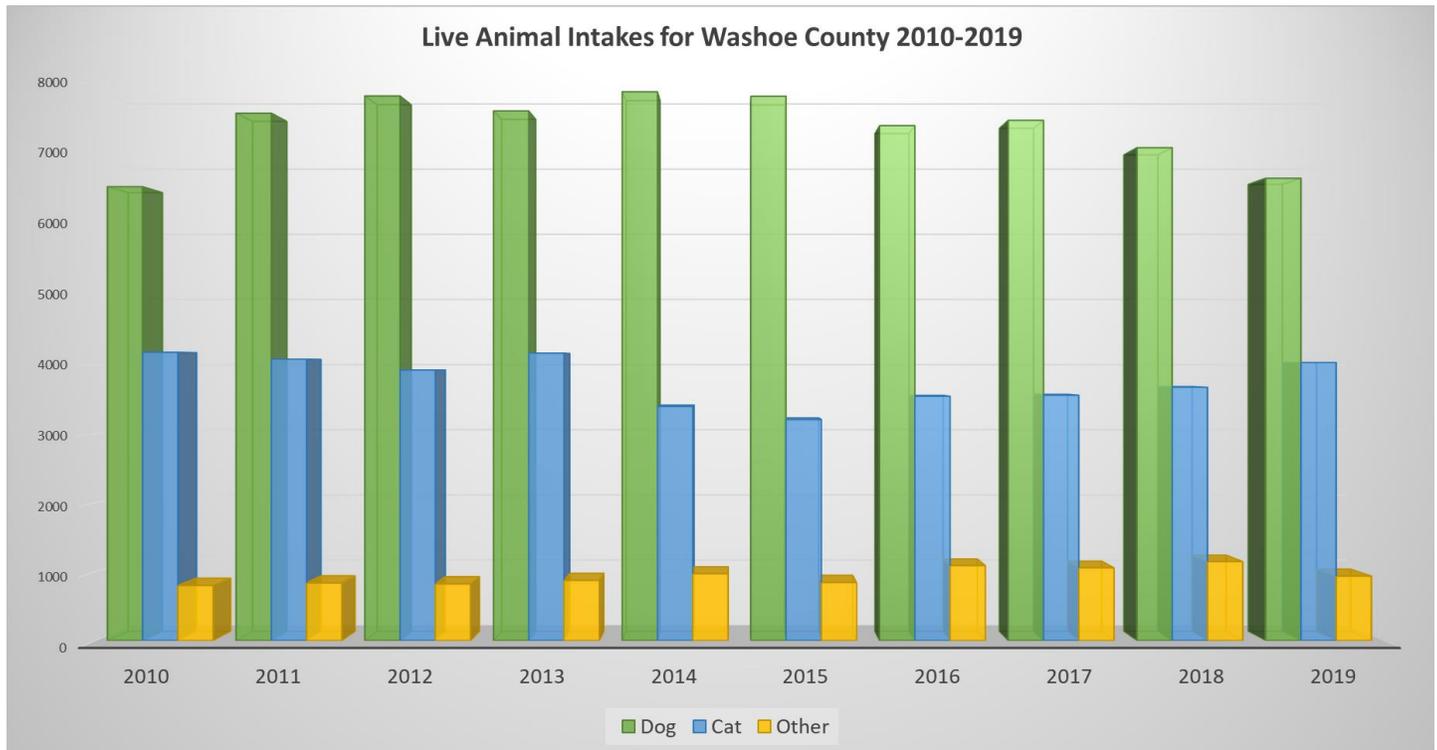
Specific program area updates such as field, shelter, budgetary or outreach services are frequently provided and presented by various staff members from the department so that the ASAB and the community have an opportunity to meet valued members of the WCRAS team and provide feedback on WCRAS' programs.



Animal Intake

WCRAS' average animal intake lands at approximately 13,000 per year. This chart includes live intake of domestic animals as well as livestock and exotic animals and all types such as stray, surrender or cruelty case animals.

Collective overview of live animal impounds year over year



As part of the statistical component of the Director's Report, the staff and the Board discuss trends and possible correlations as they relate to the data. For example, the number of dogs impounded spiked following the economic downturn in 2008-2009. The noticeable spike in intake for the subsequent few years, could have been attributed to the economic impacts to our community.

Return to Owner

An important and notable effort by WCRAS is the focus on returning animals back to their rightful owner, if known. Animals that get returned to their owner expeditiously, save tax dollars, minimize stress on the animal as well as reserve resources for those animals that truly need services. WCRAS successfully returned 39% of animals in 2018 and 38% of animals in 2019 back to their owner.

WCRAS staff routinely discuss strategies that support the efforts to return animals back to their owners such as the free microchip program that launched in late 2012. Since 2012, WCRAS has microchipped just under 30,000 animals. Any dog or cat residing in Washoe County may receive a free microchip from WCRAS which stays with the animal for life. The unique microchip number that is assigned to that animal and owner get uploaded into WCRAS' database as well as the national microchip registry to help with reunification efforts, if ever necessary.

In addition, efforts such as scanning every animal picked up for a microchip, taking a photograph of every animal to be uploaded onto WCRAS' database immediately, and ensuring that staff follow up on contacting the owners of those animals with identification help to support WCRAS' successful return to owner numbers. It takes effort, attention to detail and a lot of follow through to ensure that staff are doing everything possible to return animals back to their homes.

As part of the deeper review of when animals get returned to their owners, WCRAS looks at data that reflects efforts made to return animals by field staff, prior to being impounded, versus after the animal has been impounded. This data helps to drive programs such as the free microchip program and the free ride home program, which both help to promote identification by way of a microchip and or a license.

Collective data reflecting animals being returned in field (prior to impound) and in shelter (post impound)



The data in green represents in- field return of animals without the need for sheltering. This in-field return effort also gives an opportunity for the officer to facilitate valuable connections with pet owners while engaging in that face to face contact. When the redemption occurs after the animal has already been impounded, the opportunity may be lost for that dialogue to occur.

