

**Lincoln County Animal Services**

**Advisory Board Meeting**

**April 4, 2017**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Hannah Beaver, Animal Services Director

Chaya Parker, Animal Services Supervisor

Dr. Ashley Oliphant, Chairman

Dr. Karen Miller, Secretary

Ms. Robin Franklin, Board Member

Diane Leatherman, Board Member

Mark Connolly, Board Member

Tyler Moore, Animal Services Caretaker

**Guest Attendees:**

Anita McCall, County Commissioner

Kate Cameron

Matt Anderson

Susan Larsen

**Opening:**

Director Beaver handed out the agenda, March 14, 2017 minutes, PowerPoint presentation, the new voucher policy, policy changes in regards to kitten season, and a change in hour's sheet. Dr. Oliphant opened the meeting by welcoming everyone at 6:36pm. Josh Grant, Danielle Rudisill, and Doug Woods were not in attendance.

**1) Approval of Minutes:**

Chairman Oliphant asked if there were any suggestions or changes that were required of the March 14<sup>th</sup> minutes. Director Beaver stated that the date in the heading needed to be

changed. After taking a moment to look over the minutes, Robin Franklin motioned to accept last month's minutes and Mark Connolly seconded.

## **2) Animal Services Policy Changes Presentation**

### **a) *Voucher Policy***

Director Beaver started by showing the change in the voucher policy from out of county adopters and under three pounds. Now the policy states that animals only under the weight of three pounds or animals recommended by the contracted veterinarian are able to go home with a voucher for spays and neuters. Beaver stated that the policy is already in effect as of March 29<sup>th</sup> this year after a staff meeting was held. References can be made to handout number one, the voucher policy.

### **b) *Trap Lease Program***

Director Beaver stated that the policy for renting cat traps is still in the draft form due to having to figure out internal policies for deposits and processing refunds. However, 10 traps (labeled LCAS) are lined up to be purchased and the implementation of the policy will start with a staff meeting to train staff on paperwork and deposits/refunds. May 1<sup>st</sup> is the projected start date of the policy.

### **c) *Field Cat Trapping***

Director Beaver suggested that at the beginning of the trap lease program will end the ACO field trapping. She stated that they are still working on the policies and programs for the lease program, but the field trapping should stop around May 1<sup>st</sup> as well. Before the stop of field trapping, a press release will be given to update the public of the change in policy. With this change, Director Beaver states that educating the public on feral cats and having materials and resources (including contacts for LCAS partners) available to give when traps are leased are essential. Beaver leads into the comment that studies have shown that cats are more likely to return home without the help of the shelter. The shelter system only works with about 5% of the total cat population, so changing the policy system will help the shelter with decreasing cat intakes, while not significantly increasing cat community cat population. The only exception to the new policy will be sick or injured cats; the ACO's will still be responsible in picking up those cats. Dr. Oliphant asked what the plans to increase public education, such as programs. Director Beaver stated that materials are in the making.

### **d) *Kitten Season 2017***

Director Beaver briefly went over the policies and information that is important for helping decrease unhealthy populations and increasing the movement of healthy animals in the shelter system. The suggestions are:

1. Stop ACO field trapping of community/feral cats
2. Stop picking up healthy, stray cats
3. Managed intake of owner surrender cats
4. Expanded hours for adoptions
5. Simplified and expanded foster program

Beaver stated that in May of 2016, there was an increase in the capacity for cats hoping to decrease the amount of intakes. However, this led to overcrowding and sick cats - so by decreasing intakes through the means listed above, the shelter may be able to keep cats healthy and increase adoptions. Beaver opened the conversation to discussion and there was a unanimous support for the changes. Dr. Oliphant did ask about separation of sick cats and Beaver stated that the system in place is to shut down (quarantine) rooms with sickness in hopes of decreasing the spread through the shelter; however, the shelter is hoping to increase the efficacy with a renovated building. References can be made to the handout titled Kitten Season 2017.

