

Washoe County Regional Animal Services Advisory Board

FINAL MINUTES-VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

Friday, October 20, 2023 @ 1:30 p.m.
WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL
ANIMAL SERVICES CENTER CLASSROOM
2825 LONGLEY LANE, #A, RENO, NV
~VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE~

MEMBERS

Naomi Duerr (Chair)
Paul Anderson
Julie McMahon
Mariluz Garcia
Trudy Brussard
Diaz Dixon
Jill Fisher

STAFF

Shyanne Schull (Director)
Tammy Jennings (Asst).

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jen Gustafson (Deputy DA)

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1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM [Non-Action Item]

(Meeting started and conversation already in progress).

CHAIR DUERR: Asked if Board was assembled.

MR. SCHLEY: Confirmed Board is in attendance and video is available in chambers for presentations.

CHAIR DUERR: Meeting called to order.

PRESENT: Naomi Duerr, Paul Anderson, Mariluz Garcia, Trudy Brussard, Diaz Dixon, Julie McMahon, Jill Fisher.

CHAIR DUERR: Inquired of any other staff participating.

MS. FISHER: Announced she is present.

MR. SCHLEY: Confirmed he is present, Director Schull and Tammy Jennings. Serena Stockdale and Art Westbrook are also present.

CHAIR DUERR: Advised Board she is not able to attend in person. Shifting the meeting to Item 6 to elect a Vice Chair to run the meeting in person.

2. SALUTE TO FLAG [Non-action item]

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Led the meeting in the pledge.

6. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR [For possible action]. This item taken out of order.

CHAIR DUERR: Asked if there was anyone present to offer the services of Vice Chair.

MEMBER ANDERSON: Offered services as Vice-Chair.

MEMBER GARCIA: Made motion.

MEMBER BRUSSARD: Seconded.

CHAIR DUERR: Confirmed nomination and motion passes unanimously.

3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROVIDING PUBLIC COMMENT VIA ZOOM/ TELEPHONE [Non-Action Item]

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Introduced item.

MS. GUSTAFSON: Provided instructions for members of the public to join the meeting via Zoom and/or telephone. Also provided instructions for public comment.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT [Non-action item]

MR. SCHLEY: Advised no additional public comment.

CHAIR DUERR: Asked if Tracy Dean is present and Tom confirmed. Tracy Dean is a representative of Community Cats. Asked Director Schull to read a proclamation from the Mayor of the City of Reno recognizing Global Cat Day.

MS. DEAN: Appreciated the acknowledgment.

CHAIR DUERR: Commented on the importance of the program and the TNR program. Asked Director Schull to read the proclamation who commented she did not have the proclamation in hand. Discussed the service at Animal Services about the cats. Between 2019 and 2022, Animal Services took in 17,489 cats. There was a 10% increase in last calendar year.

Also discussed the risk to cats when at the shelter that they don't adjust well and acclimate to change. Cats often become stressed and ill. It is a challenge to transfer healthy cats to adoption partners. Stray hold period is 5 days. If not claimed, cat goes to shelter. The TNR program is very successful.

Animal Services is focusing on educational components and how to search for a lost cat. Also, how to assist the community with the importance of identification. Will be providing community assistance, i.e., free microchipping, vaccination clinic for cats. There is a billboard campaign coming soon.

CHAIR DUERR: Thanked Tracy Dean and thanked them for raising the issue.

5. APPROVAL OF REVISED APRIL 21, 2023, MAY 15, 2023 AND AUGUST 7, 2023, MEETING MINUTES [For possible action]

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Opened discussion for approval.

MR. SCHLEY: Commented on the revision of the Minutes for April 21, 2023, for clarification.

MEMBER GARCIA: Made motion to approve revised Minutes.

MEMBER McMAHON: Seconded the motion.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Motion passes unanimously.

7. INFORMATIONAL UPDATE ON RECORDED PHONE LINE SERVICE OPTIONS FOR WCRAS'S DISPATCH CENTER [Non-action item]

MEMBER JENNINGS: The Advisory Board requested into looking into recording phone lines in dispatch center. Pricing was looked into, as of now, all phone lines are recorded in dispatch center. The recordings are being kept for 90 days for any

public records request.

CHAIR DUERR: Thanked Tammy and Director Schull for the effort. Commented on past incidents where 911 calls were made and 911 transferred the caller to WCRAS, but there was no record from the point that 911 transferred the call.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Agreed on a job well done.

MEMBER McMAHON: Asked about the 90-day retention of records being consistent with 911 operator calls.