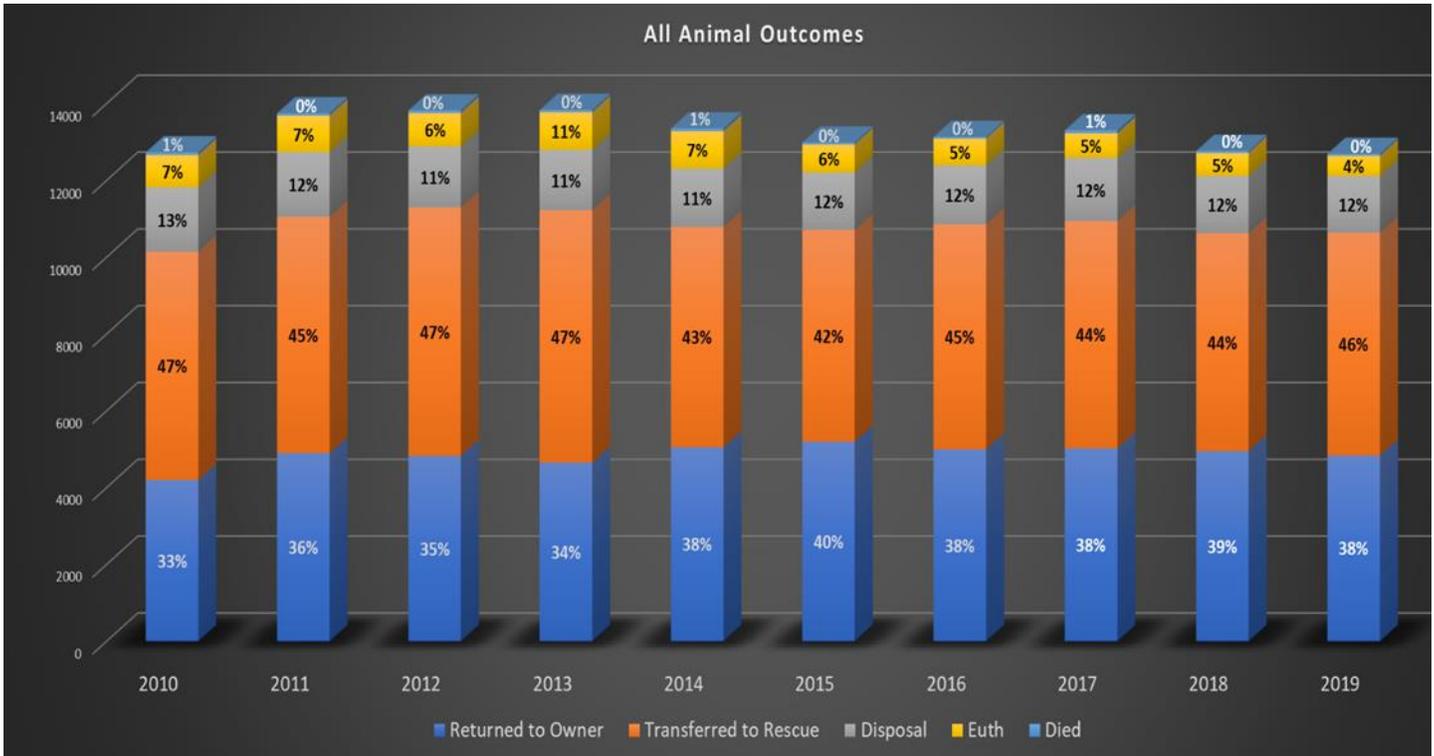
Live Release

WCRAS boasts a 95% live outcome percentage of all live animals that cross our path. The *Returned to Owner* and *Transferred to Rescue* data in the outcomes chart below is the point of interest. 12% of the animal intake makeup those that were deceased upon intake and are not calculated into the live percentage rate.

Through an Interlocal Agreement, WCRAS and Nevada Humane Society (“NHS”) partner together on a variety of programs; namely adoption of unclaimed WCRAS animals. NHS provides the adoption services for animals that successfully perform in a behavioral assessment and get transferred from WCRAS, after they have been processed through a stray hold period and unclaimed.

In addition, WCRAS works with SPCA of Northern Nevada, Pet Network and 50 to 60 other rescue group partners to assist in placement of the animals that do not transfer to NHS in order to exhaust every option for a live release for every adoptable animal. In many cases, one rescue or shelter may be more adequately equipped to deal with a particular behavioral or health issue than another and can meet the animal’s specific needs.

Collective data reflecting all animals (deceased or alive) and their outcomes



Animal Enrichment

The ASAB has also heard updates from kennel staff about enrichment strategies for the shelter animals and behavioral assessments and efforts to help find homes for difficult to adopt animals. Kennel Supervisor, Yvonne Shanto provided updates to the Board about a new animal enrichment program that has been working well to help engage the animals in constructive behavioral and sensory stimuli.

Yvonne shared the essential oil “scent of the day” enrichment idea and how it was being implemented into the animal rooms to illicit a variety of positive responses from calming to curiosity. She also talked about edible enrichment such as pupsicles and treats which help to engage animals that may need mental or physical stimulus and how it has turned some animals around from a withdrawn or overreactive behavior to a more “adoptable - ready” animal.

