

Washoe County Regional Animal Services Advisory Board

MINUTES

Thursday, February 22, 2018 ~ 2:00 p.m.
WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES
CLASSROOM
2825 LONGLEY LANE, RENO, NEVADA

MEMBERS

Charlene Bybee
Jill Dobbs
Naomi Duerr
Kitty Jung
Jennifer Linn
Irene Payne
Anette Rink

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

Shyanne Schull - Director, opened the meeting at 2:04 p.m. A quorum was established.

PRESENT: Jill Dobbs, Naomi Duerr, Irene Payne and Anette Rink.

ABSENT: Charlene Bybee, Jennifer Linn, and Kitty Jung (replaced Jeanne Herman)

Jennifer Gustafson, Deputy District Attorney, was also present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT [Non-Action Item]

There were no public comments.

Jennifer Gustafson – Deputy District Attorney, reminded the Board Members about some of the open meeting law items discussed at the last meeting, and noted that the Election of Officers and Approval of Minutes were action items at this meeting, and a short agenda won't always be the case.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS [For Possible Action]

Election of Chairperson of Advisory Board was discussed. Nomination of Naomi Duerr was indicated a willingness to serve for a one year period and a motion was made for her nomination. Member Dobbs seconded the nomination. Member Duerr accepted the nomination. Motion carried.

Member Duerr invited discussion for nominations for Vice-Chair. Member Rink was

nominated. Member Dobbs will support and nominated Anette Rink for Vice-Chair. Member Payne seconded nomination. Motion carried unanimously. Additional discussion was had requesting further information the differences between the Advisory Board and the Animal Control Board.

4. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 20, 2017, MINUTES [For Possible Action]

Member Payne proposed minutes be approved. Member Rink seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. 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. Welcomed everyone and suggested audience members to introduce themselves and who they may represent.

Chris Vaught. Lives in Washoe Valley and is a professional dog trainer. She raises Australian Kelpies. She just finished law school and also holds a kennel permit.

Nancy Samon. Lives in Washoe Valley and is a long time breeder of Quarter Horses and owns some of the Australian Kelpies. Secretary to the Nevada Reined Cow and Cutting Horse Association.

Linda Peri. #6 on the Agenda and wanting a status regarding what she submitted at the last meeting.

Tim Stoffel. He is a keeper at Sierra Safari Zoo with the specialty felines, large felines, and also works the Feline Conservation Federation and is an advocate for responsible exotic animal ownership.

Karen Stark - Regional Animal Services Program Coordinator.

Mandy Schultz - Regional Animal Services Office Assistant II.

Director Schull. Presenting the first of many quarterly reports to the Board and discussing upcoming events, updates, statistical reports. Also presenting updates relative to the strategic plan that was developed in 2015. She wants to continue to develop long and short term goals for the department and will also be discussing statistics, budget and Code Amendments.

Mission Statement was revised to incorporate being proactive on education new directions in the upcoming 5 years. Four strategic objectives were developed for the next three years: 1) That WCRAS lacks the presence in our community and the services that we provide and wants to improve community awareness. Also discussed the revamp of the website and noted it to be a more user friendly website for Animal Services and tracking hits on the website of 296,000 in 2017. Twitter and Facebook is also used to reach the community; 2) Proactive Outreach Programs and Education. Suggesting developing new programs to have animal owners be more proactive as to the care and maintenance of animals. 3,211 pets were vaccinated using the available resources. WCRAS is contracted with NHS and a veterinary clinic for services.

Jen Gustafson – Deputy District Attorney reminded the members and audience to introduce themselves before speaking.

Member Rink. Inquired about spaying/neutering for the public at large. Senior programs are utilized.

Director Schull. 2,967 animals were microchipped and the department offers the service at no cost to the community. Over 1,000 seniors were assisted with pets including primary vet care and food. Educational presentations were also incorporated into the Washoe County School District and visited the schools for care of animals. Effective regulation and compliance was also an objective. Fix-it tickets were also issued to animal owners for licensing violations instead of a citation. 2017 compliance rate was 28.88% which is up 5% from 2015.

Resources and Resolutions. Animals escaping, animals in heat, etc., WCRAS is available to help the community with tips and resources to help the animal owners. Staff compassion and experience was discussed to further assist the community, including providing monthly newsletter to share statistics, goals, challenges.

Training of staff was discussed. All important and essential training is important to all staff members. Monthly team meetings are also held to enforce motivation and continuity.

Recognition Programs for 2017, the Shining Star Program. Staff can be recognized for going above and beyond with a lapel pin or a presentation at the County Commission Meeting.

The budget was discussed. Revenue sources discussed regarding the property tax

implementation for WCRAS. The accounts are appropriated for operations of the Animal Services Center and Regional Field Enforcement Operations. WCRAS is partnered with NHS and clarification for the community is desired so they can understand the difference between the two entities.

