

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TOTTEN TRASHED!**  
Fulton Shelter Contract to Be Rebid

The Atlanta Humane Society's contract to operate the Fulton shelter expires today. Last night, the commissioners voted not to award the contract to Synergy Management Services, the bidder recommended by the selection committee.

Synergy was set up by Annette Lane, rumored to be a relative of Ron Totten, the current shelter director who has been executing Bill Garrett's policies and pets for four years.

Synergy's bid came in \$334,000 below that of its sole competitor, Southern Hope Humane Society. However, Synergy's bid was not for complete fulfillment of the service requirements as stated in the request for qualifications. Their bid reduced the number of personnel from the required 30 to 25; cut in half the number of hours per week the public would be allowed to adopt animals; and stipulated they would not be required to hold animals for seven days for owner reclaim or adoption.

Synergy also stated they intended to purchase animal control equipment from the AHS, and stipulated Fulton County must reimburse them for this expense in the 2004 budget. In an article published today, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Fulton County had asked the Superior Court for a restraining order preventing the AHS from removing \$325,670 worth of equipment purchased with taxpayer dollars from the shelter. The judge denied the order on the grounds that some of the items on the county's equipment list could belong to the AHS.

The AJC article indicated the contract would be reopened for bids, a process that will take at least two months. Although Fulton's Dr. James Fason assured animal welfare activists in a meeting I attended on March 13 that a contingency plan had been developed in case the commissioners did not approve the contract award to Synergy, Steven Cover put the lie to his boss' assurances by telling the AJC, "We have to scare up some sort of emergency operation to cover it." Following the vote, Fason told the AJC he would ask Synergy to provide services during the interim, and only if Synergy refused would he approach Southern Hope.

Southern Hope was awarded the interim two-month contract.

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