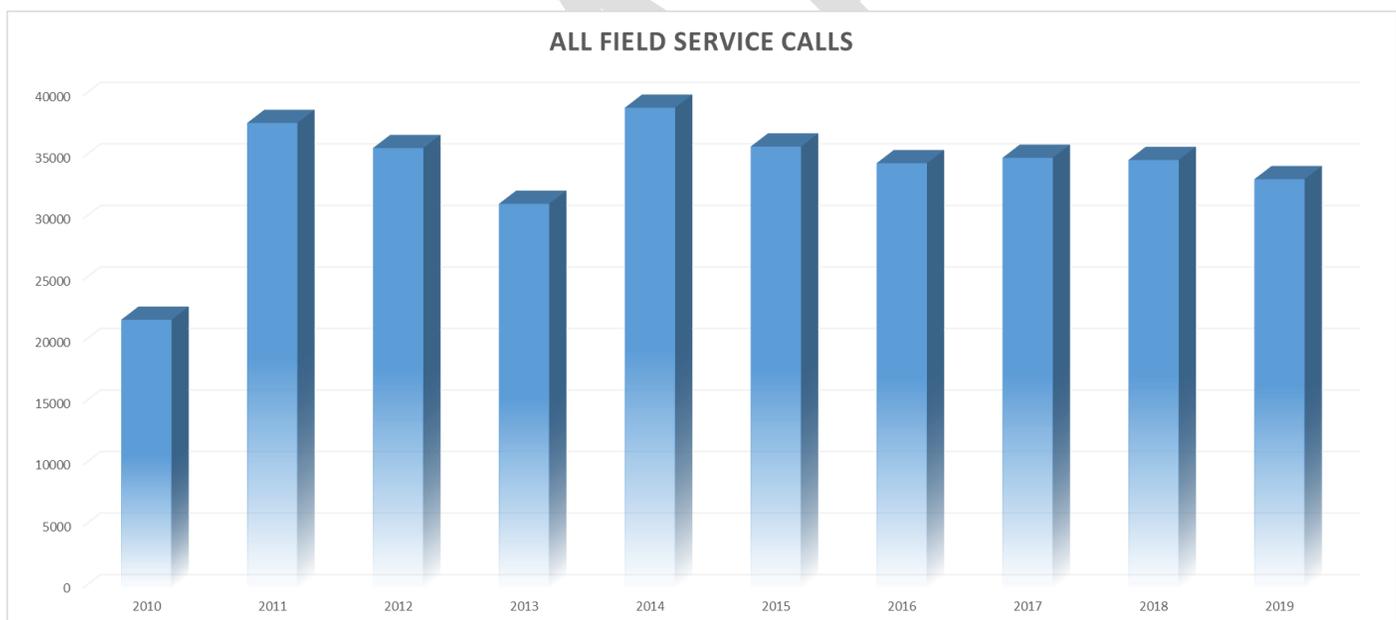
Happy Tails

WCRAS staff have shared Happy Tails updates at each meeting, highlighting an animal or two that beat the odds. One such story highlighted a joint effort between TMWA, TMFPD, NV Energy and WCRAS to assist rescuing several deer that had fallen into a canal with a steep embankment. Another shared story was about an elusive dog that had been roaming the streets for two years. An ACO spent a year, working with the neighborhood and establishing a successful plan to trap the dog.

Field Service Calls

WCRAS receives well over 30,000 calls for field services on average per year. Staff provide an overview of the most routine types of calls that field staff respond to such as stray animals at large, animal welfare/cruelty and animal bites. Staff and the ASAB also discuss possible correlations that may be related to a change in call volume from quarter to quarter.

Collective calls for field services

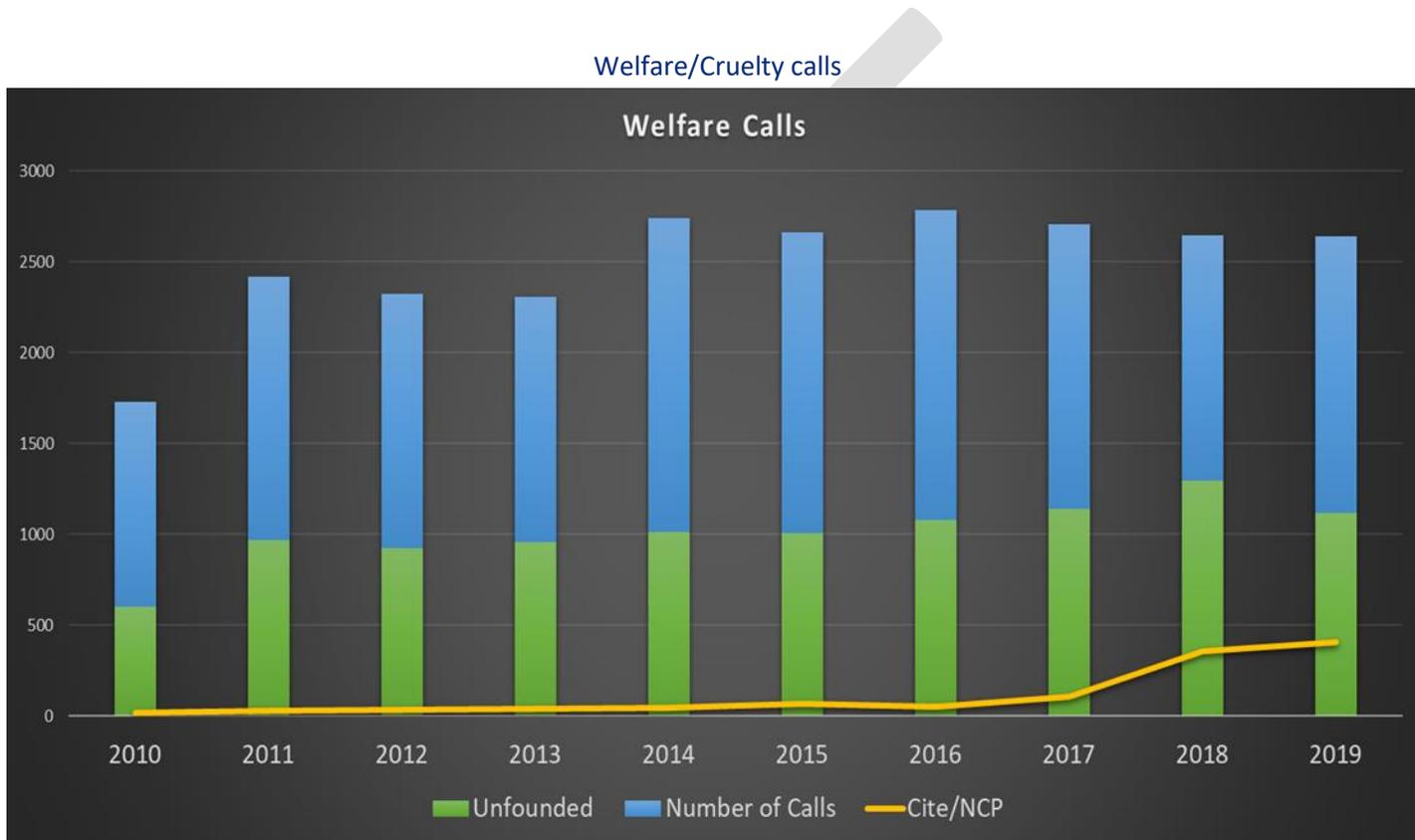


Cruelty Cases

WCRAS shares updates on a number of animal cruelty case updates, along with photos and outcomes provided by field staff. Staff shared their internal focus in 2017-2018 to improve case report preparation, evidence collection and overall investigation strategies. As a result, WCRAS has improved the working relationship with the Washoe County District Attorney's

Office, veterinarians and other LE partners as well as increased the successful prosecution of animal cruelty/welfare cases.

