

Letter Sent to the City Council and Mayor – October 25, 2024

I wish I could have been at this week's meetings, but I was led to believe that our proposal had already been rejected by the City of Conroe. I could have attended the workshop meeting, but I was left under the impression that you could not speak with me because I'm a vendor. You also kept calling the proposal a contract. Our proposal was just that. I had assumed we would be negotiating the fine points of a contract. This is how I have done business with other entities in the past.

I'm a bit taken back by the fact that I was told there were 5 sticking points as to why the proposal was rejected. Evidently there were more but they were not brought to my attention, so I was never given the opportunity to address them. I got this information from DC Keleman. I have never been invited to speak with the committee.

These 5 points were:

1. TLC could not put a portable building on the shelter property.

This is a non-issue for TLC. If we need more space, I'll just lease one. I'm looking at convenience and a built-in way to get people to the shelter TO ADOPT! Your shelter is in an out of the way location with no organic foot traffic. A clinic will drive people to the shelter and generate some revenue for the shelter.

2. TLC cannot provide services to the public.

Keleman stated that this would be competition with local vets and the City can't get behind this. This statement conflicted with the fact that the Council said other clinics could operate on the premises. Anyways, this is also a non-issue for TLC. If you don't want us to work on ways to offset your expenses, that's fine. Again, we will just lease space if we need to. Keep in mind if we lease a space, funds will not be put back into the shelter. They will go into TLC's general funds for all programs.

3. The city does not want to provide veterinary care in emergencies after hours for animals the city picks up.

It is my understanding that you don't usually pick up injured animals after hours, so I don't know why this is a sticking point. You can't honestly expect the ACO to dump an injured animal in a kennel at an empty shelter and wait hours for medical attention. I can add a 24/7 on call Veterinary to the budget, but it will add an additional half a million dollars to the budget. I can't imagine the city will run up that much in emergency room fees. I will add this line item to the budget if you require it.

4. TNR for cats would likely not happen.

You indicated that the date was the problem-not that TNR was off the table (which is what I was led to believe). The timeline was never brought up with me. These dates are no longer valid in the proposal anyways. The process is dragging out and I need a certain amount of time to hire and train staff. The ordinance changes will need to be in effect prior to TLC taking over. Every change I proposed is being used in other counties and cities in Texas, so I am not worried about it being against the law. I would also never ask the City to do something in violation of the law.

5. ACOs are not to look for pet owners in an attempt to return the pets to homes in the field.

This is the only point Keleman was passionate about during our conversation which leads me to believe the ACO is in charge of policy. I am not saying the ACO needs to stay out for days looking for pet owners. There needs to be an honest attempt at reuniting pets with their owners. 67% of your animals are entering the shelter through the ACOs. That is WAY out of line. Your ACO is also publicly telling everyone she is not on board with TNR. Every shelter achieving a 90% live release rate has good, solid ACO policies for reuniting pets with owners. Your ACO policy will either make or break your shelter. If you have ACOs not willing to help people recover their pets, you really need to find new ACOs. One other thing worth noting is that I had ask for the ACO policy to review prior to submitting my proposal so I could see what probably should be updated. This has never been provided to me.

As I listened to the discussion today, there were 3 more sticking points. These points were twisted and either the proposal was not read or it was completely misinterpreted. I know a lot of it was just political posturing for the public. I'm sorry, but I just don't do drama. I am not a bleeding heart. I am a businessperson and a problem solver. I am very direct, and I expect the same out of people I do business with otherwise it is not a good fit. These issues were not ever presented to me and honestly, the funding comments made me sound like an embezzler when my points were clearly outlined in my proposal. My background is in loss and fraud prevention and the comments were downright insulting. I cannot and will not tolerate any damage to my reputation or Texas Litter Control's.

1. As far as your funding comments, you have absolutely NO PROGRAMS at the shelter. I have nothing to work from. There's no budgetary information. Grants take a good year to get in place. I just need to be able to shift funding FOR THE SHELTER where THE SHELTER NEEDS IT!!! Funding comments in our proposal:

“Through no fault of the City or the PD, we are not confident in the data provided to Texas Litter Control. We have based our budget on averages. It will also take about a year to establish “credit” with funders in the sheltering world. I would like to revisit the budget in September 2025. My hopes are that we can lower the cost to the city and increase funding through services, grants, and donations.”

“Texas Litter Control reserves the right to shift funding within the above provided budget. Funding will be used to create programs, provide enhancements to the shelter, provide lower cost and free services to City of Conroe residents, etc. as we see fit. As we decrease intake numbers, funding will be shifted to programs. For example, as the cat intake goes down, these funds will be used for spay/neuter of Community Cats and targeted spay/neuter.”

“Texas Litter Control will be responsible for the operating costs. We will retain any adoption fees, intake fees, and revenue from public spay/neuter and wellness services to offset the difference between what is contracted with the City of Conroe and the actual costs. Texas Litter Control will also administer any grants awarded to our organization for helping the community and shelter pets.”

My solution for this to your attorney is that we will change the bid to reflect a monthly fee TLC will charge for the operation of the shelter. It will be one line item called Shelter Operations. There will be no itemized budget.

2. There is nothing about “no oversight” in the proposal. This statement is 100% false. TLC welcomes oversight. We will not have a municipality dictate private, internal policies meaning adoption policy, transport policy, etc. We never stated anywhere in the proposal that we would not welcome inspection of the shelter. Oversight to us means, the animals are being cared for properly and we are breaking no laws, but the city should not intervene with other policies. The statement was taken totally out of context.

Here is the statement from our proposal: “TLC’s policies are set up for maximum life-saving efforts. The City will not intervene or dictate TLC policy unless it is in violation of a law.”

This stance will not change. I will add a line that explains the City can inspect the shelter at any time for humane conditions. You can also give me a list of expectations we can review, and I can include if we choose to rewrite the proposal.

I would like to request a meeting with the committee to address all concerns in this proposal. This should have happened to begin with considering we were the only one who submitted a bid. I would like the gameplaying and posturing to just stop, or we are just out. If you guys don't want TLC, just say so. I highly recommend hiring an EXPERIENCED SHELTER DIRECTOR AND LISTENING TO THEM if you chose to run this thing yourself. You do not have anyone on staff in the City of Conroe who has the qualifications to manage the shelter properly and begin your journey toward a 90% live release rate. I can help you find someone if you want to go that route. I've already got feelers out. You also need to look at your ordinances. They are very outdated. I would also sit down with the PD and have a very candid conversation with them. They don't want to run the shelter. They have expressed this to me many times. I get the impression they are hesitant to talk to any of you about it. You have put them in a really bad situation by firing Care Corp with no plan in place. These are stand up guys and they are always going to try to rise to the occasion. This is not what they signed up for when they went into law enforcement.

I wrote the proposal so you can use it for a blueprint. I highly recommend you all actually read it. I am not going to spend any more time rewriting the proposal if we cannot get on the same page with everything I have outlined in this letter. Please let me know if any of you want to meet or if you want me to meet with the committee. I would be happy to do so any time after next week. Our clinics are placing a new software system, and I will not be available until after 11/4. Thank you for your time. I wish you the best of luck in whatever decision you make.

Sincerely,

Deana Love

Executive Director & Founder

Texas Litter Control

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Real Texans don't litter...please spay/neuter your pets!