The revenue pie chart was used. Licensing and permit revenue was also discussed and outlined the areas of fees and fines that outlined the revenue for the department.

Member Duerr. Requested clarification on the three cent property tax.

Director Schull. Clarification was indicated that three cents of every \$100 of property tax is used for WCRAS.

The internal operations include program budget division which is divided up of four categories which is used to track expenditures, needs for different division areas: administration, field, shelter and outreach. Field is the large portion that is eating up more than half of the resources available. They are fully staffed with 24 field service agents.

Outreach is the new division area which was implemented in 2015. Karen Stark will address that program.

Expenditures were discussed. Salaries/wages are the biggest chunk of the budget with 40 staff members. Services & supplies includes vehicles, computers, supplies, any improvements to the building. They will be phasing in 5 new Animal Control boxes into the fleet and phasing out some of the old boxes. There are a variety of animal boxes and depending on what is chosen will depend on the price.

Chris Vaught requested clarification of charges for services and wanted to know who was being charged and for what.

Director Schull. Clarification was indicated that WCRAS shares common area expenses with NHS and additional expenses.

Karen Stark - Regional Animal Services Program Coordinator. She has held the position for years; however, it was not proactive with the public as it is now. The programs aren't costing the taxpayer dollars as the monies raised pay for the programs.

Educational programs were discussed where staff travels to schools, civic groups, homeowner associations, to discuss community involvement and responsible pet

ownership and promoting education to be a great pet owner.

Vaccination clinics are available on the first Tuesday of every month from 3:00 to 7:00 and \$10 is charged for a vaccine. There has been a tremendous reduction in the dogs coming in with Parvo virus because of the low cost clinic. The vaccination clinic averages about 200 pets per clinic. Off-site clinics are also provided in the lower income areas.

Discussed services to senior complexes wherein the seniors are low income, home bound, or otherwise stationary, and the pets are provided with care, exams, deworming, etc., and if necessary, those pets are referred to another veterinarian for spays, neuters, etc. Also, pet food is delivered on the third Tuesday of every month to the senior centers. It results in minimal staff time and the seniors really benefit from the services, and NHS helps a lot. It is more of a group effort now with the two entities.

The volunteer program was revamped. The volunteers go through an orientation program and are fingerprinted. It's a 3-tier process. The first is to learn the process of the shelter, including how the shelter works, how admin works and how outreach works. Ride-alongs with field officers are also included.

The second tier of the volunteer program is intermediary and more hands on with the public, and answering questions with the public and helping explain the process.

The third tier is advanced volunteers and they may also be asked to go to disasters, including floods, fires, etc., and try to assist animal rescue, if necessary.

Ms. Stark was previously an Animal Control Officer, as well as a supervisor. She has been with WCRAS for 16 years.

Mandy Schultz - Regional Animal Services Office Assistant II. She is an Office Assistant II for the Outreach Program.

She indicated there were 511 park related complaints last year. Most of those complaints are during the summer where the majority of the dogs and owners are outside. A park patrol program was launched in November of 2017. When the parks are visited, the public is talked with and education is offered for leash and off-leash areas, vaccination options, basic pet ownership. Complaints of animals are also addressed, including dog bites, etc.

By summer, they hope to transition the program and offer more enforcement instead of

just education. The public is given a chance to understand the laws first before fines.

Member Duerr. Discussed her issues with a lost foster dog, and using NextDoor for posting lost and found pets. She obtained citizen advocates to monitor NextDoor if they were not in the areas to be able to access the daily conversation regarding lost and found pets. She was wondering what the process was regarding the use of NextDoor and Animal Control combined. The Councilwoman also suggested the contact of another Councilwoman for that Ward. Also, to completely fence the Plumas Park, and turn it into a dog park instead of a soccer yard.

Further discussion was had regarding the use of NextDoor, however, speakers unidentified. The use of various dog parks was discussed and responsibilities with the use of leash and non-leash, and the community responsibility. Enforcement will be used. There are a lot of problems at Plumas Park of off-leash complaints, dogs approaching other dog owners.

Jennifer Gustafson – Deputy District Attorney suggested this dog park item would be better discussed and placed on the agenda so that appropriate recommendations could be made at that time.

Member Duerr. Also discussed the amount of dog waste and handling of the same.

Mandy Shultz, OAI. Addressed the use of picking up animal waste and owner responsibility for the same. She is hopeful to have public service messaging to discuss responsibilities of dog waste and picking up.

Member Duerr. Clean ups were initiated at Virginia Lake Park. A neighbor was so frustrated about the dog waste and involved the Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful Foundation to manage dog waste. She suggested that WCRAS be connected with the Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful Foundation so possibly they could work together to clean up dog waste.