In 2015, WCRAS only had 50 citations and or Notice of Civil Penalties (“NCP’s”) issued for animal cruelty / welfare type violations. WCRAS realized a steady increase in the number of penalties from 2017 through 2019 from 50 cites/NCP’s to 409!



WCRAS Strategic Objectives

Staff shared four of WCRAS’ strategic objectives as the core of their strategic plan:

1. **Greater Community Presence and Collaboration; Raise awareness and support for the organization among those served.** WCRAS shared some of their initiatives that are helping to support this objective. They revamped their website to be more informative, self-serving and captivating and began tracking the algorithms and realized that the WCRAS had one of the most frequently visited webpages in the County at 296,000 hits in 2017. WCRAS began using Twitter, through the Communications Team at the

Manager's Office and typically Tweets over 80 Tweets annually about notable things that WCRAS wants to share with the community.

- 2. Proactive Outreach Programs & Education: Establish programs that address the root causes of animal welfare issues.** WCRAS has devoted a heavy focus toward outreach and proactivity, recognizing that progressive animal services overlap with social services and overall community wellness. Many of the programs that WCRAS participates in aim to support the preservation, protection and promotion of lifesaving efforts, rather than simply controlling the animal population.

WCRAS shared that they participated in over 100 events in 2018 and 2019, such as vaccine clinics, career fairs, festivals, etc. In 2018 and 2019, WCRAS assisted 5,293 pets with free pet food as part of their resources for seniors. WCRAS assisted 326 pets with medical care for homebound seniors during the same time period. WCRAS vaccinated over 7700 animals through vaccine clinics and outreach events.

- 3. Effective Regulation Compliance: Make compliance with rules and regulations easy for citizens.** WCRAS aims to be a resource center for our community, rather than simply an animal shelter. This means that the community needs to trust the staff and that WCRAS will serve as a conduit of valuable resources and a resolution- based approach to problems, to help promote responsible pet ownership.

One of the strategies that WCRAS instituted in support of this objective is a fix-it ticket program for dog licensing. The goal of this program is to gain compliance by providing a Notice of Civil Penalty ("NCP") that is voided a two - week period for a pet owner to license their dog, rather than an automatic penalty. This program has been relatively successful with a two- year average of 57% compliance.

Officer Brooks securing a broken fence to keep a dog contained



4. Engaged and Professional Team: Unleash the knowledge, compassion, and energy of staff and volunteers by empowering them to make a positive impact on the community and its animals.

WCRAS maintains the goal of professionalism as one of high importance through training, consistency and linear communication. WCRAS shared that their field staff attend standardized academy training that is structured in three successive, week-long modules. Additionally, field staff have multiple FEMA and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) training certificates to help ensure their safety during emergency evacuations. Kennel staff have been offered animal behavioral training, stress recognition and reduction and online classes in sheltering and animal care. WCRAS has integrated internal training, to improve consistency and skillset for commonly needed proficiency such as safe trailer towing.

In addition, WCRAS has made concerted efforts to improve communication within their team through routine staff meetings, daily shift change briefs, newsletters and participation in a consistent staff recognition program. Statistics are shared during each division meeting, highlighting specific metrics for each division area.

Trap-Neuter-Return Cat Program

Additionally, the ASAB specifically requested to hear and learn more about the Trap-Neuter-Release (“TNR”) program that WCRAS and Nevada Humane Society (“NHS”) work collaboratively to facilitate. The ASAB heard a presentation from former NHS, Chief Operations Officer, Arthur Westbrook about the inner workings of the program, statistics and future goals. Arthur provided an overview of the process for a cat coming through the TNR program and explained that the feral cats are examined, vaccinated, spayed/neutered, microchipped and released into a colony that is monitored by a colony caretaker. Arthur talked about how NHS provides resources for feral cat colony caretakers to support their efforts to monitor their cat colonies. He also addressed questions from the Board about how NHS addresses community members who request nuisance abatements for feral cat issues.



WCC

Other collaborative discussions that have taken place include amendments to Washoe County Code (“WCC”) Chapter 55.760, Dangerous Dogs. Staff shared the current code section as well as highlighted areas that the staff have prioritized as needing refinement. A productive discussion took place and feedback was provided by both the ASAB and the community members that were in attendance.

Legislation

Legislative priorities were also discussed for the upcoming 2021 Session. The ASAB heard the overview of each priority and provided thoughts, ideas and expressed a desire to continue supporting the Department on those changes. A collective list of the supported priorities and language is below, including items that have been redlined from the priority since inception.

NRS Section	Current Language	Amendment Focus
<p>NRS 171.17751 Gives ACO's authority to prepare, sign and serve written citations on persons accused of violating a county animal ordinance and that ACO's also shall comply with NRS 171.1773;</p>	<p>Gives ACO's authority to prepare, sign and serve written citations on persons accused of violating a county animal ordinance and that ACO's also shall comply with NRS 171.1773; which states that a peace officer may prepare a misdo citation and that the citation must be signed by a peace officer.</p>	<p>Clarify that animal control officer has authority to issue all citations within the field that he/she works</p>
<p>NRS 574.203 Right to request hearing; timing of hearing.</p>	<p>If a person is lawfully arrested for a violation of NRS 574.070 or 574.100 and if an animal owned or possessed by the person is impounded by the county, city or other local government in connection with the arrest, the person must be notified in accordance with the provisions of subsection 2 of NRS 574.055 and be notified of his or her right to request a hearing within 5 days after receipt of the notice to determine whether the person is the owner of the animal and whether the person is able to provide adequate care and</p>	<p>Include- If a person is lawfully cited or arrested for a violation of NRS 574.070 or 574.100..... To help address the hearing process as the majority of our violations of statute violations are cites, not arrests.</p>

