

Washoe County Regional Animal Services Advisory Board

MINUTES

Friday, July 26, 2019 ~ 9:30 a.m.
WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES
CENTER CLASSROOM
2825 LONGLEY LANE, RENO, NEVADA

MEMBERS

Naomi Duerr (Chair)
Annette Rink (Vice Chair)
Paul Anderson
Jill Dobbs
Irene Payne
Al Rogers
Jeanne Herman (absent)

OTHER MEMBERS

Shyanne Schull (Director)
Tammy Wines-Jennings
Keith Munro

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL [Non-Action Item]

The meeting was opened and a quorum was established.

PRESENT: Naomi Duerr, Annette Rink, Paul Anderson, Jill Dobbs, Irene Payne, Al Rogers

ABSENT: Jeanne Herman

Keith Munro, Deputy District Attorney, is also present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT [Non-Action Item]

There were no public comments.

3. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 17, 2019, MINUTES [For Possible Action]

Vice-Chair Rink made the motion to approve the Minutes. Member Anderson seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.

Member Rogers introduced himself. Newly appointed as of March, 2019, and provided his background information to the Board. Member Payne seconded nomination. Motion carried unanimously.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT [Non-Action Item]. An informational update on the Department of Regional Animal Services' programs, statistics, emerging developments, financial updates, and other matters properly related thereto.

Director Schull. Discussed last quarter meeting and that the report she is bringing forward will be the same. Advised the next meeting may be longer and there will be more statistics and several quarters to catch up on. The information may seem a bit old.

Discussed Happy Tails with Yvonne Shanto, Kennel Supervisor.

Yvonne Shanto. Presented a story about Bella and her two puppies who were found in a home and locked in crates for months on end which resulted in hair loss, poor coat condition, skin issues, covered in feces and urine scalding all over her paws and face. She also had an ear infection and had dental disease. She had given birth to puppies recently. She was part of a cruelty case and was at the shelter for almost five months. The WCRAS spent time with Bella working with her and socializing her. She also received medicated baths and antibiotics. She also received dental treatment and was also spayed.

Bella was rescued on March 13, 2019, by Animal Rescue Relay and she is doing good in foster care. They are looking for a permanent home for Bella.

Member Jill. Requested information on the conclusion of the cruelty case. Information was not available at that time.

Member Naomi. Wanted to know how many more animals were involved in the cruelty case. She was told there were two adult dogs and two puppies. All have been adopted and information was provided.

Chair Naomi. Discussed how case came about and was thankful how staff handled the case of Bella, as well as others.

Director Schull. Discussed previous advisory board meetings and information being antiquated and attempting more meaningful data to present. Continuing to work on statistics that mean something to them, i.e., how many animals have returned because of microchip? Continued successful program information and continuing the learning curve.

Continued discussion regarding intake numbers and types, as well as statistics reviewed to see how they are doing. Presented interesting data regarding level of animals being maintained in the shelter, and how many are taken in yearly.

Discusses success in the department. Focusing on animals coming in as a stray and leaving alive. 54% over the 2018 calendar year were rescued. With continued partnerships with rescue groups and Humane Society, that amount is maintained. 40.8% returned. Continued presentation of how to identify animals and hopefully return lost animals to home instead of the shelter.

Presents graph of return to owner percentage; died or euthanized; and transferred to other facilities.

Discusses the free microchip program that began in 2012 and now there is over 30,000 animals in Washoe County that are micro chipped.

Member Anderson. Had questions regarding rescue transfer. Also requested information regarding the information to the community to let them know how wonderful the program has worked.

Director Schull. Explains that the microchip program has reached the plateau regarding the microchip program. Explains continued efforts to the community regarding the benefits of the program. And when they re-examine how they are putting the statistics together, she thinks the message will be more received.

Member Anderson. Complimented the efforts of Animal Rescue Relay and the program.

Chair Naomi. Discussed more appearances at Art Paws for informational purposes and continued community awareness.

Director Schull. Explains how they are short staffed and the events are really challenging because of staffing issues, but they have participated in the past.