Member Dobbs. SPCA partners with the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation to help with trail clean-ups to encounter a larger area and wanting to get volunteers out there and assist the community.

Director Schull. Discussion of the exotic animal permit process. The Code written previously required smaller pets sold by pet stores would have to all be permitted under the previous Code. A more concise Code is being developed that will include the Nevada Department of Wildlife, as well as categorize animals in tiers. Tier 1 animals are animals

that are primarily sold in pet stores. A system was created that Animal Services can look at the animals in the community. Tier 2 are moderately inherently dangerous. And Tier 3 is larger, more inherently dangerous.

The permit application process would include the applicant's description of the animal they are applying for, what the reasons for the animal are, what reasons are that the application is being contested, and then make approvals, denials and revocations. Animal Services has since started a revision process. Insurance requirements were implemented for the Tier 2 and Tier 3 animals, and the species were listed accordingly.

A recommendation was made to the Board and Commission was made that Animal Services would internalize the recommended use for the exotic animal permits. Animal Services would take over the administration of the permits and also the revocations and denials. The permit applicants are also permitted to appeal the Animal Services decision and the Administrative Hearing Officer Report.

Member Payne. Inquired to briefly summarize what Commissioner Hartung and Commissioner Herman found and why they were unable to support the policy.

Director Schull. Commissioner Hartung's concerns were relative to the permit and the insurance requirements per animal versus per permit. But the way it's written in the Code is per animal which is similar to the Dangerous Dog requirements wherein they are required to have a \$250,000 insurance policy per dangerous dog. It's currently written the same way. There can be multiple animals listed on a permit, but the way it's listed on Code, if it's a Tier 2 or Tier 3 animal, the insurance requirements are per animal.

Member Rink. Inquired how many Tier 2 and Tier 3 animals do you have permitted at this point? How many do you think you have in Washoe County?

Director Schull. There are currently 10 exotic animal permit holders in Washoe County under the current code which this code becomes effective April 1st. All of those animals would possibly be Tier 3 animals.

Member Dobbs. She commended Director Schull and the department in getting the revisions passed.

Director Schull. Discussed the previous permit process regarding a variance permit relative to caging requirements, language clarifications and abolishing the permit board giving Animal Services to administer those applications, denials and revocations in-house. The significant changes that were added were clarifying the caging requirements

for the size of dogs.

Prior to the change, the permit required if you were having more than three dogs, you were required to assemble a kennel on the property. The language was antiquated. Now residents have the ability to use their residence as part of the kennel. Requirements were also changed regarding the fence requirements for particular breeds.

The Code revisions were supplied to Board Members.

PERSONNEL UPDATE:

The retirement was discussed of the 2nd in command and she is hopeful that the Assistant Director position will be filled soon so that the processes for Animal Services can continue.

The new fee schedule will also be updated and revised in the next few months. Also, the internal processes to be developed to facilitate the variance code and exotic animal codes is a huge task. Policies and procedures will be in place and staff will be aware of new changes and how the process works.

Operational procedures are being streamlined to provide a clear, articulated process for staff of what is expected and to be able to have a step by step outline for them.

6. UPDATE ON LINDA PERI CORRESPONDENCE [Non-Action Item].

An informational update on correspondence submitted by Linda Peri.

This was a cruelty complaint that was received by Animal Services in October of 2017. A discussion was had regarding what was presented to WCRAS, what was presented by Linda Peri, what was forwarded to the DA's Office for prosecution.

A dog was being walked by his owner in town and Ms. Peri was a witness to what she interpreted as the man dragging the dog, and was not allowing the dog to walk at his pace. The officer took the complaint and investigated the incident and discussed the incident and obtained security surveillance of the man walking the dog. The security surveillance did not support Ms. Peri's claims and charges were unable to be filed with the DA's Office.

Ms. Peri was invited to review the footage, talk to field staff supervisors about concerns and complaints. Not only was there nothing on camera to substantiate the claim, the dog owner brought the dog to the department within an hour of it expiring. The dog was

registered, microchipped and neutered by the owner. The owner brought the dog in to surrender. The dog was deceased. There was nothing indicated on the animal to substantiate further charges.

The dog appeared to have collapsed. It appeared the dog owner picked up the dog and carried it after collapsing, not dragging the dog. The case did not proceed further.

Member Payne. Inquired as to the cause of death and if the owner had a history of mistreating animals.

Director Schull. Indicated the dog was obese. It was possible the dog could have had a stroke, a heart attack, and many other things. The owner was unaware of any health conditions. The owner did not have an abusive history.

Jen Gustafson – Deputy District Attorney. Clarified that open/pending criminal cases, which is not something the Board would discuss because of prosecutorial privileges that need to be protected. In this case, it did not go to prosecution which is why it was okay to discuss the case.

