

REGULAR MEETING
WILLIAMSON COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SHELTER BOARD
Wednesday, July 24, 2013

MEETING LOCATION:

Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter, Community Room
1855 SE Inner Loop, Georgetown, Texas 78626

Minutes:

BOARD MEMBERS

Cedar Park, Asst City Manager, Josh Selleck, Chairperson	Leander, Community Development Director, Jim Bechtol
Williamson County Commissioner, Valerie Covey	Hutto Assistant City Manager, Micah Grau
Round Rock, Asst City Manager, Bryan Williams	

1. Call to Order 2PM

2. Roll Call

-Board members present: CP Asst City Manager Josh Selleck, Hutto, Asst City Manager Micah Grau, Leander, Community Development Director, Jim Bechtol (alternate Jeff Hays), Williamson County Commissioner, Valerie Covey, Round Rock Asst City Manager Bryan Williams –late arrival
Visitors Present: Sherri Fleming, Juanita Jackson, Greg Minton, Phyllis Clair, Rhonda McLendon, Frank H. Lofton, Ana Almaguel, Abigail Smith

3. Citizen Communications

4. Board Opening Comments

5. Approval of Minutes: May 22, 2013

6. Director's Report

- a. There were several recent incidents: a scraped wrist, dog bite of hand and ankle, a shelter volunteer fell over on two different occasions when bending over a dog pen.
- b. Wilco jurisdiction intake numbers were examined broken down further into the smaller participating cities and communities. Discussion was had as to what point it is appropriate to request supporting funds from cities who are contributing intake animals to the shelter but who are not currently billed for operation costs.
- c. Line item transfers were recently approved by Williamson County Commissioners court and completed between line accounts for: animal medical care, care of animals, medical supplies, animal disposal and courier service.

7. Discussion with City of Austin regarding regional sheltering concept –Abigail Smith

- a. Austin shelter is full. They have projected 1.1 million cats and dogs and want to take a regional approach. Regionally approach building and prevention (spay/neuter). Valerie Covey: WCRAS and AAC are both full. There is a need to reduce the number of animals. Sheri Fleming from Travis County commented that Pflugerville and Lakeway both have small shelters. Abigail commented that there is .5 million dollar budget for subsidized spay/neuter. The leash law and licensing does not reduce intake. They don't work for Travis and need to do massive TNR. There are political barriers and acceptance of problems that you can't solve. Abigail said that TNR stabilizes cat populations. The ACOs from Travis do not pick up cats (only sick & injured). Shelter is filled with owner surrenders and strays. They use TNR for strays with an \$80,000 funded program. Return to owner rate is almost nothing. Austin Humane Society and Emancipet are partners and they neuter 6000 and 12,000 animals respectively.
- b. Travis County has many fixes (door to door education, schools etc). Josh Selleck: Due to rate of growth and relationships and needs there is a need for service and cost savings. They need to build trust to make it work and have a total buy in for everyone. The financial structure needs to be established including percentage paid and percentage of intake. Each jurisdiction has an intake responsibility. Commissioner Covey stated that Texas Humane Heroes is primarily bringing in animals from outside of Williamson County for adoption. Cheryl Schneider mentioned that in the past, the agreement with Williamson County Humane Society had been that they would take approximately 50% of their intake from WCRAS. Their philosophy was pulling from shelters with a 50% or higher save rate. Commissioner Covey commented that Texas Humane Heroes (formerly Williamson County Humane) is making the problem worse. Cheryl relayed that THH will not take owner surrenders. They refer them to WCRAS. Abigail stated that there are 80,000 coming into Travis. The break down at WCRAS is currently 50% ACO 30% Owner Surrender 25% Public Drop Off Stray. There are currently complaints from citizens regarding driving a long way to the AAC across the county. It would have been better to maybe have an east and west branch.
- c. Return to Owner rates at WCRAS: Dogs 20-25%, Cats 3% AAC Return to Owner Rates: Dogs 17% Cats 2%
- d. Josh Selleck attended a meeting with Travis County and the City Managers where the idea of working together was introduced. Commissioner Covey listed the possible issues of finding land, expansion, TNR and education of public. Josh Selleck expressed a willingness to continue dialogue with Austin/Travis County. Check points need to be established for a project calendar.

