

Volusia County Animal Control
Advisory Board Meeting
February 18, 2020

Present:

Cathy Driggers
Karen K. Clark
Robert Baird
Kenneth Mullen

Adam Leath, Director, Volusia County Animal Services
Alicia Dease, Field Supervisor, Volusia County Animal Services
Shari Williams, Office Manager, Volusia County Animal Services

The meeting was called to order. Debbie Darino, Pat Mihalic, Robert Belt, Suzanne Grubbs and Jeannine Colletti have an excused absence.

Approval of minutes for the September 11, 2019 meeting was postponed due to quorum not met at current meeting.

Mr. Leath: As a matter of formality, the County asked that I make sure that I go over with you, boards, and how those things run. Some of the ground rules and what that looks like. He refers to the packet given to each member when they were appointed to the board. It goes through specifically, the Animal Control board duties and responsibilities along with Chapter 14 in our county ordinance. Both of those outline the role that each member on the board play. It also outlines conduct and activity, things that are expected when we are conducting business. The fact that you go through the Roberts Rules of Order, pretty self-explanatory. If there is any question regarding that, we can run through the Roberts Rules of Order. The Chair will be responsible for conducting the meeting, making sure that all of the votes, all of the business is conducted by the Chair. If there's any discussion, the board is here to help us. We consider you partners. We want to hear perspectives. We want to understand all the different angles of any potential new program or service. But also any changes to the ordinance. All of the things that affect animals. That's really important to all of us or we wouldn't be here. We just want to make sure that we're having these meetings as efficiently and effectively as possible. That also means the agenda and any items that are added to it, should be discussed amongst the board so that there is an expectation what it is you would like to cover. And also setting the date for the next meeting. One of the things that we started doing, and I'm not sure if it's been very helpful for the collective group, is we were doing Survey Monkeys to try and get a date. What works best for everyone. I know that there is no such thing. It's hard to make everyone's schedule meet up. What we don't want to do is, for the Division, to be making those decisions. It would really be helpful for the board to be having those discussions during the meeting and the date is set solid and we move forward.

The other thing is, if there's a concern, for instance, you as a board member, are representing the County. You are a representative of the County. In fact, as the board you're represented by the County Attorney. If there is a question or concern, if there's an opinion that you have as a person, just like I was asked to go to Tallahassee yesterday to discuss their new pre-emption, which would affect our ordinance, but I can't go as a county employee. I would have to take off personal time, I would have to drive my own vehicle in my own clothes and represent the topic as an individual. I cannot represent the county. The reason for that being, is because Ken may think one thing on a particular issue, Karen may think something else on an issue and then Cathy may have a totally different opinion. Which one of you wants to pay for my opinion? That's not appropriate. So we don't speak on behalf of the citizens, the citizens speak for themselves. We just want to be a conduit for that information to go through. I mention this because it's incredibly important for us to know that you're advocating

for our Division out in the community. It's an incredibly difficult position as you all have probably seen. This Division exists because we want to provide services to our most vulnerable citizens, and that's our animals and the people who are responsible for caring for them. It's a responsibility that we take very seriously. I do take very seriously concerns when you bring it to my attention. You want time with me? We're going to sit down and make time. You want me to attend a meeting with you? I am always available to talk with you. I've spoken to many of you throughout the time. That doesn't mean that you speak with one another. You're only able to talk about this in this room. So not talking to one another but you can absolutely go to staff. Just like Council will come to staff, and staff will make a recommendation to Council. But it's not my decision. Just like today, we have something going up for consent agenda for our veterinary supplies. I can't say that yes, we're going to approve this contract. It's not my money. It's your money. And it's a responsibility I take pretty seriously. So I can make a recommendation that we've done our due diligence, we've gotten all of our estimates, we've made sure that this decision is going to benefit the animals and citizens. But ultimately I don't make that decision, County Council does.