MS. JENNINGS: Confirmed that the Sheriff's Department keeps theirs longer. Going along with the retention schedule provided by ADA Gustafson. There is an increased fee if calls are kept longer than 90 days.

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT [Non-action item]

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Introduced Director Schull.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Opened report with animals impounded from Q1.

CHAIR DUERR: Commented that slides can't be seen.

MR. SCHLEY: Confirmed there will be no video or slides. Checking with IT.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Slides were brought up. Impounded animals in Q1 are down 18% for dogs and cats combined. Cats down 23% and dogs down 14%. 9% of cats were microchipped. 48% of dogs were microchipped.

CHAIR DUERR: Had questions about the slides again.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Confirmed connection with PowerPoint presentation is not available at this time.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Apologized for technical difficulty. Provided chart of intake numbers. Length of stay is up for dogs at 9.1 days which is a 4% increase. There is significant impact to the animal with a long stay. Cat length of stay is up at 9.6%. Reached capacity last week for cats. Also discussed a case where someone was evicted and left behind in excess of 20 cats in the residence. Services had to be reduced to be able to accept cats until numbers could be reduced.

Discussed animals impounded and returned after impound. Still striving to keep reunification numbers and percentages high, however, a lot of animals have come into care and it is suspected the owners are not looking for them.

Discussed the DocuPet licensing program which is a licensing smart tag. If a member of the public finds an animal with these tags, they can contact the pet owner directly. In the last year, over 100 pets were reunified using DocuPet.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Sought clarification on the slides.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Maybe lost reports versus found reports. Confirmed that the program is working and is hopeful for more favorable statistics.

Discussed animal outcomes for Q1. Down by 10% in euthanasia. Down in reunifications, 2.6%. Down significantly in transfers, a decrease in 31%. Vet euthanasia was up a little bit.

Discussed animals transferred to rescue partners. Seeing 44.7% decrease in cat transfers to NHS. 42.5% in dog transfers to NHS. 54.9% decrease in other animals.

Started working with Options to provide feral cat TNR services. Options is working with Community Cats to get cats released. Pet Network has stepped up and took 42 cats and 7 dogs which is a significant increase. Res-que has transferred 15 dogs and 16 other animals. SPCA picked up 59 cats and 35 dogs. Very thankful for all rescue partners.

Presented field call types. Seeing more noise complaints of 49%. Stray animal calls decreased by 35% since 2020. All animals returned in field reunifications, 35% is average.

Animal welfare cases and calls. In this quarter, 705 total calls. 524 outcomes, resolved complaints.

Outcome of tethering calls. Sometimes animals are choking. Some may have been seized, three have been cited, two provided education, three impounded. In 2022, there were 18 impounds as a result of tethering.

Providing Quinn's outreach status. Issued 293 personal pet ID tags. Attended 10 events and provides 144 CARES referrals. Helped 319 seniors, and 681 of their pets, and

230 unique seniors and 450 of their unique pets. This includes senior pet food distribution. 513 vaccinations provided last quarter.

Conducted three pet food distribution events and had three vaccine clinics. Upcoming event with Boxers & Buddies for Halloween. Petsgiving donation drive kicking off in December.

Commented on the FaceBook page being down for about 85 days. Lost a lot of traction while having capacity issues and missing the ability to communicate with community was devastating. A photograph of a cat with an ear injury is what caused the page to be disabled for 85 days, but it is reinstated. There are 281 new followers, 46 posts, and 78,170 followers. There have been 11,712 direct visits to the page and 8,514 reactions to posts.

Presentation and Director's Report concluded.

MEMBER BRUSSARD: Discussed a previous conversation about sending an adopted pet home with a County license and wondered what the progress was.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: The program is in the queue. Animal Services is working on a revision of the fee schedule. Hopeful to conclude study and bring fee schedule to BOCC to approve. Is hopeful that with every adoption a free license would be offered.

MEMBER DIXON: Commented on intakes being down 14% but length of stay rises 4%. Doesn't compute. Wondered how many times they have reached capacity with cats in the last 8 years.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Confirmed they have reached capacity for cats two times in this calendar year. Reached dog capacity multiple times this year. Doesn't have recollection in her nine years there of reaching capacity before.

MEMBER DIXON: Clarified they have not reached capacity before. Wanted to know why capacity is being reached.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Feels there are a number of factors that go into the capacity challenges. Adoption numbers are slowing. Pet owners have housing challenges and finding pet friendly housing. Many can't afford to care for their pets.

Commented on change with partnership with NHS. The NHS new leadership has

transition and staffing changes. Hopefully, the number of transfers will pick back up.