	<p>shelter to the animal. The person must request a hearing pursuant to this subsection within 5 days after receipt of the notice pursuant to this subsection.</p>	
<p>NRS 574.100(1)(c) Torturing, overdriving, injuring or abandoning animals; failure to provide proper sustenance; requirements for restraining dogs and using outdoor enclosures; horse tripping; penalties; exceptions.</p>	<p>Cruelty section outlining what constitutes animal cruelty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insertion of <i>failure to provide sufficient, potable water in an amount reasonably sufficient</i> -<i>failure to provide access to quality food reasonably sufficient for nutrition needs</i> -<i>failure to provide veterinary care, causing an animal to suffer from injury or illness</i> -Insertion of <i>to deprive an animal of good and wholesome air</i> -Insertion of <i>to deprive grooming that is reasonably necessary to prevent adverse health effects or suffering</i> -Insertion of <i>to cause an animal to ingest narcotics or alcohol by intention</i>
<p>NRS 574.100(2)</p>	<p>Restraint and confinement</p>	<p>-Insertion of Except otherwise provided in subsections 3 and 4 and NRS 574.210 to 574.510,</p>

		inclusive a person shall not restrain or contain
NRS 574.100(2) (c) Tether	Time frame for tethering dog	Change from 14 hours in a 24 -hour period to <i>10 hours in a 24 -hour period</i>
NRS 574.100(2)	Add new subsection to address confinement by crate and a maximum time frame allowed	-Insertion of <i>shall not confine a dog or cat by crate, box or other restrictive method which is not size appropriate, allowing the animal to stand up, turn around and lay down</i> -Confinement by crate shall be limited to <i>10 hours in a 24 -hour period</i>
NRS 574.110 Abandonment	Abandonment of disabled animal	Integrate 574.110 into 574.100 and create language that addresses abandonment of an animal, rather than just a disabled animal. Also, clarify the definition of abandonment.
NRS 574.90(2-3)	Disposition Fighting Animals	Insertion of a probable cause hearing process to euthanize animals prior to final conviction
NRS 574.080(1)	Authority to take possession of animals and implements used in fighting	Omit authorized by law to make arrests
NRS 574.190	Carrying animal in cruel manner	Integrate language to address transporting an animal in the bed of a truck without proper

		cross tethering or by securing in a cage to prevent animal from being thrown, falling or jumping from the vehicle.
NRS 574.390 and 574.400	Floor space of primary enclosure for dog and cat	Clarify the primary enclosure minimum size for minimum age of 8 weeks rather than 6 months

Special Interest Research Project

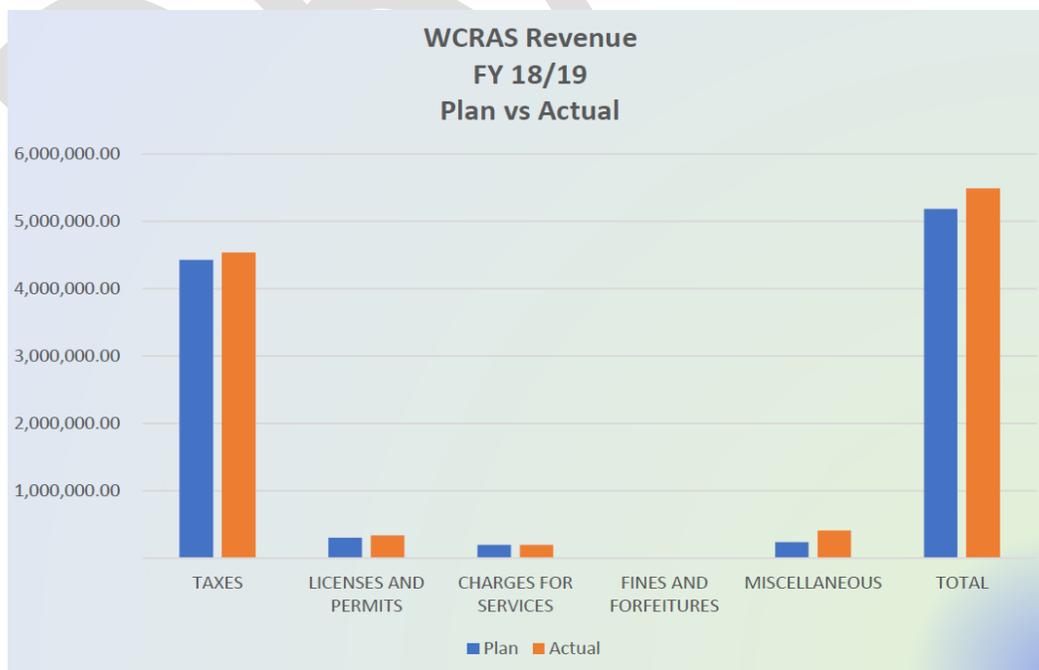
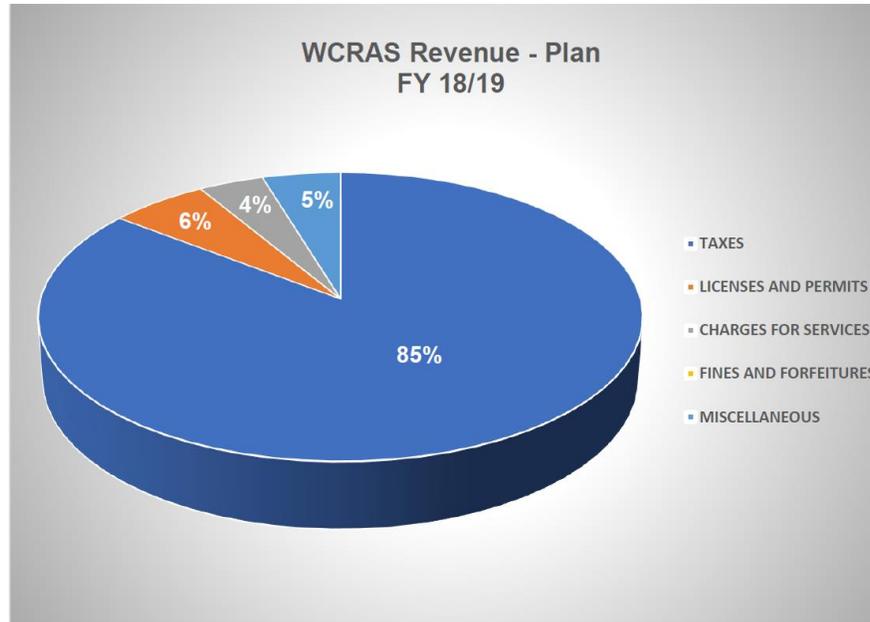
The Department researched a product called The Dog Parker, by the request of the ASAB. The Dog Parker is a secure, temperature- controlled enclosure that can be placed outside of participating businesses that allows for the safe - keeping of a dog while the owner visits a business. The Dog Parker is equipped with monitored ventilation and heating units to maintain interior temperatures and is also monitored by the Dog Parker corporate offices. Staff employed by Dog Parker are dispatched to the location if necessary and do have the ability to remove animals if the need arises. The customer pays for the service by the amount of time necessary.