Member Rink. Commented that it appeared the deceased dog was morbidly obese. It appears the ownership was transferred to the gentleman that had brought the dog in and it was originally his mother's dog and felt it was a very difficult case to judge.

Director Schull. Reviewed the process to insure that cruelty cases are properly handled and the investigation is done accordingly. Linda Peri was acknowledged for her involvement for trying to help the dog in question. She also advised of the new app, "My RPD" for citizens of the community to stay involved. Linda Peri was invited to comment.

Linda Peri. She expressed her disappointment in the outcome of this matter. She indicated the owner said the dog had a heart murmur and was obese. She expressed that the dog owner has another dog and felt it might happen again. She was upset that the dog owner got credibility and she didn't. She insisted the dog was dragged and then collapsed. She expressed that even the bad things that happen should be acknowledged as well as all the good things that WCRAS does for the community.

Member Duerr. She agreed that additional training should be implemented with experts and report back improvements that hopefully will be added to the upcoming agenda.

Jennifer Gustafson – Deputy District Attorney agrees that statistics will be available by the next meeting regarding tracking of prosecutions of animal cruelty.

Member Rink. Encouraged the positivity in keeping statistics of cruelty cases.

Director Schull. Commented on the community involvement in cruelty cases wherein most of the time, the reporting party does not want to be involved, does not want to go to court, does not want additional problems. Additional comments regarding standard procedures with a deceased dog and improvements for handling the same. Questions were asked regarding prosecution of cruelty cases.

Jennifer Gustafson – Deputy District Attorney. Cases are definitely prosecuted. Statements, video, photographs are helpful. Does everything corroborate the claims? All the cases are evaluated on a case by case basis. When evidence that conflicts with a statement being made, like the one in question, it might have been submitted for prosecution.

Member Duerr. Addressed the compromising problems with the video surveillance of the dog in question and the handling of the case. Could more cameras be available? Is 4th Street a possibility for installing more cameras, i.e., for animal cases, criminal cases. It could be that certain intersections would benefit from having more cameras available. She wanted to discuss with RPD.

Member Rink. Ignorance is a big part of animal abuse. The outreach program is helpful because it educates the pet owners and it's important to get the public involved and taught the proper procedures.

Linda Peri. Additional comments regarding the additional videos being available and that the decision was made on a 10 second video and a decision of not enough evidence. She submitted a 5 minute copy of her phone call indicating proof. She addressed Member Rink's comments about the public being ignorant.

7. WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS AND/OR STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS, REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

[Non-Action Item]. Limited to items not addressed elsewhere on the agenda. The Washoe County Regional Animal Services Advisory Board may not engage in discussion or take action on any item identified under this topic and items may be placed on a future agenda for discussion and possible action. The next regular meeting of the Washoe County Regional Animal Services Advisory Board is scheduled for May 31, 2018.

Member Duerr. Requested a presentation of the barking dog scenario. What is the right protocol? Seeking clarification of what the role is for the sheriff, city police, citizen, and requested education on handling of the situations. Requested as an agenda item.

The Reno Mayor requested information on technology called Dog Parker which sells kennels to put outside businesses that are heated and cooled. Active dog owners can use these kennels to put their dogs in while frequenting areas were dogs that are now allowed. Seeking information if the City of Reno should pursue. Requested as an agenda item.

Requested report on dog waste situation and use of Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation and Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful. Requested future updates.

Requested information regarding WCRAS fee schedule.

Requested examples of dog cruelty cases and information on prosecution of cruelty cases so that the Board can understand the process and start tracking the statistics.

Requested, for a future meeting, the demand for dog parks, especially in Hansen, Nicolle <NHansen@washoecounty.us>; Shanto, Yvonne <YShanto@washoecounty.us>South Reno. Requested pros and cons for dog parks, as well as additional information.

Member Dobbs. Addressed various behaviors in dog parks and being aware of dog group's postings for responsible dog parks, education for same, and communication to the public of basic rules and postings. Comment heard regarding citizens versus citizens in terms of what the dog needs or wants. Suggested signage for public safety on the agenda.

Member Duerr. Dog park discussion to include discussion of signage, what signage is currently available and what information could be provided at dog parks? Agenda the Plumas Park situation.

Chris Vaught. Comment heard regarding dog language, bullying, and a common understanding and consistency of what can be useful at the dog parks.

Member Rink. Is there another species the Board should be concentrating on besides dogs?

Director Schull. We don't focus more on dogs than cats, but we have higher profile

issues that arise with dogs. We deal with cats.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT** [Non-Action Item]. Comment heard under this item will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Washoe County Advisory Board Agenda. Comments are to be made to the Washoe County Regional Animal Services Advisory Board as a whole.

There were no public comments.

9. **ADJOURNMENT** [Non-Action Item].

Director Schull adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

**AS APPROVED BY THE ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD IN
SESSION ON MAY 31, 2018.**