

MINUTES
Advisory Board to
Memphis Animal Services

January 8, 2009

The Board convened at 10:00 a.m. in Room 205 at Memphis City Hall, Ken Moody presiding. Present were:

Board Members:

Earnest Alexander
Stephen Schwartz
Franklin James
Michelle Buckalew
Allen Iskiwitz
Carol Katz

Visitors:

Gail Phillips
Amy Kalkbrenner
Sylvia Cox

The meeting was called to order at 10:20 a.m.

Minutes of the December 11, 2008 meeting were approved as earlier mailed to each Board member.

Rules and Procedures were adopted unanimously as follows:

(1) The Advisory Board shall meet monthly on the second Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. at a place designated by the Chairperson, and at other such times as shall be deemed necessary.

(2) A quorum of at least four (4) members at the meeting shall be necessary for the conduct of business.

(3) The Chairperson shall conduct the meeting. If Chairperson is absent, such person as designated by the Director, Memphis Animal Services, shall conduct the meeting.

(4) The meeting shall convene at time set with quorum present and follow the procedure as follows:

- Call to order by Chairperson or designee
- Minutes approved or corrected
- Director's report
- Old business
- New business
- Public comment
- Adjournment

(5) Procedures may be amended by a majority (4) of Board members. *

(6) Recommendations may be submitted to Mayor and Council by majority (4) of Board members. *

(7) The advisory board may request a replacement or reappointment of any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings.

*This requirement is a majority of the entire board, not merely a majority of members present.

Officer duties were adopted unanimously as follows:

CHAIRPERSON:

- (1) Conducts meetings.
- (2) Formulates agenda items in advance of meeting and distributes to members via email two days in advance of meeting.
- (3) Performs such additional duties as may from time to time be assigned by the Advisory Board.

SECRETARY:

- (1) Record minutes of meetings.
- (2) Custodian of records: minutes, recommendations, etc.
- (3) Performs such additional duties as may from time to time be assigned by the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board Mission Statement was adopted unanimously as follows:

MISSION STATEMENT:

- (1) First and foremost, to serve as advocates for the humane treatment of animals in the Memphis shelter facility.
- (2) To advise and attempt to resolve conflicts relating to the efficient and humane operation of the Memphis shelter facility.
- (3) To review citizens' comments and complaints and bring these to the attention of the Director, Memphis Animal Services and Director, Public Services.
- (4) To assist in promoting positive aspects of Memphis Animal Services to the public at large.

The following handouts were provided to the Board and Visitors:

“Criteria For Euthanasia” outlining current MAS euthanasia policy

“Memphis Animal Services Adoption Contract”

Memo from E. Alexander to MAS Employees dated 1/7/09 re Injured or Sick Animals (procedure upon intake)

Memo from E. Alexander to MAS Employees dated 1/7/09 re Medical Alert (mandatory vaccinations)

Ernest announced that there would be an Open House at the shelter facility on Friday, January 16, 2009, time to be announced.

Steve questioned the absence of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Ernest said that they do exist. Gail Phillips questioned Ken’s statement at the last meeting that there were no policies or procedures currently and that they were being formulated. Discussion ensued as to how to hold employees accountable for the various areas of the shelter and the need for regular inspection of the stray area. Michelle stressed the need for accountability. Ernest said he would have a sign-in/sign-out sheet in the stray area so that when the area has been cleaned and inspected the employee could be accountable for it. Frank stated that in all practicality the area could never be completely clean, so holding one employee responsible is difficult. Sylvia Cox commented that she was pleased with Ernest’s plan for accountability on the part of employees. Frank said the two employees assigned to the stray area and one assigned to the adoption area are insufficient to keep both areas optimally clean at all times. Sylvia Cox said that the purpose of the volunteers is to help take the staff by dealing with the public, but she admitted that the duties of volunteers are limited by union contract.

Discussion turned again to need for transparency. Alan said that the Memphis Animal Coalition couldn’t get copies of shelter policies over a year ago and neither could the city council. Sylvia Cox said that she had made an open records request last year asking for shelter policies, and had obtained a copy of the technicians’ manual. Carol requested a copy.

(At this point, Ernest was called out of the meeting.)

When Ernest returned he advised the Board that copies of the material Sylvia Cox submitted could not be distributed to the Board because it was an Animal Care Technician’s policy and procedure manual. Carol felt

that the Advisory Board, in its oversight capacity, should have a clear understanding of all policies of the shelter. She said it was incomprehensible as to why these were not being furnished to the Board.

Steve wondered if the city feels the shelter is a nuisance and doesn't really want to address the problems out there. Ernest said that the goal of the open house is to familiarize the Board members and the city council with the shelter, the way it is run and the difficulties it deals with.

Michelle suggested that statistics could be developed from the various zip codes in the city that might help in educating the public. Steve and Gail Phillips both agreed that the community at large is at fault for many of the problems the shelter faces, and education of the public is needed. Ernest said that he could develop statistics regarding bite cases, court cases and cruelty cases by zip code. They vary greatly from one area to another.

Amy Kalkbrenner said that zip code reporting is very helpful for targeting spay and neuter efforts. Amy pressed for free spay and neuter by MAS. Ernest said that such an effort would face severe opposition from veterinarians. Steve said that a private vet charges between \$290 and \$500 for spaying. Amy said that most of the clients using her group (APA which provides free and low-cost spay and neuter) have never seen a vet. Ernest believes that the city would face a lawsuit if it instituted free spay and neuter.

Dog food (Sportmix) is still being purchased locally and the city procurement division has not issued a purchasing contract.

Photographs of a pit bull that had been taken in and apparently left unattended with large gashes in his neck were shown to the Board. Ernest said that the collar should have been removed immediately, the area shaved and gauze applied. He said he would research this incident.

Approved minutes may be posted on the city web site. Ernest will see if he can get a link off the city website to the shelter website for minutes of the previous Board meeting.

Several members needed to leave (leaving the Board without a quorum) and the Chairperson stated that the community complaints would be taken up at the next meeting. Due to time constraints, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Smith Katz, Secretary

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 10th