

ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 13, 2009

A regular meeting of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Animal Control Commission was held at the North Pole Fire Department Annex Building, North Pole, Alaska. Ronnie Rosenberg, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ronnie Rosenberg, *Chair*
Shellie Severa, *Vice Chair*
Gidget Hagan
Gail Gardner
Lauren Tuori
Jaime Marschner

GUESTS PRESENT:

Marie O'Neill

STAFF PRESENT:

Matt Ruger, Animal Control Manager
Rachel Seale, ACC Secretary

ROSENBERG called for each member present to state their name and whether they approved the March 9, 2009 meeting minutes that had been previously distributed. All members present approved the March 9, 2009 meeting minutes.

SHELTER REPORT

Matt Ruger presented the shelter report.

Old Items:

The casual Admissions Clerk position was reopened and Ruger stated there are four applications on his desk awaiting interviews that will be scheduled this week or next.

There is no further information regarding the Mayor's proposed Ordinance 2009-20-2C (discussed at the April 9th Assembly meeting) regarding Animal Control building repairs and capital issues, including the replacement of the current fire alarm system, that are rolled into a single \$265K project under the facilities maintenance reserve. In addition, Ruger reported there has been no word on public comment for or against adding money for the engineering study discussed at the March ACC meeting.

Sallie Stuvek is still reviewing Ruger's draft Procedures Manual and he has contacted Love INC and the Salvation Army about the pet food pantry proposal discussed at the March ACC meeting. Love INC has already submitted a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and it is at Legal for review. Ruger announced he also expects a draft MOA from the Salvation Army.

New Items:

The Animal Control budget for fiscal year 2010 passed the Assembly Saturday 8 to 0. It is a maintenance budget and the only increases are cost of living items. Ruger mentioned an Assembly member asked about a sixth Animal Control Officer so Ruger wonders if this will be proposed in the future.

Animal Control had 11 reported bites in March and nine of those bites were confirmed.

Sandy Klimaschesky, Lead Animal Tender, went to the Animal Expo in Las Vegas last week and returned with many good ideas and made new network contacts.

Stacey Dains from American Humane will be visiting this Wednesday through Friday to provide training in EBI and Compassion Fatigue to Animal Control's new accessions from the past year as well as others—roughly a half-dozen—registered from around the state, some possibly from the villages.

Kyle Wright from the Tanana Chiefs Conference expressed interest in controlling the feral dog population in the bush and is exploring different methods of euthanasia than the one currently used. When he asked about the prospect of contracting to bring the animals here, Ruger suggested it would be most efficient and cost effective if the villages had their own technicians trained in EBI and Compassion Fatigue versus having the dogs brought to the shelter to be euthanized.

Ruger bought two new duplex high-speed scanners to use in conjunction with Chameleon. The scanners will allow Animal Control to electronically file most of the animal and adoption documents thus eliminating the need to store a lot of paper documents.

The 2009 Rabies Clinic will be held Sunday, September 27th, at Pioneer Park from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Ruger added that this year they have invited the Blood Bank of Alaska to hold a blood drive during the Rabies Clinic and they accepted. The Blood Bank of Alaska will be present to accept donations from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

The foster program has grown and Marsha can no longer handle it on her own along with her other duties. Fortunately, a volunteer has come forward to assist her for several hours per week making follow-up phone calls, tracking vaccinations, sending email notices, etc.

Bite hearing training is scheduled for Monday, April 27th at the Noel Wien Library conference room from 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM, though training needs to end by 8:45 so they can get the room cleaned up and arranged prior to the library closing at 9 PM. Everyone should assist with the clean up.

ROSENBERG mentioned she did not intend on having a break for the bite hearing training because it is impossible to get all of that information done in 2 hours and 15 minutes.

RUGER clarified that no more than 50 people would fit in the reserved room and Rosenberg expressed that this should be sufficient. The public is invited to observe but public comment will not be accepted during the training.

RUGER continued, reporting that a dog came in to the shelter with what looked like a urinary tract infection but it turned out to be Parvo. The dog died on the premises on the evening of Sunday, April 5th, and the areas where the dog had been were completely cleaned, including the removal of all hardpack and straw in the affected areas of the yard and multiple disinfections over the course of the entire week. Ruger made several unsuccessful attempts to contact and advise the owner to take appropriate action with his other dogs. Ruger stated that this unfortunate circumstance underscores the importance of our strict control and cleaning procedures and their role in ensuring the health and safety of the shelter population when diseased animals make their way into the shelter.

