RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2020-116

MEETING: March 10, 2020

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Kimberly Williams, Human Resources Director

RE: Approve an Amendment to the County of Mariposa Pet Policy

RECOMMENDATION AND Justification:
Approve an amendment to the County of Mariposa Pet Policy.

The Board approved the County's Pet Policy last year to address concerns of having dogs in the workplace on the first designated "Bring Your Dog to Work Day," which was held on June 21, 2019.

The Pet Policy was established to ensure public safety, employee responsibility, and a safe and pleasant work environment for everyone while dogs are in the workplace. The policy provides guidelines for employees to follow, including a sensitivity to coworkers and visitors who may have allergies or an aversion to dogs. The policy further contains an Authorization and Waiver form to indemnify the County from any liabilities, claims, or lawsuits relating to the behavior of a pet on County property.

The current Pet Policy was developed to address pets in the workplace specifically on the County’s designated Bring Your Dog to Work Day. Staff is proposing to amend the policy to include everyday situations where employees' dogs may be in the workplace and not only on a designated day. This would further indemnify the County from any liabilities, claims, or lawsuits relating to pet behavior on County property on any day and in any situation.

Prior to bringing a dog to work, each employee must complete and sign the Pet Policy Authorization and Waiver form and also obtain written approval of his/her Department Head in the Department Approval section of the form. Department heads shall have full discretion to allow or not allow dogs into their departments. The County Administrative Officer shall have the final decision of any action taken relating to violations of the policy.

This policy is intended to encourage responsible pet-ownership in the workplace and does not apply to emotional support animals, service dogs, or police dogs.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
On May 7, 2019 the Board approved the County of Mariposa Pet Policy.
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ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Do not approve the amendment to the policy, and the policy would remain specific to Board-designated Bring Your Dog to Work days.

ATTACHMENTS:
Pet Policy - Amended Draft (PDF)

RESULT: ADOPTED BY Consent Vote [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor
SECONDER: Merlin Jones, District II Supervisor
AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey
Currently dogs are the only authorized pet category for employees to bring into any County worksite. The overall objective of this policy is to ensure responsible dog guardianship and promote an environment where dogs and people can peacefully and safely co-exist while on County work premises. Employees with approved dogs at work are expected to be sensitive to employees and/or visitors, especially those who may not be dog-oriented and who may have allergies or other health conditions that preclude them from being in close proximity to a dog. All dogs must be treated humanely, and a high standard of animal compassion is expected of all dog owner employees. It is considered a privilege to have a dog at work and as such, requires the complete cooperation and responsible action(s) of all dog owners at all times.

An employee must have approval of his/her Department Head prior to bringing a dog to work. Dog owners are responsible for ensuring that their dogs are fully trained on all aspects of hygiene and elimination, personal habits in homes or offices, and non-disruptive behavior in a professional public facility. Dogs must be properly licensed and vaccinated. Dogs should be in generally good health, free of any parasites, and have adequate food, clean water, and veterinary care. Dogs must be free from offensive odors and display habits appropriate to the work environment, must not engage in behavior that endangers the health or safety of the individual or others in the workplace. All dogs greater than six (6) months of age must not be in a heat cycle or have any recent history (6 months) of infection or ringworm.

Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times while on County property. Reasonable periods of exercise, at least once every four (4) hours, are to be provided during the day (i.e. dog elimination breaks, a walk at lunchtime and/or socialization). When moving about outside the offices, the leash should never be extended more than six (6) feet from the owner. If dogs are left alone in employee work areas, they must be restrained by a crate. Dogs may only attend short business meetings if they are quiet and do not distract participants.

Dog owners are personally responsible at all times for controlling the behavior of their dogs regarding, but not limited to, disruptive, aggressive, protective and/or unfriendly behavior; biting, excessive barking; destructiveness; fighting with other animals; proper clean up and waste disposal. Dog owners must also keep a supply of plastic bags with ties at all times and appropriately dispose of dog waste in a manner that does not cause disruption in the workplace, including without limitation offensive odor or unsightly material. Any dog behavior interfering with the County’s and/or another employee’s ability to work, will be cause for the dog to be banned from County premises and the dog owner will be banned from bringing any other dog to work in the future. Dog owners are cautioned to be especially alert at all times when any member of the public is present on the property. Employees are responsible for advising anyone visiting them with a dog of the County’s leash requirements. No pet dogs may be transported in a County vehicle at any time. If an employee needs to travel on County business and wishes to also transport his/her dog, he/she may use a personal vehicle to do so.

Dog owners are completely liable for the actions of their dogs at all times and are financially responsible for any damage, liability, injury or special cleaning required as a result of accidents and excessive pet hair and odor removal. The County assumes no responsibility for the health and wellbeing of any pet. The County also assumes no responsibility for any personal injury or property
damage to any person caused or contributed to by the conduct of an employee's dog or the employee's failure to supervise or care for the dog.

Any concerns regarding the observance/administration of this policy are to be expressed in writing to the County Administrative Officer (CAO) or the Assistant County Administrative Officer in his/her absence. Any employee who fails to act responsibly, as defined herein and as determined by the CAO, shall be subject to losing their dog privileges, will be required to remove their dog from County property immediately, and will be responsible for making up any resulting lost productivity. The CAO's decision shall be final regarding any action taken under this policy.

Created: 05/2019 (B/S Res. No. 19-247)
Revised: 03/2020 (B/S Res. No. 20-116)
PET POLICY
AUTHORIZATION AND WAIVER

GENERAL INFORMATION
Employee Name: Date:
Department: Phone:
Department Head:

DOG DESCRIPTION
Breed: Weight: Age:

WAIVER OF LIABILITY:
For valuable consideration, including without limitation authorization to participate in this policy
authorizing pet dogs to be present at work, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, [EE
name] hereby agrees to indemnify the County from any liabilities, claims, or lawsuits arising from or
related to the conduct or behavior of a pet on any County premises. The employee shall indemnify
and hold harmless the County, its officials, administrators, employees and agents from any and all
claims, injuries, damages, liabilities, losses, or lawsuits, including attorneys' fees and court costs
defending against such actions, resulting from any claim asserted, or legal action filed by or on
behalf of any individual who is an employee or member of the public for personal injury, property
damage, wrongful death, medical expenses, medical liens or fees, arising out of the conduct or
presence of the employee's dog on any County facility.

BY SIGNING THIS AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE, THE DOG OWNER EXPRESSLY
ACKNOWLEDGES AND REPRESENTS that he/she has carefully read the foregoing terms and
conditions, understands the contents thereof and signs voluntarily; he/she is at least eighteen (18)
years of age and fully competent; and executes this Authorization and Release intending that
he/she, his/her spouse and family members, and his/her heirs, assigns and personal
representatives if deceased, be legally bound by same.

Employee Signature Date

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL:
I have discussed the foregoing Authorization and Release with the dog owner and am agreeable to
the employee bringing his or her dog to the workplace and into my department. I approve this
request, subject to employee following these and other departmental guidelines and demonstrating
responsible dog ownership.

Department Head Signature Date