

Memphis Animal Shelter Advisory Board

Open Meeting

January 8, 2014

Present: Dr. Stephen Tower, Chairman; Jim Adams, member; Jill Madajczyk, member; Jeanne Chancellor, secretary; James Rogers, Shelter Administrator, Jerry Goudy, Operations Manager, Memphis Animal Services; Robert Ratton, City Attorney's Office

Dr. Tower opened the meeting. It was announced that Karen Williams has had to resign from the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board thanks her for her service to the Board and the Shelter.

Dr. Tower opened the meeting with a question card from Jan Courtney: What is the MAS policy about public viewing dogs in the stray area. Mr. Rogers stated that the animals in the stray area are not the most desirable animals available at the Shelter. The public is not allowed in the area to view other than looking for a lost pet as the animals are diseased and injured. Mr. Rogers had agreed at the last meeting to allow qualified volunteers in the area. Jeanne Chancellor reported that the volunteers had to be escorted into the area and no pictures were allowed. The only way to take a picture is to get a staff member take the animal to a public area for the photo. The time limit is 10 minutes for the volunteers visiting the area. Ms. Chancellor reported that there are very adoptable animals being housed in the area, and they should have a chance to be adopted. She stated that there are fractious animals and some injured that would be upsetting for children especially to see, and she stated that children can put their hand too near the cages of some of these animals. If rescues and the public do come into the area it would be a good idea not to have small children visit the area. Ms. Chancellor is concerned that the adoptable animals in the stray area be given every chance at adoption. Dr. Tower will send a letter to Janet Hooks regarding the policy in the stray area.

Mr. Rogers gave his presentation highlighting all the off-site events held by the Shelter to help find animals a home. He also reported that the staff had been to Baptist Hospice for team building exercises. Safety vests have been purchased for Animal Control Officers. Mr. Rogers reported that the Pets for Life \$50,000 grant from the HSUS would cover 3 zip codes in the Memphis area providing free spay or neuter for the citizens in the zip codes. He reported that the employees were giving back to the community by adopting patients at a nursing home. They provided gifts the patients who have no family and would not receive Christmas gifts. Mr. Rogers announced that there have been more adoptions than euthanasias this year to date. Dr. Tower asked what the breakdown was between public adoptions and animals that went to rescue. Mr. Rogers stated he did not have those numbers with him, but he would make them available at the next meeting.

Jill Madajczyk asked about citations issued. Mr. Rogers reported that the cruelty citations had increased, but he did not have the numbers with him at the meeting. When asked how the cruelty

reports are made by the public, Mr. Rogers reported that the caller can remain anonymous when making a report.

Dr. Tower asked about the call backlog. Mr. Rogers reported that the year started 220 calls behind, and it is now down to 168 calls behind.

Dr. Tower asked what the December intake had been broken down by surrenders and animals taken in the field. In December 311 were taken in over the counter (surrendered) and 366 were taken from the field by the Animal Control Officers. Jeanne Chancellor stated that these field numbers compared to surrender numbers were low in comparison with other cities. The national average is 40% animals surrendered. Dr. Tower asked if the Officers have been aggressive in the field. Mr. Rogers stated that they have been. Dr. Tower asked if the stray intake was available by zip code. Mr. Rogers stated that he would provide that information at the next meeting. Dr. Tower asked if the Officers were doing all they could. Mr. Rogers said he couldn't say.

Jackie Johns presented the question: Did the Shelter implement any plan for the extreme cold weather and helping the animals in the city? Did we have all the Officers in the Field? Mr. Rogers stated that the officers were out until dark, and all Officers were in the field. Jeanne Chancellor stated that other cities, St. Louis for example, had had Officers sweeping the City for strays for days before the cold weather moved in. There were making every effort to get any strays off the streets before the frigid weather moved in.

Robert Ratton gave his legal report. He stated that the cases taken to court are being triaged to the right court, and the plan seemed to be working. Division 2 Court is taking the first offender offenses of lack of license, maintenance issues that are not serious, and some dangerous and vicious cases as Judge Sugarmon likes handling some of those cases. Division 14 is able to issue bench warrants and is handling repeat offenders, black listed owners (those ordered not to have animals from a previous offense) and serious cruelty cases. Dr. Tower asked how responsive Animal Services was. Cindy Sanders stated that the officers seem to have the tools to make charges but seem reticent at times to press charges due to the Officers' compassion for the people involved. Ms. Sanders suggested that the Officers be able to make the appropriate charges when necessary.

Jill Madajczyk suggested that there be random follow up calls on cruelty cases. Mr. Rogers said he would look into this.

Elise Michaleson presented the question: Who will coordinate all tasks for the grant? If employees, is it overtime on City payroll? Who will do spay/neuter? How much money will MAS receive? Mr. Rogers, stated that the grant will be handled by himself, Jerry Goudy, Tracy Dunlap and a yet named Animal Control Officer. They should not receive overtime pay for grant work, and the work will not interfere with their regular work at Memphis Animal Services. Mr. Rogers stated that the City will contract with area vets for spay/neuter, and they will be paid through the grant monies. \$30,000.00 of the grant money will go towards spay and neuter. \$20,000.00 of the grant will go towards an event and support of the total program. The goal is to do 500 spay/neuters. This plan allows \$60.00 for each spay/neuter

performed. Mr. Rogers stated that some spay/neuters would be performed at the Shelter depending on the staff veterinarians' workload.

Jim Adams asked about Animal Control Officers not all being on the street. Mr. Rogers stated that due to staff shortages some Officers have been working in the Shelter. Cleaning and euthanasia have been the duties most assigned due to the shortage of animal care technicians. The Officers are needed in the Shelter to sufficiently maintain the shelter according to Mr. Rogers.