So I want all of you to also think of it as that same responsibility. I need you to come and speak with me and I want your feedback. If you have questions or concerns and you make those concerns known to other people, I can't be a part of that. Because I'm governed by what the facts of a situation are. My personal opinion doesn't matter. I'm not paid for my personal opinion. And I won't give it to you because it's not appropriate. But I will give you my professional opinion. And that professional opinion will be based on evidence based practices and data in our field. I can assure you that regardless of where your opinion sits, we don't have to agree. That's ok. In fact it's better that we don't. We find different angles on things. What I'm asking for you to do is give me an opportunity to have a seat at the table. If you have a concern, if you have a question, if you go out into the public and air your concerns, I don't think it's appropriate for us. We want to have the opportunity to have those discussions with you, nor can you represent the board as a whole. Just like you represent the county, if your opinion is out there to the public and you're representing the board that actually could be grounds for dismissal from the board. You can't represent the board because you're not the board. You're an individual member of the board. So the board can make recommendations or questions to the County Council or to the county attorney's office, but as an individual you can't throw your opinions out there and see what sticks. Only because it really creates issues for us and makes it that much more difficult for us to get done what's already challenging enough. We don't have enough resources many days and we're doing the best that we can. We're asking for your help and we want a seat at the table if there's a question or concern. That's all we're asking.

Ms. Clark: I know on Facebook, due to an issue that's being taken care of out there, when people were criticizing the animal control advisory board, I got right on there and said I'm sorry that this was not an option that went to the advisory board. This has nothing to do with the advisory board. I defended us as a whole. We were getting blamed for stuff for an ongoing issue the county is handling.

Mr. Leath: I think there was a lot more out there Karen, just to be frank with you. You're very frank with your opinion and I appreciate that and you're entitled to your opinion. However when you're representing the board as everyone agreeing with the same opinion that you have, is not appropriate.

Ms. Clark: Correct. And it got corrected.

Mr. Leath: Ok. Any other questions? (There were no questions). So we've printed out for you some exciting highlights (see attached "Animal Services 2019 Annual Review"). This is actually something we provided to our County Manager so he knew what Animal Services did in 2019. We really want your feedback on some of the ideas. I want to start at the beginning.

Mr. Leath reviews the highlights with the board members.

Mr. Leath: In terms of some of the things you added on there, we had some updates regarding what we want to be able to start using Department of Corrections with. We know that they work well currently with Halifax with the Prison & Pups Program. We want to expand that. I spoke with the Director yesterday, I said what about all the kittens we have come in here? Each year we have a challenge, we don't have enough people

who are willing and able to accept cats. We would love to be able to foster them and increase their possible outcomes. We are in discussions now with female population to do a kitten nursery at the jail.

The other topic I want to make you all aware of is we're in advanced conversations now of allowing volunteers at our Division. This is something we've not been able to do before.

This are some of the main headers I wanted to discuss with you all today.

Ms. Clark: Would be able to let it known that it was Jeannine Colletti who was wanting to get the foster program started?

Mr. Leath: It's in the minutes. Thank you. That's all I had.

Mr. Mullen: Did the new ordinance that you were re-writing get taken care of?

Mr. Leath: Yes and no. There has been no changes since we talked it about it last. So UF came in and provided a grant to Halifax. As part of that, they're doing a shelter consultation. They came here, to Volusia. We had discussions with them. I had Dr. Pizano, who works directly with their division, review our ordinance. She came back with some things she would want us to consider. I want to update those. That's the only change that's going to be made. From that point it goes to public hearings. The only challenge, there is a pre-emptive bill out there that is being pushed by Pet Land that would ban local jurisdictions from passing ordinances relating to the commercial sale of dogs and cats, as well as pet leasing. They would like for those things to be available. If that does pass, that means we can't put in our ordinance what we planned which is the ban of retail sale of pets and ban of pet was leasing. I don't think it's going to pass, but it's out there.

Inaudible-many speaking at once.

Members discussed pet leasing and health issues of dogs that come from pet stores and backyard breeders.

Mr. Mullen asks for an update on Journey's End.

Mr. Leath: The petition was filed for 16 animals that were removed from the property on January 15th. Those 16 animals are currently under a private veterinarian's care. The county is seeking for the custody of those animals. That was scheduled for February 14th. They have postponed that. They want mediation between the County and those at the property. The County is seeking custody for the 16 animals and enjoining future ownership of animals at that property by both the individual and the non-profit.

Mr. Mullen discusses the many fund raises being held at Journey's End.

Mrs. Driggers: What about the remaining animals?

Mr. Leath: We've received two new complaints since we were out there last with photographs and concerns people have identified at the property. We're continuing our investigation and we'll let the courts make their decision on what they think is the most appropriate.

Members discuss all the work being done on the property.

Mrs. Driggers: We can discuss a date for the next meeting.

Next meeting set for May 14th at 5:30 at the Animal Service's office.

Meeting adjourned.