Member Stark. Reminder that there needs to be someone with knowledge at those types of events because the public will ask a lot of questions and require information.

Chair Naomi. Continued discussion regarding suggestions.

Member Dobbs. Discussed creating an FAQ sheet, and anything outside the purview of the FAQ sheet, they are not allowed to speak to, and have to refer the questions elsewhere.

Member Karen. Confirmed that some individuals are not allowed to talk about specific things and details re: same.

Member Jill. Followed up with the microchip program and NHS and SPCA and WCRAS all work together regarding the free microchip program. Feels it's so important for pets to be micro chipped. She also agrees with the messages to the community and getting information out there.

Member Rink. Also offered to help at events.

Member Anderson. Discussed Art Project and Pet Memorial at Sparks Marina and suggested presentation at those events would be beneficial.

Member Rogers. Agreed with appearance at events and getting more volunteers at events.

Chair Naomi. Provided information on how the Board can assist with events and volunteers to staff the events.

Director Schull. Introduced Karen as the Program Coordinator and thanked the Board for the assistance. Karen appreciated the support for staffing and providing logistical information at events.

Director Schull. Discussed service calls for the field staff for the period of October and December of 2018. Discussed the overview of the department to include over 30,000 calls annually. Discussed response time for officers for all types of cases of animals.

Also discussed barking complaints, bites, DOA, and other types of calls they receive.

Member Irene. Wanted clarification of DOA and/or road trucking accidents.

Director Schull. Clarified picking up dead animals as a courtesy pick up if a special case arises.

Continued discussion regarding the 2008-2009 statistics that are not accurate due to the software program being switched at that time.

In 2014, a significant jump was made in calls. She was unaware of the correlation for calls for service with prior information.

Presented information regarding some welfare calls. 674 calls came in and 200 were unfounded. 85 citations were issued the first quarter. Second quarter, 1024. 352 were unfounded. 102 citations were issued Notice of Civil Penalties. Third quarter, 1,171 welfare calls. Roughly half were unfounded. 106 citations were Notice of Civil Penalties issues.

Fourth quarter, 620 calls; 238 unfounded, with 65 citations of Notice of Civil Penalties. That was for the calendar year 2018.

Chair Duerr. It's good to refresh the Board what is the procedure? Wants everyone to be current on the procedure.

Director Schull. Discusses the influx of calls re: dogs left in hot cars in our community. Not sure if it's because of possibly visitors to Reno, but sees approximately 600 calls so far this summer.

The proper procedure is to contact Animal Services or to call 911 to have them respond. Needs detailed information about dog, location, description of vehicle.

Good Samaritans do not have authority to break a window. You can be civilly sued in Nevada. It is strongly discouraged. First responders, law enforcement, Animal Control, all have the ability to break a window.

Chair Duerr. Inquired as to response time.

Director Schull. Response time depends on many variables; staffing, where officers are, outside temperature, information from caller regarding dog.

Chair Duerr. Confirmed that SPD, RPD and WCSO can also respond to calls. And inquired as to how frequently it happens.

Director Schull. Recent story aired involving RPD and RPD referred Animal Control.

Chair Duerr. Continued discussion regarding jurisdiction and response for same. Requests a protocol be set up that if an officer is not available for emergency situations that they kick it to SPD, RPD or WCSO and hopefully someone will respond.

Member Dobbs. Discusses success with going into a store and announcing if an animal is in distress in the parking lot and receiving help.

Director Schull. Shares photographs regarding cat cruelty situation. Turns discussion over to Terri Schultz regarding this matter.

Terri Schultz. Discussed outcome of Happy Tails welfare case. This involved four Bull Dogs. Their plea was changed to guilty and convicted of 574.100, cruelty.

Chair Duerr. Inquired of the penalty.

Terry Schultz. Restitution to be paid back to Animal Services is \$2,300 and surrender ownership of all the dogs. There is a total fee assessment of a couple hundred dollars.

Chair Duerr. Inquired as to future handling of owners who have been convicted. They have constraints of ownership.

Terry Schultz. The cat cruelty case originated with WCSO who was responding to a domestic case between a mother and daughter. WCSO called Animal Services because he heard there was 19 cats in the home. There was an additional count of 13 cats, which is 6 more than the allowable limit.

