***Stafford County Animal Shelter***

***Animal Intake Policy***

It is our mission at the Stafford County Animal Shelter to enrich the lives and provide a safe coexistence of both animals and people throughout our community. It is mandatory, as an open admission shelter, that we only accept owner surrenders and strays from Stafford County residents. It is the policy to manage the intake of surrendered companion animals when the owner is no longer able or willing to keep the pet; and to house and care for companion animals that have been seized or taken into custody by Animal Control Officers. We will assist with other species such as reptiles and small companion animals. Our goal is to provide a place of sanctuary for animals to be taken to prevent abandonment, neglect or suffering.

Livestock and poultry will be addressed through the seizure process as defined in Virginia Code 3.2-6569; surrenders related to these will be sole responsibility of the owners.

The Stafford County Animal Shelter does not euthanize due to time or space constraints, reserving euthanasia for animals who are suffering mentally or physically, terminally ill, or considered dangerous to themselves, other animals, and/or humans. We will accept critically/terminally ill, geriatric animals from owners to alleviate suffering and behavioral issues for the safety of the public. Animals surrendered by the owner for the following reasons may be subject to euthanasia;

* Deteriorating medical or behavioral condition that is causing suffering to an animal. If the staff determines that a pet is suffering from medical condition that is not able to be medically treated to maintain a comfortable and quality life. Should outside opinions of the medical state of a pet be needed, the Shelter Management will consult with other Veterinarians to make a final determination on the pet’s state of health. If the pet is treatable, Stafford County Animal Shelter will attempt to do everything possible within resources to properly treat the pet to manage its medical condition to live a comfortable and safe life.
* Behaviors that are beyond management that are deemed unsafe to other pets, people, and to itself. In these cases a certified behaviorist or rescues may be consulted in conjunction with recommendations from staff.
* Owners seeking immediate assistance regarding pet euthanasia are informed to contact their local veterinarian for this service. However, case by case, if the owner is unable to provide medical care with a veterinarian the shelter will accept the animal to alleviate suffering. Each animal will be evaluated upon arrival and a final decision will be made by shelter management.