RUGER ended the shelter report on a positive note: Animal Planet is doing a program with John Schandelmeier called "Alaska Dogs" and they will be at the shelter this week to follow Schandelmeier through the selection and adoption process. Although there will be no interviews of shelter staff, this is an opportunity to showcase FNSB Animal Control and pet adoptions.

RUGER presented the Kennel Statistics Report for March and the budget status as of March 31st. He noted there were still some discrepancies in the numbers regarding reasons for euthanasia due to data entry quirks that are being addressed, but stated the totals appeared to be correct.

HAGAN questioned why certain numbers on the Disposition Report regarding euthanasia did not add up and Ruger restated that those were data entry issues and were being addressed. He also noted that the discretionary euthanasia numbers were off (artificially high) because data entry for owner-requested euthanasia is not always accurately categorized.

ROSENBERG clarified that Animal Control has no control over owner euthanasia so the only thing that is tracked in regards to owner euthanasia is that the animal is euthanized. The reason why is not recorded.

GARDNER asked if there were a way the report could be easier to read/enter data into.

RUGER explained the shortcomings of Chameleon, its use, customization requirements and staff training in its use. He assured the commission that once the program was fine-tuned the numbers would be accurate. It is a solid program though it is new and they still have to learn what the program is capable of.

RUGER mentioned that when Klimaschesky was at the Animal Expo she did talk to a tech and let the tech know of their current difficulties. The tech then called Ruger to troubleshoot some of the issues. Ruger also explained that he is exploring adding

“Foster” to the report because the packaged report does not track foster inventory. In the meantime he is running a separate foster report and then adding the numbers manually.

ROSENBERG discussed the issues involved with tracking foster animals.

RUGER added that the Chameleon tech, when asked about adding fosters to the intake report, said that the numbers would be “polluted” because adding fosters as separate numbers to the intake would be double counting and suggested running fosters separately and then adding the numbers manually.

MARSCHNER asked about the Animal Expo and Ruger answered that the Animal Expo dealt with all animal agencies/organizations such as rescues, animal control agencies, and software companies that specialize in animal shelters, etc.

ROSENBERG suggested Klimaschesky attend a meeting as a guest in the fall to talk about her experience at the Animal Expo.

FORTUNE asked about the casual position currently open for Animal Tender and Ruger explained that the position is being advertised this week.

PUBLIC COMMENT

O’NEIL asked whether she should address the Animal Control Manager, FNSB, or ACC when she has questions concerning Animal Control. In addition, O’Neil asked what veterinarian is contracted with the shelter.

SEVERA and **ROSENBERG** recommended that O’Neill first start with Ruger and he will point her in the right direction.

RUGER answered that Dr. Cort Zachel is the contract vet but he serves as a consultant and does not practice medicine at the shelter. He clarified that FNSB will not have a vet practicing medicine at the shelter as the Borough does not usually compete with the private sector. Dr. Zachel has an annual contract to make two unannounced visits to the shelter per week and is on retainer for after-hours emergencies for the purpose of having a vet’s assessment of an animal for cruelty cases.

O’NEIL also asked what days she should not come to the shelter when she wants to speak with Ruger and Ruger advised her there aren’t good or bad days but to always call first to be sure he’s available. He noted he is very good at meeting with people within a day or two of their request.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Budget Update

Previously discussed.

B. Maintenance Items and Engineering Report

GARDNER asked about the engineering study and maintenance ordinance. Ruger clarified that the engineering study is not “on the table” but if the public brings it up at the meeting it can be discussed. Ruger further explained the \$265K budget.

GARDNER asked if the ACC should come and speak on behalf of the study.

ROSENBERG reminded the ACC they can go as individuals and then asked if wanted to pass a resolution so they can bring it to the meeting.

GARDNER proposed a resolution backing an engineering study to be included in the budget.

TUORI seconded.

ROSENBERG voiced concern that if the engineering study is passed the maintenance currently on the table will not get done.

RUGER assured her this is not the case. The maintenance in the Ordinance will be completed regardless of the outcome of a study.