Further visits were conducted to try to get the owner a variance permit, come into compliance, get the cats cleaned up, get the house cleaned up. While they were there, they discovered litter boxes all over, litter canisters, and cat food. They discovered a room above the garage that originally the owner denied there were cats. They finally were allowed to go into the upstairs. It was four steps of solid feces that officers slipped on trying to get upstairs.

She further explained that on prior visits, there was no odor coming from the home. When the upstairs door was opened, the odor all came out. Additional litter boxes were found with cat carriers. The daughter had moved into the house 9 months before this, and brought 27 cats with her.

Animal Services pulled 40 live cats and 18 dead cats, 27 of which were upstairs. Owner was cited for cruelty. Most of the cats were sick with various issues.

The situation happened in November, 2018. The cats were held until March, 2019. Owner refused to surrender them. True hoarder mentality. Further investigation determined owner had done it before in Florida with 60 cats and 18 dead cats.

Owner wouldn't surrender. Owner kept amending court documents to delay the process. In the end, she was convicted. She was sentenced to two years in jail and a fine of \$305. Her two year sentence was suspended. She was also ordered to pay \$22,820.00 restitution to Animal Services.

Owner is under Department of Alternative Sentencing's jurisdiction for the next two years. The Judge allowed her to have one cat, and then the three dogs that she originally had. She was found not guilty on the three dogs because the dogs were outside and all the cats were

inside.

Originally, the owner was met for a variance permit. She wanted four dogs. Animal Services had previously inspected the property, but had not gone into the house. They had no clue there were all those cats there.

Recently discovered that the mother has two cats, now plus the daughter's one cat, so now they have three cats at the home.

Member Payne. Inquired if the owner paid the restitution and was told it will be paid over time via payment plans.

Member Rink. What is the approach of DAS? Is she getting mental health help?

Terri Schultz. Confirms that counseling and various other things were remanded to the owner.

Member Doss. Asked if owner's name has been shared on the Do Not Adopt list and was confirmed yes.

Chair Duerr. Asked for confirmation of the Do Not Adopt list.

Director Schull. Explained that through various partnered organizations, they all share information as to someone who they want to "red flag" and not adopt to based on previous cases or information.

Chair Duerr. Inquired about breed specific rescues and wanted to know if those rescues were included in the distribution of the Do Not Adopt.

Director Schull. Confirmed that rescue organizations outside of NHS, SPCA, Pet Network are not supplied with the Do Not Adopt list. The list will share with specific rescues if it involves the specific breed, but otherwise, it's just the primary organization.

Director Schull. Concludes her update, but provides an update on things the Board has requested over the last year or so.

Update on barking dog complaint. On 2/22/18, there was a request for staff to provide an update on marking dog complaint process which was facilitated in 2018. Also, a request on the track and release monitoring program, and a status was provided.

The Board requested on May 31st an update on parks which Amanda Schultz provided an update to the Board in December.

On May 31st, the Board asked for an update on Washoe County Code Revision and time line, and code revisions and other items have been put on the back burner for now.

On May 31st, the Board requested contact with the Parks Foundation regarding disposal (inaudible) and Karen Stark will provide additional information.

On May 31st, a request was to Animal Services using the Next Door app for lost and found assistance.

Amanda Schultz. Contacted the Next Door facility. They do not allow animal facilities to use the app. They don't want advertising throughout the county to try to get pets home. They are concerned about overloading everybody on the Next Door application. A Sacramento facility goes under a law enforcement umbrella. But at this time, Next Door is not allowing Animal Services to do it at this time.

Chair Duerr. Further discussion on Next Door regarding lost pets. Her dog escaped and someone had found and posted on Next Door.

Director Schull. Adds that if they can umbrella under another law enforcement organization that would post on their behalf, they have the ability to do geographic data programming so that if an animal is picked up in a certain neighborhood, the information would be populated in the Next Door app. Social media provides a good avenue for lost animals.