WCRAS staff researched the system, spoke with the vendor as well as researched the product reviews and provided a complete summary of the program to the ASAB. Additionally, a Memo was prepared and delivered by staff to each respective elected body including a summary of the research that had been collected for their consideration and possible implementation within their jurisdictions.

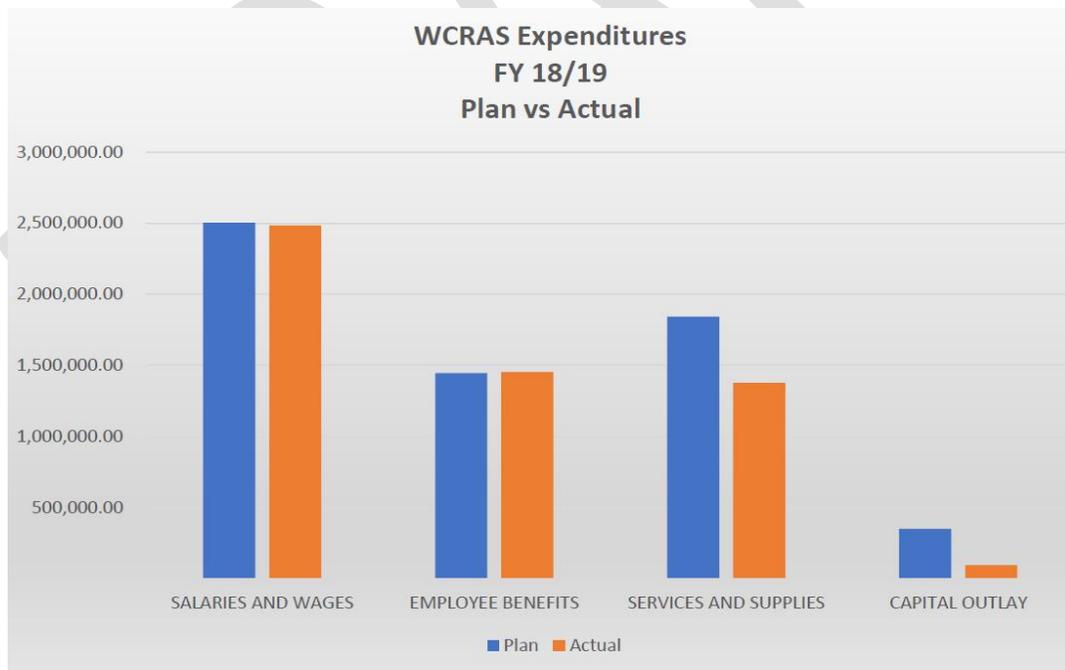
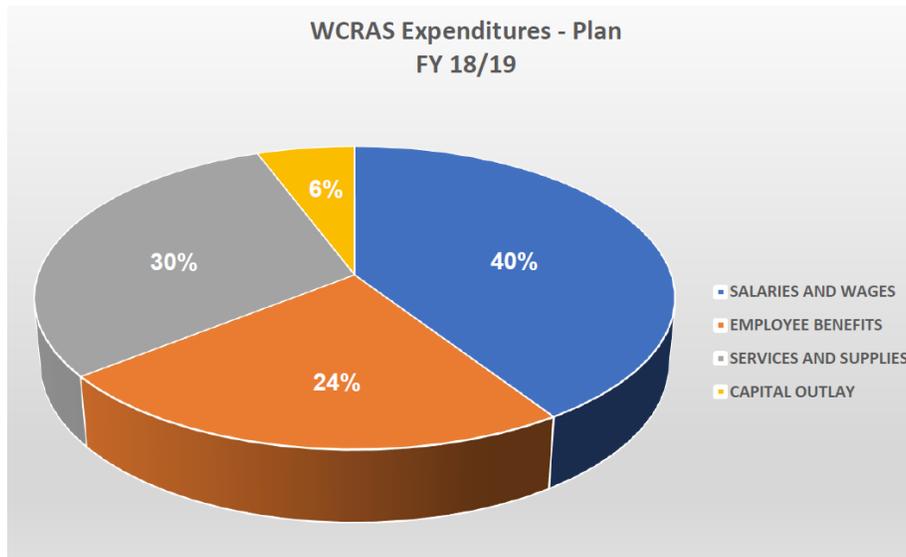