MEMBER DIXON: Inquired as to the 45% decrease in cat intake and 43% decrease in dog intake. Feels anything beyond 10% is an anomaly when you start looking at statistics. Asked about the action plan in place to make the shift.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Commented Animal Services is trying to put actions in place to assist with pathway planning. Trying to do more with less. Need to figure out how to work through time lines for animals in care. The capacity challenges are creating roadblocks. Animals have had to be euthanized for space.

MEMBER DIXON: Commented all numbers look good except for the intake numbers. Feels it is very clear for WCRAS and NHS to have a plan.

MEMBER GARCIA: Wanted to ask staff if the slides can be reversed to the partner's page. Wanted to know if the data was just for Q1.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Confirmed.

MEMBER GARCIA: Wanted to know about Q2 and Q3 and when would those numbers be provided.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Is more than willing to supply those numbers to the AB.

MEMBER GARCIA: Very concerned about the intake numbers. Wanted to know how we're trending moving forward.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Trending downward in terms of transfers for sure. It is a major concern. The hope is when NHS gets new positions hired and team together, that the transfer numbers turn around. What is transferred in the past to what is transferred today are two different animals.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Sought clarification in looking at Q1 and Q2 and Q3 will be typically the same for those transfers.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Confirmed. Not seeing a major difference in terms of turning it around.

CHAIR DUERR: Expressed deep concern about transfer rates. Agrees that animals cannot be held at Animal Services past a certain point. The euthanization that took place for space, and those animals were killed that could have been adopted. Feels it is unacceptable. Suggested to have a heart-to-heart conversation with NHS about why.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Commented that she has invited Jerlene from NHS for next AB meeting. Hopeful that more progress has been made to assemble team at NHS and amendments to PSA. They continue to meet every week. Difficulty remains between the partners.

CHAIR DUERR: Feels like the criteria for accepting animals over to NHS has changed. Requested by next meeting to find out what has changed. If the partnership is not working, changes need to be made. Is there a possibility of using empty cages at NHS so WCRAS animals aren't euthanized. Wants all possibilities explored. Was not aware until this meeting that euthanization was taking place to make space.

Also questioned the transfer rate of NHS. Wants to look at the pre and post to understand better.

MEMBER McMAHON: Commented about changes that have occurred. Wanted to remind everyone that before Jerlene was on NHS Board, the relationship was falling apart even prior. Snowball effect. Maybe the relationship won't exist forever. Didn't hear in the Director's Report that there was a plan to move forward with NHS or resolve things. Wants everybody to recognize the work NHS does and how hard they've tried.

MEMBER DIAZ: Agreed about the hard work that has been done. Asked if there were any young animals being euthanized.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Commented that 8 dogs have been euthanized for space that were healthy, viable, adoptable dogs. No cats have been euthanized for capacity reasons. Statistics are being shared with community.

MEMBER FISHER: Asked what period of time was it that 8 dogs had to be euthanized.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Confirmed it was the last quarter. It was the first time they reached no outcome, no interest, at capacity. The dogs had been sitting there for six weeks. No options left.

9. INFORMATIONAL UPDATE ON WCRAS's DISPATCH PATHWAY PLANNING FOR SHELTER DOGS AND CATS [Non-action item]

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Introduced Arthur Westbrook.

MR. WESTBROOK: He is the kennel supervisor at WCRAS. Discussing shelter challenges and what is in place to fix the challenges.

Has an increased length of stay for animals in their care. He has 4 staff members to take care of the whole shelter. The decrease in animal transfer to NHS impacts flow of animals and affects capacity for care for animals at WCRAS.

Discussed process changes implemented such as behavior training for animal care staff. Currently working with Kelly Bolen. Performing behavioral assessments to include kennel presentation, socialability, handling and dog-to-dog interactions.

Also have implemented a pathway guideline form. Increasing number of transfer partners to include organizations outside of Washoe County. Also created an email sent to rescues with interested adopters.

Discussed Kelly Bolen's credentials and experience of companion and animal behavior.

Discussed the path of an animal through the stay at the shelter. Days 1-5, staff walks through to observe behaviors. Recording behavior notes. On day 5, animals are assessed for behavior. On day 7, at risk protocol is initiated. Rescues are sent emails of all available animals able to be pulled. If any animal is microchipped, the owner is called immediately and told to come get the dog and it may be risk of euthanasia. On day, a pre-euthanasia list is created which is sent to all rescues. Aggressive animals are euthanized. On day 10-13, discussions are had about the animals still in care and not transferred. On day 14, euthanasia decision is made. Notes are made about all contact.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Thanked Mr. Westbrook for the presentation.