Mary Marr questioned: The community is still interested in some type of camera in the euthanasia room. I know the City does not want to risk FOIA requests for footage. Would The Advisory Board consider revising the request for a camera with live feed in the euthanasia room would only allow Mr. Rogers, Ms. Tunstall and Mr. Goudy to view the camera. They could see the actions there "at-will" and let employees know they could be monitored in this way at any random time. There could be an option to record only if needed to submit in case of violations being noticed. Also, is there currently a sign-in sheet for those who are supposed to be checking the euth room?

The board discussed the using of a camera in the euthanasia room that is just a live feed. It was agreed this would be a good idea. Jim Adams made a motion: The Advisory Board recommends that a non-recording camera be installed in the euthanasia room which could have necessary frames saved if abuse noted. . The motion was seconded by Jeanne Chancellor. The motion passed The Board will make this recommendation to Director Janet Hooks. It will be left to her to make the final decision on the camera.

Mr. Rogers said there is a sign-in sheet for those monitoring the Euthanasia Room.

Cindy Sanders asked a question about the age at which the Shelter is vaccinating cats and dogs for rabies. Cindy noted and read the City ordinance (Sec 8-16-2) that requires all dogs and cats be vaccinated for rabies at the age of three months. Not vaccinating by the correct age is a public health hazard and also violates City ordinance. Mr. Rogers stated that he would check on the shelter policy for vaccination for rabies in cats and dogs and report back to the Board. He stated he was not sure what age the Shelter was vaccinating the animals leaving for new homes. All animals are vaccinated for rabies before leaving the Shelter unless too young in which case the adopter/rescue is issued a rabies voucher to obtain the rabies shot when the animal is old/healthy enough.

Rachel Dobbs question: As it has been discussed in previous meetings, sedation before euthanasia for ALL animals is "the right thing to do". We have addressed the financing issue. Has this sedation been implemented yet? If not, why not? If "maybe", when will we know? Thanks. Mr. Rogers was asked by Jim Adams what percent of the animals were being tranquilized now. Mr. Rogers stated that between 10 – 15% are now being sedated. He said that he would check the logs to get an exact number for the next meeting. Animals that are being fractious are the ones being sedated at this time. Dr. Tower stated that the use of Ketamine would produce an unconscious animal before the euthanasia is performed. Mr. Rogers stated that Dr. Coleman is working on coming up with the correct "cocktail" to be used. There is a problem with some drugs being scheduled drugs which makes using these drugs much harder in the current Shelter setting. Mr. Rogers stated that all the euthanasia technicians are well trained. The cost of paying for the drugs to sedate all animals was discussed. There are evidently

members of the public who would contribute to pay for these drugs. The City receiving payments was discussed. Cindy Sanders stated that a resolution was passed in 2009 before the raid at the Shelter that would allow the City to accept funds for the Shelter without the funds going into the general fund. The monies for the sedation drugs could be accepted under these terms. Robert Ratton said he would look up this resolution. Dr. Tower asked that there be days marked with a "T" (tranquilized) during the next month before the next meeting where all animals euthanized be sedated. Mr. Rogers stated that this would be possible, and he would bring record of these days to the next Board meeting. A motion was made by Jim Adams that every animal be sedated before euthanasia at Memphis Animal Services. The motion was seconded by Jeanne Chancellor. The motion passed.

Sylvia Cox stated: At the October meeting, I submitted a question about the decrease in animal intake over the past 5 years, even though there are 25% more Animal Control Officers now than there were in 2009. As of the end of 2013, the intake of animals has decreased from 2009 by just under 4,100. How is the increased number of ACOs justified when intake is down so significantly? In October Mr. Rogers said that he would create a breakdown of intake statistics and of incoming calls by citizens. Is that breakdown available yet? Mr. Rogers stated that due to a shortage of Animal Care Technicians the Animal Control Officers have been working in the Shelter. The Shelter is currently 5 Technicians short, but some new hires are expected in the next month. He stated that the City is operating under a hiring freeze, and that has affected the Shelter's ability to fill positions needed. The breakdown of surrenders and field intake was presented earlier in the meeting.

Dana Frederick had the following questions: How do you plan to encourage residents in the three zip codes to spay/neuter their pets? For animals in the stray area that are being treated for injuries, disease, will they ALL be taken to healthy hold and adoption area after treatment is complete. Mr. Rogers said that there will be public events held to encourage the people in the three zip codes to spay and neuter their animals. Mr. Rogers stated that animals in the stray area will be moved to healthy hold and adoption areas on an animal by animal basis. He stated there was no reason the animals in stray could not be moved to these areas if adoptable.

Lorraine Hall introduced herself as working with Blues City Rescue. She is concerned about some of the rescue policies and asked if she could get a copy of Policy and Procedures to go over with some rescue groups to come up with suggestions to make the rescue process smoother with policies understood by all. Mr. Rogers agreed, and she will contact him for a copy of the policies.

The last question was from Lisa Naquin. "I'd like to know why rescues aren't allowed access to the stray hold area after dogs have served their time to allow for owner to claim? How can this policy be changed? This question was answered earlier in the meeting.

Dr. Tower thanked all those who attended the meeting, and thanked the attendees for their questions and comments.

Dr. Tower stated that we need to approve past minutes for sure at the meeting next month as we are behind a couple of months with minutes approval.

Jim Adams made a motion the meeting adjourn. The motion was seconded by Jeanne Chancellor. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeanne Chancellor, Secretary