WCRAS Budget

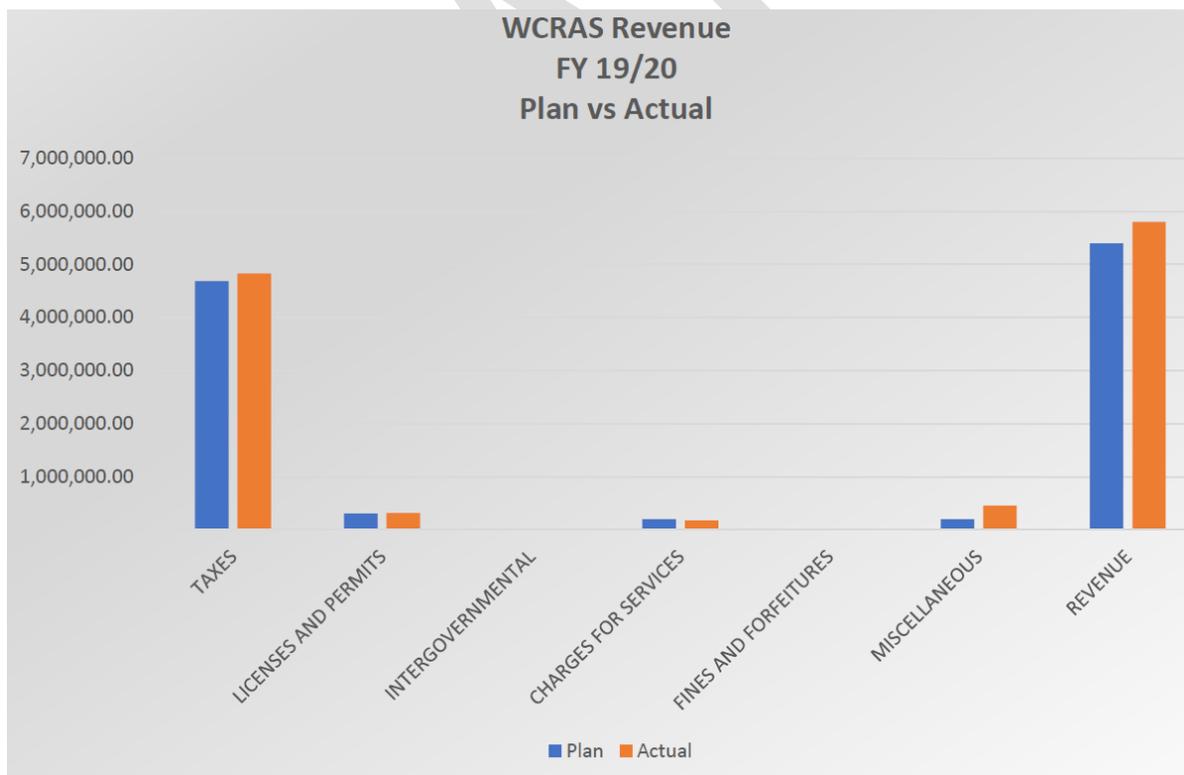
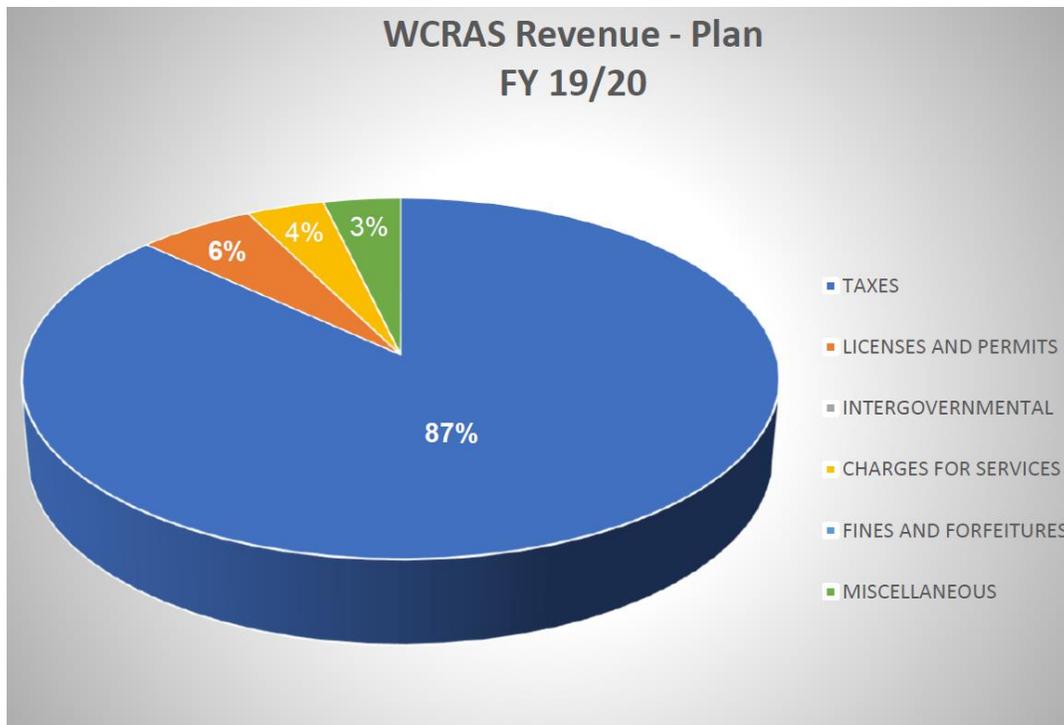
FY2019 revenue increased by \$574,916, or 12%, when compared to FY2018. The increase is driven primarily by an additional \$244,481 in ad valorem taxes from higher property tax collections. There is also an \$11,221 increase in animal licenses and permits as a result of increased compliance. In addition, the net change in the fair value of investments increased by \$222,778 from the prior year.



Expenditures in FY2019 increased by \$351,375, or 7%, when compared to FY2018. However, FY2019 expenditures were still under budget in the amount of \$736,766.

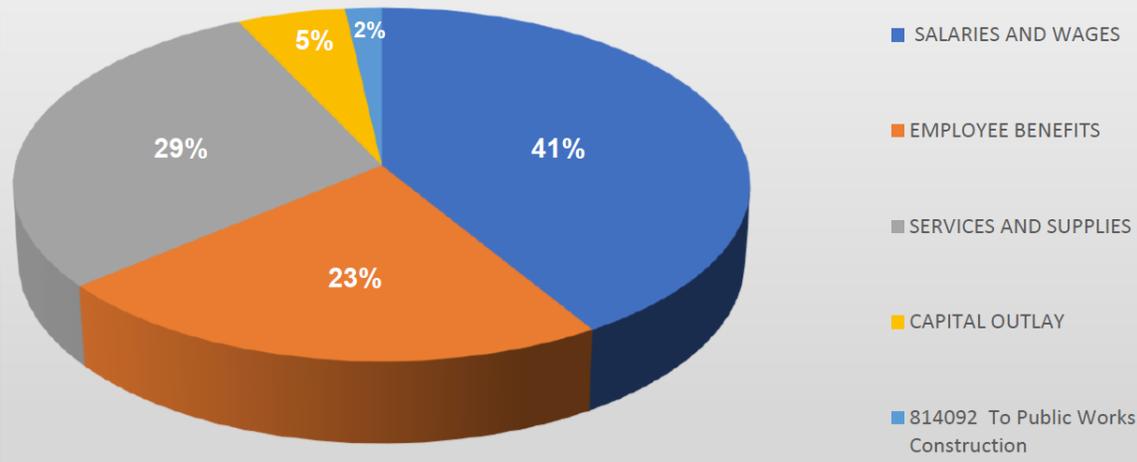


When compared to FY2019, revenue and expenditures in FY2020 remained largely constant.