MEMBER FISHER: Asked about the behavioral assessment and wanted to know about animals that have mild behavioral issues but can't be remediated. Wants to know if outside agencies will take a dog that can be rehabilitated.

MR. WESTBROOK: Commented that he was previously employed with a rescue partner. Has a small minor behavior modification program. Kelly Bolen assists

with implementing behavior modification programs.

MEMBER McMAHON: Wanted clarification about behavior when they are a danger to other animals or humans, and asked if they still go through the 14-day period.

MR. WESTBROOK: Confirmed the animal does not. Severe cases are not offered to rescue and immediately euthanized.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Asked about the 4 full-time employees he has. Wanted to know if volunteers are utilized.

MR. WESTBROOK: Is currently in the process of creating a volunteer program.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Added there are 7 caretakers. 4 each day. Care is provided 365 days a year. WCRAS is set up to be a lost and found/stray hold facility. There are not exercise yards. No volunteers walking dogs. After the 5-day hold, more enrichment can be done, but facility is not set up for additional programs.

10. ESTABLISH ASAB MEETING DATES FOR 2024 [For possible action]

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Asked Director Schull to discuss.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Needing to schedule meetings for 2024 calendar year. Asked the Board to consider if they wish to continue meeting in person, it is acceptable, but data cannot be produced until the third or fourth week of the month. Having meetings earlier in the month is not possible.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Opened up for discussion.

CHAIR DUERR: Confirmed they are authorized to meet four times a year. Last meeting was discussed meeting more often, maybe every other month, for just this coming year because of the situation currently. Next meeting would be January 2024.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Doesn't have a preference. If met more frequently, quarterly stats would not be available, but they can meet to convene business. Is open to the Board's decision.

CHAIR DUERR: Commented that the last few meetings were very full and it was difficult to get to all agenda items. Next meeting would involve NHS presentation

which would take awhile. Asked for other comments.

MEMBER GARCIA: Commented she is comfortable keeping quarterly meetings because she feels like the communication coming from Director Schull is very strong. Tom provides access to everything they need. Tuesdays are not good for BOCC meetings, City of Reno, City of Sparks Council meetings.

CHAIR DUERR: Suggestion is acceptable to her. Commented that Director Schull works 4 10's and trying to avoid Fridays.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Isn't opposed to Fridays and requested mornings.

MEMBER DIXON: Commented that too many meetings can be a challenge when people are taken out of their office and away from their work.

MEMBER McMAHON: Commented that all days, except for Fridays, are very difficult as she is a full-time teacher. If it was something other than a Friday, it would limit her ability to attend.

CHAIR DUERR: Asked about January 26, 2024.

MEMBER FISHER: Agreed that Fridays are better for her and prefers mornings.

MEMBER BRUSSARD: Fridays work for her, morning or afternoon.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Feels that Friday mornings work best for him. Encouraged that they hold to the quarterly meetings, but special meetings could be called, if necessary.

CHAIR DUERR: Agreed with Vice Chair Anderson. Proposed January 26, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. Asked Director Schull to come back with a proposed schedule for the rest after the first has been set. Will be looking at the fourth Friday of the quarter for the meetings. Clarification was made for the fourth Friday of the month. January, April, July and October.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Asked DDA Gustafson if a motion was needed.

MS. GUSTAFSON: Confirmed the item is listed for possible action and suggested to take a motion on the January date and include that future dates will be

presented at the next meeting.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Asked Chair Duerr to make the motion.

CHAIR DUERR: Made a motion for the meeting be scheduled for January 26, 2024, at 9:30 am, location to be determined, based on availability. Staff will come back and make a proposal for the rest of the year.

MEMBER FISHER: Seconded motion.

MEMBER GARCIA: Wondered if it is a 2-hour time frame.

CHAIR DUERR: Commented the meeting is usually 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Motion passes unanimously.

MEMBER BRUSSARD: Wanted to know if a one hour Zoom meeting can be scheduled legally, if necessary.

MS. GUSTAFSON: Confirmed if the meeting is properly noticed in accordance with Open Meeting Law, a special meeting can be scheduled. It is up to the discretion of the Chair if a special meeting needs to be called.

11. OPEN MEETING LAW AND ETHICS TRAINING [Non-action item]

MS. GUSTAFSON: Introduced herself as the Deputy District Attorney for ASAB. Providing update training on Open Meeting Law. Discussed the legislative intent of the Open Meeting Law.