### **3) Animal Services Hours Policy Discussion**

a) Director Beaver started this section by talking about the hours presented on the door of LCAS. She stated that the hours are confusing and does not clearly state the hours of operations. This is due to being open from 8am – 5pm Monday through Friday for business hours (which includes in-taking strays) and 11am – 4:30pm Monday through Saturday for shelter hours. The issue being that intakes are shelter activity, not business, and that makes people come and sit in our lobby for hours while waiting for adoptions. Also, surrender hours are from 1pm – 3pm Monday through Saturday, which causes issues because most people come at 1pm when staff is still on lunch.

So, the proposal for new hours are to help encourage and promote adoption hours, help increase one-on-one time with owners that are surrendering their animals, and allow adequate staffing be present during intakes. The new hours are to help the public to be able to understand when the shelter is available for the services that we provide. To help in the decision-making process of changing hours, there was a poll of 25 random NC shelters. The only four questions asked were:

1. What are your adoption hours?
2. What are your intake hours?
3. What time do you open your doors to the public?
4. Do you do intake on Saturdays?

With these questions, all 25 shelters stated that they started their intake and adoption hours at the same time as they opened their doors to the public. Currently our doors open at 8am through the week, adoptions begin at 11am, and surrenders are at 1pm. The statistics were that 20% of the shelters opened at 8am and 80% opened after 10am, with the majority opening at 10am. So, the recommended change that Director Beaver suggests is changing LCAS business hours to 10am, which means that we will open for everything (adoptions and intakes) at this time.

Another realization that was made through the poll was about doing intakes on Saturdays. However, the findings were that the shelters were just as divided as LCAS is on whether or not we should do them. So, due to the close call, LCAS will continue intakes on Saturdays.

Also, changing the hours to later would be more beneficial to the shelter because it would allow more focus on animal care and facility maintenance, daily operations, and cleaning of the building and kennels. In addition to being able to complete these normal, daily routines, opening later would allow for necessary staff meetings and/or trainings, animal inventory, and shelter rounds with key staff. This includes moving the opening time for Saturday, as well, for transporting of animals to offsite adoption events, lunch, and then focus on adoptions. Therefore, the suggested hours are as follows:

- Monday through Friday, 10am – 5pm, for all operations.
- Tuesday and Thursday, extending adoption hours (only) to 7pm.
- Saturday 12pm-5pm.
- Sundays closed.
- Cat surrenders by appointment only.

On the topic of intakes, a discussion opened up on the definition of owner surrenders. There is a regulation stating that after 72 hours of possession of an animal, the person is liable for rabies vaccinating; therefore, responsible for the pet. Director Beaver suggests making a definition for the gray area of picking up a stray and bringing it to the shelter as stray or surrender due to length of time. Mark Connolly agrees with this suggestion. So in summary, the suggested changes to the hours can be found on the last handout.

#### **4) Public Comments**

Public comments were moved on the agenda by Dr. Oliphant in hopes of creating a discussion among the guests. Matt Anderson stated that he likes the changes for the hours and managing owner surrenders but the question about ownership is a black and white due to the regulation about an animal in the care of someone for over 72 hours needs rabies vaccinations. Anderson states that this could decrease the population of animals due to not having a hold. He says that microchipping would be the most definitive show for ownership. Susan Larsen stated that she liked the suggested hours and the managed surrenders as well.

Commissioner Anita McCall stated that the hours of operation of 8am – 7pm Monday through Friday and 8am – 5pm on Saturdays could be achieved by staggering the caretakers. Two full-time caretakers would come in for the hours 7am – 4pm and the other two would come in 10am – 7pm, while rotating employees to accomplish McCall's proposed Saturday hours. She stated that this would allow two meetings to be held with a portion of the staff every Wednesday as needed. As an ending statement, McCall said that we should only be calling shelters that are no-kill to get any information for policy changes.

#### **5) Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting date will be Monday May 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm with the continuation of Dangerous Dogs. The location of the meeting is TBD at a later date.

#### **6) Motion to Adjourn**

Dr. Ashley Oliphant finished the meeting by stating that she was encouraged during the last meeting because of how everyone on the board worked well together over a difficult subject and that she believes the public will take to the proposed hours very well. After the

statement, Dr. Oliphant asked the board to end the meeting. Dr. Karen Miller motioned to adjourn with a second from Diane Leatherman. The board voted and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.