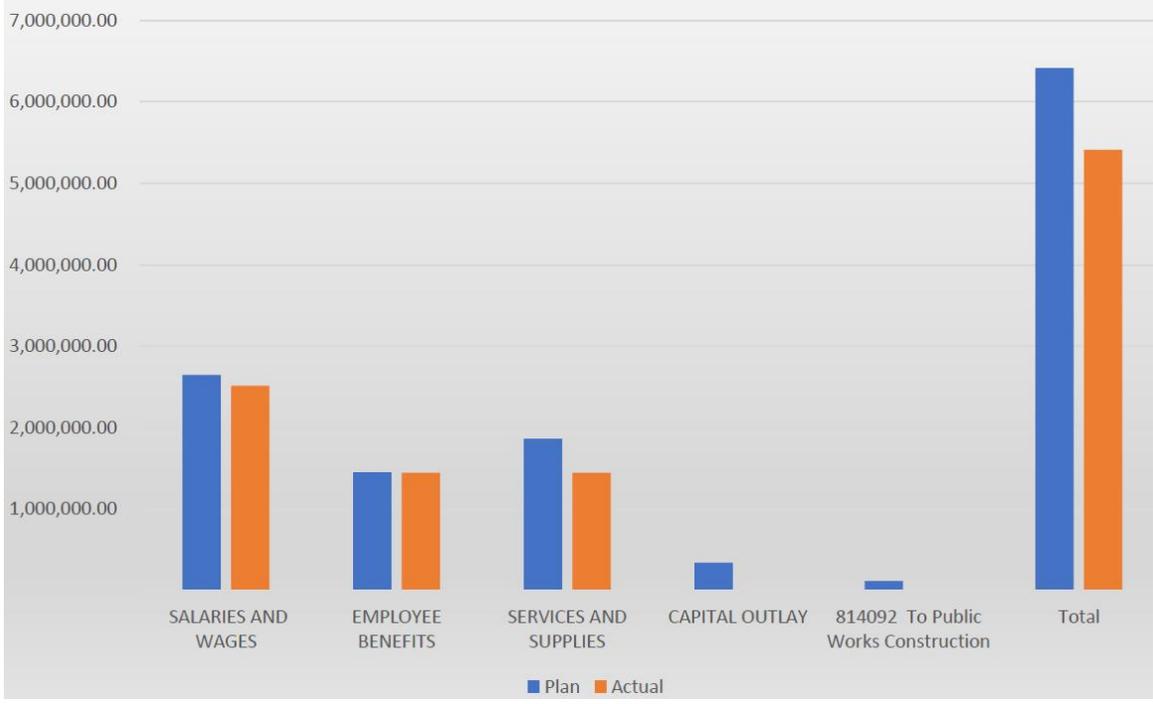


WCRAS submitted a Capital Improvement Project, which was approved for the front lobby, safety upgrades in the amount of \$114,345.00. This makes up the 2% planned expenditure in the chart below. This project is due to begin November, 2020.

WCRAS Expenditures - Plan FY 19/20



WCRAS Expenditures FY 19/20 Plan vs Actual



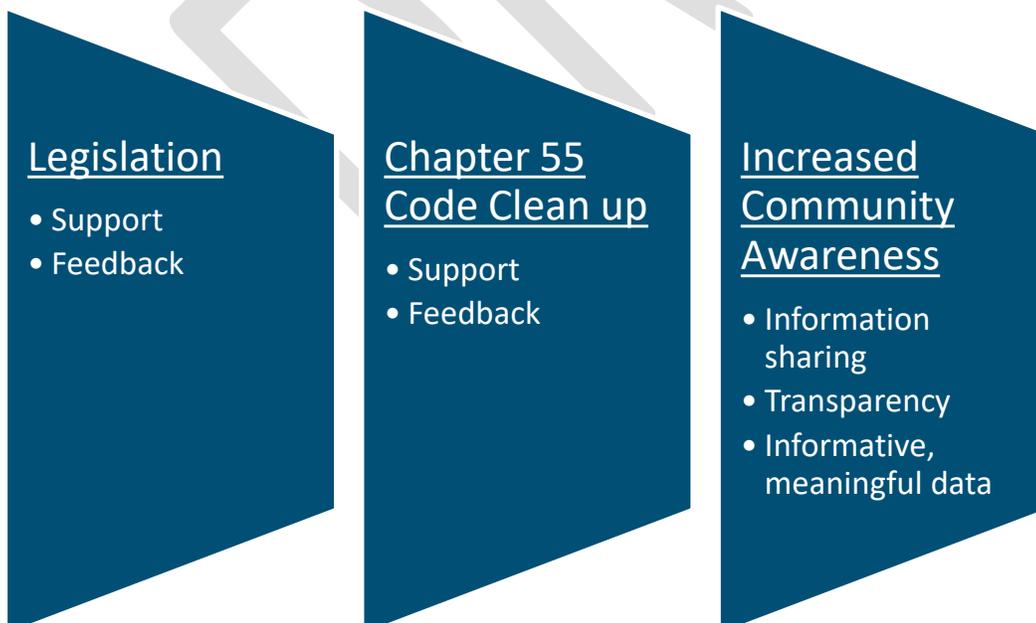
ASAB Recommendations

The ASAB requested an overview of the County social media protocol and how WCRAS utilizes social media within the course of WCRAS’s work. The ASAB heard an update from staff about the County protocol that requires appointed departments to utilize social media through the Communication’s Team within the Manager’s Office for both Facebook as well as Twitter posts.

The ASAB recommends for future consideration by the Board of County Commissioners and the County Manager, that WCRAS be given authorization to create and utilize the power of social media within the scope of their work to empower and support their day to day efforts with their own dedicated avenues. The ASAB believes that opportunities to engage with the community, share timely and important information and gain more support are being missed.

The ASAB looks forward to sharing their collective knowledge and expertise as well as that of its contacts and constituents by providing WCRAS and our community with their recommended tools and resources to strengthen and support WCRAS’ role within our community.

Long Term ASAB and WCRAS Objectives



Naomi Duerr
Reno City Council, Ward 2
Advisory Board Chair

Annette Rink
Veterinarian
Advisory Board Vice-Chair

Paul Anderson
Sparks City Council
Advisory Board Member

Kitty Jung
Board of County Commission
Advisory Board Member

Jill Dobbs
Northern Nevada SPCA
Advisory Board Member

Irene Payne
Animal Advocate
Advisory Board Member

Al Rogers
Real Estate Professional
Advisory Board Member