ROSENBERG asked for a roll call vote and the commission unanimously voted to pass a resolution in favor of an engineering study and Gardner volunteered to submit at the meeting that the ACC has passed a resolution in favor of an engineering study.

C. Scheduling of Bite Hearing Training

Rosenberg reminded everyone that the training would move fairly quickly.

NEW BUSINESS

ROSENBERG stated Michael Lamb prefers to be contacted through Borough staff.

A. Resolution in favor of FNSB accepting credit cards

GARDNER contacted Lamb and the Borough has been working on this issue and it should be ready by July 1.

HAGAN asked why the same system used for paying taxes through the FNSB couldn't be used for the shelter.

RUGER explained that the Assessor's office has that contracted just for their office. He conceded that citizens have complained about the inability to use credit cards elsewhere before.

B. Resolution in favor of advertising the Shelter on borough buses (Gardner)

ROSENBERG admitted she passed this to David Leone and there is a contract with Northwest Advertising and advised the ACC to contact Wendy Garwood.

GARDNER stated she has been trying to get hold of Garwood but did find out if there is a fee for advertising on the outside of buses. Inside of buses the advertising is free.

C. Resolution in favor of HB 6, criminalizing bestiality, and HB 138, stiffening penalties for animal cruelty (Rosenberg)

ROSENBERG asked the ACC if they want to send an official resolution favoring HB 6, criminalizing bestiality. There were several questions about the commission's involvement in State matters and past ACC involvement in State issues.

ROSENBERG then asked ACC about passing a resolution in favor of HB 138, stiffening penalties for animal cruelty. Discussion ranged from support to a desire to learn more about the bills. It was decided to add discussion of the bills as an agenda item for a future meeting to allow the commissioners more time to look at the proposed legislation.

D. Guidelines for Shelter Fund support of animals in foster care (Rosenberg)

ROSENBERG said she just passed out these guidelines as an FYI for the commission.

E. Committees (Rosenberg)

Now that there are nine ACC members Rosenberg addressed the issue of committees and asked the commissioners if they wanted to resurrect the committee structures. Rosenberg reminded the commissioners that all committee meetings are public meetings.

GARDNER asked how many members were needed, minimum, for a committee and Rosenberg stated two to three people would be sufficient.

GARDNER asked what the Shelter Care Committee did and Rosenberg, having been a member of that committee, recounted the details for her.

ROSENBERG asked commissioners if they would like to ruminate on committees.

F. Scheduling (Rosenberg)

ROSENBERG explained that the ACC has to have six regular meetings or more per year. In the past there have been meetings from September through April or May and then a four-month gap. Rosenberg asked if they would like to reconsider a new schedule.

GARDNER asked for the reason behind the required six meetings per year and if it was for the purpose of meeting every other month.

ROSENBERG admitted they have never had a meeting every other month.

RUGER stated that part of the issue was trying to get a quorum in the summer when people are out and about on vacations, as well as the fact that the new budget starts mid-summer.

ROSENBERG believed spring meetings are essential and then asked members their preference.

HAGAN suggested setting a pre-determined date and a discussion of flexibility ensued.

GARDNER proposed a meeting every other month and Tuori agreed that was a good idea.

ROSENBERG suggested a June meeting.

MARSCHNER asked for website address for House bills.

ROSENBERG called a recess at 7:52 pm.

ROSENBERG ended the recess at 7:53 pm and meeting the resumed.

RUGER suggested that every other month does not always work out because issues come up where more frequent meetings need to occur, generally in the fall.

SEVERA proposed a meeting in June and then adjourning until September.

Discussion ensued about when to hold the next meeting, possibly in the summer. Dates were suggested and dismissed due to conflicting engagements.

SEVERA suggested June 15th and Rosenberg called the next meeting for June 15th and suggested if the commissioners can't make it then it will be rescheduled.

ROSENBERG called for the commissioners to consider ACC meeting schedules next year, think about committees, and reminded them to submit their agenda items several weeks in advance.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

ROSENBERG announced the Walk for Charity, sponsored by the Visitor's Bureau, on the May 8th. One of the charities that people may walk for is the Shelter Fund. Dogs are not allowed. The money is directly passed to the charity.

TUORI commented she is glad to hear about the blood drive at the rabies clinic.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm. The next meeting will be scheduled for June 15th.

Submitted by Rachel Seale on behalf of Matt Ruger