- e. Abigail stated that AAC charges a \$160.00 owner surrender or stray fee for animals from areas out of their jurisdiction. They bill the appropriate municipalities later for strays.

8. Discuss and/or take action on Stray Hold period policies

- a. Only about 2% of reclaims are done past 5 day hold period. The majority of reclaims are at 2.2-2.6 days. Shelter director Cheryl Schneider requested that the current 7 day hold period for animals with ID be changed to a 5 day hold period. This would still allow for most of the owner reclaims and would permit earlier outcome for more animals thus freeing up room for the ever increasing intake. Additionally, it is requested that stray litters that are deemed likely to have been abandoned be allowed to be put up for adoption/rescue right away. The third revision to the policy is addition of clear statement that ownership of the animal transfers to the WCRAS at the end of the hold period.
- b. Josh Selleck mentioned that it should be considered whether the reduction in hold period may open future possibility of earlier undesirable outcomes as well. Ownership transfer to the shelter clause in the policy needs to be added to the ordinances of each of the entities as well. Commissioner Covey moved to approve the policy revisions. Micah Grau seconded. Policy revisions are approved.

9. Discuss and/or take action on emergency repair of A/C unit-Adoption2

- a. Emergency repair of AC unit in adoption building 2 had to be initiated. Also air conditioning in Stray Hold building went out. Purchase order has been issued. The parts are on order. Cost of \$3949.00 was taken from donations.

10. Discuss and/or take action on play yard shade purchase

- a. There is currently \$7078 in the donation fund earmarked for use on the dog park. Shelter director would like to purchase 2 shade canopies for the dog exercise yards. The combined cost of the 2 canopies is \$6,998.67. Commissioner Covey moved to approve meeting items #9 and #10 HVAC proposal for \$3949 and canopies for \$6998. There was unanimous board approval.

11. Discuss and/or take action on 2013/2014 Budget

- a. One of the two requested positions was approved (part time Animal Care Specialist). Rebecca Clemons in Auditors office suggested after looking at the budget that if Animal Control Officers helped at the shelter there may not be a need for another position. Collectively there are 18 ACOs that are working for the participating entities. What can they do to help with additional shelter duties? Director Cheryl Schneider mentioned tasks such as animal work-ups, photos, vaccines, medications for sick animals. Josh Selleck added that it should be addressed how they can help proactively getting pets back to their homes so they don't have to be brought to the shelter. Commissioner Covey asked "Can the ACO write a ticket that would be a negative deterrent and not take the pet to the shelter?" Jeff Hays commented that working up the animal could take too much time such that the ACO may not be available to do their calls.

- b. The budget numbers presented in the director's handouts do not include staff any possible staff raises. Josh Selleck made motion to approve the \$1,237,986.85 FY2014 budget subject to flexibility of accepting raises proposed by the county. Micah Grau seconded the motion. FY 2014 budget approved.

Micah Grau had to leave board meeting for another meeting at 3:38PM.

12. Discussion and/or action on planning for an expansion

- a. Long term strategic planning needs to be completed with demographers. Bryan Williams stated that city of Round Rock may not have available staff support until end of August or beginning of September due to current work on budget responsibilities. Cedar Park may also have a staff member to spare to help by end or middle of September. Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) predictions and Williamson County demographer may also be able to help. Possibly each entity could offer one staff member for support
- b. Josh Selleck proposed that 2 subcommittees be formed to start the project:
 - i. Preventative – This could include ACO actions to get pets home, pet licensing, shelter tasks performed by ACOs during down time
 - ii. Education – Including PIO/Marketing actions, radio, news stations, PSAs
- c. A workshop could be formed after feedback from the 2 subcommittees is presented. The education subcommittee will be organized by WCRAS staff member Misty Valenta. The preventative subcommittee will be organized by WCRAS director Cheryl Schneider who will begin with getting the senior ACOs together in a meeting.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 PM

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS _____ DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2013

Josh Selleck, Chairperson

Linda Gunter, Secretary