Chair Duerr. Confirms that they have established a Next Door presence in Reno. They are allowed to push out information. They cannot respond except under individual names. There is not two way communication, but there is a push out capability.

Member Anderson. Doesn't believe they have utilized that in Sparks but will gather further information on it.

Director Schull. Discusses the livestock evacuation team. Was not able to provide a complete update until it was completed. Confirms a liability concern with people's personal property, training, etc. More time is needed to complete the update.

Chair Duerr. Confirms Director Schull's report is concluded.

Discussion regarding Agenda Item #5 – Board Members and/or Staff Announcements, Request for Information and Selection of Topics for Future Agendas.

Member Payne. Inquired if it is worthwhile to have a report from the legislative session that would provide up to date information.

Director Schull. Offers to bring legislative session information at the next meeting.

Member Anderson. Confirms that it would be nice to have information about any roadblocks and additional information about topics they are facing.

Member Payne. Advises that she read recently that Nevada had voted soring which is for Tennessee Walking Horses due to painful hooves being on the ground which is why they have a high gait. She confirmed that progress has been made in this country for equine.

Director Schull. Confirms she will research that and will bring information to the next meeting.

Member Rink. Confirms that it would be under NRS 576.

Member Rogers. Followed up on the legislative update. Also concerned about welfares, and wants information about how to prevent hoarders and cruelty case individuals from adopting? How can the network assist? Is there a legislative process? Offered to be a liaison to that industry.

Member Rink. Corrected NRS 574 is animal cruelty.

Chair Duerr. Requested proposal to have penalties evaluated for various findings – hoarding, cruelty, and laying out a clear path of punishment, more direction to Judges. Wants a better understanding to the Board of what are the recommended penalties, should there be? Is this something that legal can get involved?

Member Dobbs. Discussed that Nevada is a very pro property rights state, and animals are defined as property under the law. But even if it's a collaboration of all animal welfare groups in the area to give guidelines to the Judges, informal to formal.

Chair Duerr. At Art Paws, she learned that Florida outlawed Greyhound racing. She feels attitudes can change, things can happen at a state and national level.

Discussed change involving Bob Cox who had been the minute taker for the meeting.

Director Schull. Bob Cox retired. Amanda Shultz will be taking over. Asks for everyone's patience while the system and process is created. Requests that members provide photograph with contact information and short bio information.

Also discussed putting together more meaningful statistics and sharing information that will be beneficial to the Board and the community as a whole, and also capitalizing on the different backgrounds of the Board.

Chair Duerr. Appreciates Director Schull's comments. Appreciates the connection between all individuals and/or members because it brings everyone together regarding the animals. Also requested name plates.

Keith Monroe, DA. Introduced himself. Substituting for Jennifer Gustafson.

Member Jennings. Introduced herself as the Assistant Director. Provided brief background information and discussed her job duties. A change was made after the hoarding case. Processes were improved because of the intensity and amount of animals they had, the time it took for staff. They were able to fix those processes to give the animals more care.

Amanda Schultz. Provided background information as to her current position. She is used wherever departments/personnel need her.

Chair Duerr. Discussed graphs and handling of same. Recommended all CAP type. Asked for more input on presentation techniques and communication.

Member Payne. Always happy to help with anything. Discussed challenges with staff and funding.

Chair Duerr. Confirmed Member Payne is at the top of the food chain for communications for the School Board.

Member Dobbs. Discussed operating Facebook page through Washoe County. Inquired if it was possible for WCRAS to have their own communications page. Felt it would help.

Director Schull. Confirmed they can't have their own Facebook page. She has asked for the social media avenue, however, indicated that if you aren't an elected department head, you don't have the option for your own Facebook page.

Chair Duerr. Requested the Facebook page item be put on the next Agenda. More discussion is required to consider this. Looking at forming a side-by-side non-profit for

fund-raising, animals, etc. Requested staff to look at the Washoe County web page and see how dynamic, or not, it is and then conversations can follow on this.

Member Payne. Requested information on the photographs for the site that should be considered.

Director Schull. Suggested members take pictures with their pet for web page information.

5. ADJOURNMENT [Non-Action Item].

Naomi declared the meeting adjourned.