Open Meeting Law applies in general of a public body at which deliberation takes place and/or action may occur. Provided definition of “public body” and AS is subject to Open Meeting Law. Provided the definition of “meeting.” Has to have a quorum to constitute a meeting. Voting members establish a quorum.

Discussed methods of holding meetings to be in person, via remote technology system, or a hybrid meeting. All meetings still have to be properly noticed and open to the public. Clear and complete instructions have to be provided for how a member of the public can call in and provide public comment and must be read verbally.

Reminded to be careful when discussing over the phone. Don't want to use electronic communication to circumvent the Open Meeting Law. If there is a quorum via email, make sure not to discuss Board business. Advised a "walking quorum" could be a violation. Provided examples of possible violations.

Also discussed attorney/client communications. Information can be sought from the public body's attorney about potential or existing litigation. If there is a legal question from an individual, email Ms. Gustafson, and she will handle accordingly.

Provided additional information about crafting the agendas so the public has clarity what items are going to be considered and what possible action the Board may take. Also discussed Non-Action Items and For Possible Action Items.

Voting minimums discussed. Public comment discussed. A disruptive person providing public comment can be stopped by the Chair.

The Board cannot deliberate or take action in response to public comment unless the item is agendaized. It has to be proper notice.

Open Meeting Law violations. The Attorney General can bring a legal proceeding to void an action taken in violation of Open Meeting Law or obtain injunction. Discussed fines for offenses and/or violations of Open Meeting Law.

NRS Chapter 241. Open Meeting Law statute.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Asked if anyone had questions. Thanked her for the reminder "do not reply all" to emails.

MEMBER McMAHON: Sought clarification on replying to emails and information.

MS. GUSTAFSON: Clarified the discussions about things that could potentially come before the Board and advised to save it for the meeting.

Discussed ethical standards that apply to Board Members. Most are common sense. Can't accept gifts. Can't use position as AB member to get any unwarranted privileges. Can't negotiate a contract between government agency and personal business. Can't accept payment from private sources for performance of duties. Can't use confidential information obtained to benefit personal interest. Can't suppress government information that would be unfavorable. Anything you can't do yourself, you can't use a

subordinate to do for you. Can't seek employment or contracts through use of board membership. Can't improperly use government property.

Conflicts of interest discussed and examples provided.

12. 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]

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Asked if any members had anything they wanted to cover. Seeing none, moved to staff.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Reminded that they have invited NHS to be present at next meeting and will be placed on agenda for discussion.

13. PUBLIC COMMENT [Non-Action Item]

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Called for public comment.

MS. SCHLEY: Advised there is public comment from Zoom. Introduced Jill Dobbs.

MS. DOBBS: She is the Executive Director of SPCA of Northern Nevada and former member of AB.

Wanted to comment regarding Director Schull's Director's Report and Mr. Westbrook's updates. Recalled that NHS Board of Directors made a number of promises to AB and requested AB follow up because none of the promises, other than email addresses, have been complied with. It is really adding to public and partner distrust.

In anticipation of NHS presentation at next meeting, requested they present a capacity increase plan. No data has been provided as to what steps they are taking to increase their capacity. They've only listed 3-4 positions available over the last three months. There is no training program for volunteers or current staff. Current staff keeps quitting. It is becoming overly burdensome on the governmental municipal body to be holding the animals, and many are NHS adoptees.

Is encouraging the Board to advise Director Schull to consider adding that NHS and other partner shelters pull their own adoptees from Washoe County before they can pull anything else.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Reminded her that her three minutes are up.

MS. GOFF: Rebecca Goff, Nevada State Director for The Humane Society of the United States. Wanted to quickly mention that shelter overpopulation is a problem across the country and not unique to Washoe County. Large impact on rural communities as well. This is an issue facing the whole state.

Commented on the amazing work of the veterinary staff.

CHAIR DUERR: Thanked Member Anderson for taking on Vice Chair and running a great meeting.

DIRECTOR SCHULL: Reminded she did update the AB on the most recent code amendment. Second reading was successfully adopted on variance permit code which will allow individuals to apply to own more than the legal limit of pets. Residents of congested areas of Washoe County will be able to own five dogs without a permit, versus three. The number of cats is still seven. Code goes into effect October 27th.

MEMBER BRUSSARD: Wanted to add to the next agenda any revisions to the PSA or anything that's being done.

CHAIR DUERR: Commented on Ms. Dobbs' presentation.

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Asked Ms. Dobbs to send AB members her additional points via email.

14. ADJOURNMENT [Non-Action Item]

VICE CHAIR ANDERSON: Declared meeting adjourned.