

ANIMAL CONTROL ADVISORY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time:	Wednesday, September 18, 2024 *4:30PM
Location:	Saginaw County Animal Care & Control Resource Center 5615 Bay Road, Saginaw, MI 48604
Council Members Present:	Tom McIntyre (Left at 5:15PM), Kelli Scorsone, Alycia Norton, Jonna Scharf, Dr. Mielke, Tracey Slodowski
Council Members Absent:	Cynthia Winiecke, Emilie Lyday, Randy Howard, Lauren Lutenski
Others in Attendance:	Mary Catherine Hannah, Rachel Horton, Christine Madrigal-Sawyer, Kim Trinklein, Linda Harper, Alissa Specht, Mark Piotrowski, Myah Shiva, Caroll Pickleman, Jennifer Speckard, Lindsey Sammons, Madison Mohn, Becky Boensch

- I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Slodowski called the meeting to order at 4:32PM
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Member McIntyre made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 26, 2024. Member Mielke supported. Motion passed (6-0). Quorum present.
- III. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
 1. **Operations** – There is a concern being addressed on how SCACCRC interacts with the public and narrative to the public when there is missing information or gaps in information. There is a list of needs that is published to the Facebook page.
 2. **Veterinarian of Record** – Dr. Kline had been at SCACCRC for 5 years when Director Horton came onboard. She looked through the budget and found funds she could put towards vet care and approached him about having more time and Dr. Kline was not interested. Immediate shelter needs were discussed as were changes in protocol as they were against ABM guidelines i.e. surgeries that were experimental in nature and should be performed by a specialist.
 3. **Euthanasia** – Numbers are in line with past years. What has gone up are numbers for owner requested euthanasia. SCACCRC does have the right to turn animals away for owner requested euthanasia. There is also court ordered euthanasia which must be performed and reported. Director Horton invites anyone with questions to speak to her directly. Chair Slodowski asked how do euthanasia's get approved? Rachel stated if it's a medical case, the veterinarian. A discussion happens with the Kennel Manager, Kennel Tech, Veterinarian and the Director.
 4. **Intakes** – Projected year number is 2,200 intakes, we are already higher than last year by 646 animals. Adoption rates are higher, and transfer rates are higher.
 5. **Programs** – We have implemented recruiting and training new staff protocols, opening the new surgical center which will be a line of business and revenue, changing the software used at the shelter which will allow more interface with a wider scope of users. There is a community office resource program that is being evaluated next week. Giving out dog houses, tethers, food, collars and fence fixing supplies are just some of the items we will be giving out.

6. **Surgical Center** – Getting quotes now for the oxygen room. FY2025 budget was approved for 2 new Vet Techs, a full time Vet and IT infrastructure. Chair Slodowski asked when the surgical center would be open. Rachel stated that it will be a phased approach with recruit and training being step 1.
7. **Community** – We will be at Birch Run Speedway, the Bissel event starts soon, monthly volunteer training is ongoing. There is also Paws Plus which is positive reinforcement dog handling training. Chair Slodowski asked Director Horton to explain the Return to Owner Program. Rachel stated that many owners do not come to reclaim, the program focuses on education, assistance, door knocking. Even if the ultimate outcome is surrender, at least we will have some information on the pet.
8. **Budget** – Mary Catherine stated that the budget needed to be adjusted because last year was the first in the new building. Rachel stated the budget takes into account the surgical center budgeted at \$600,000.
9. **Call Volume** – Chair Slodowski asked how many calls a day does SCACCRC get? Director Horton stated, August was 539 calls, which equates to 139 calls p/ACO.
10. **Bite Quarantine** – Animals that bite are on quarantine for 10 days and can be in the home. If an animal has rabies they can be surrendered and euthanized. If an animal bites a person, its recorded and goes to court the court would decide if an animal were a liability. Member Norton asked about court ordered holds and why they can last a year. Director Horton told her the process can be cumbersome, we must do due diligence and find out who owns the animal, serve a search warrant and continuously go back to the house. We could potentially update the ordinance to be 10 days and there is work being done with the prosecutor's office.

IV. **REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

1. **Fundraising** – Member Norton – Doing some research and identifying what experience, skills and how to shape the bylaws. This will not be a non-profit with sporadic fundraising efforts this will be a sustainable funded non-profit to support the community. There will be 2 focuses on launch, funds for animals and keeping animals out of the shelter.
2. **Training Room** – Contract is with Civil Counsel to be put in proper County format. Chair Slodowski confirmed that there is no policy in place. Mary Catherine advised there is nothing in place to dictate use. Once you open the space to the public you must be very careful on what you allow, very limited on what can and can't be done in a particular space. If the thought is to make it internally available to other county departments or partner agencies to use for training purposes. There is a need for a policy. Other rescue agencies would be considered partner agencies.

V. **OPEN ISSUES - N/A**

VI. **NEW ISSUES- N/A**

VII. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. Pam- thank you for showing up.
- b. Alissa Specht – May meeting minutes incorrect, Alissa and Cam are mixed up. Meeting minutes have pertinent information missing. That is very important and has not been brought up to the commissioners if they are not in the minutes. Temperament Testing - You cannot get an accurate temperament test if animals are on psychotic drugs, that is not an accurate temperament test and that is not what the animals go on. This building is a taxpayer building, it is not Rachel's building, it is not Mary Catherine's building, it is the taxpayers building. There is a lot going on in this building that is hush hush, and it is not being asked about by

staff, volunteers and others that are afraid to speak up because they are afraid of retaliation. The fact that the accusations that he made were not recorded in the minutes is incorrect. I have that meeting recorded and it is not captured in the minutes. That's it, I'm done.

- c. Mary Catherine- Regarding the allegations that Dr. Kline brought up yesterday at the commissioners meeting, that was not what I heard. There has been follow up with MDARD today and we self-reported on the accusations and there will be an investigation launched by an outside party reviewing the policies, procedures and allegations that were made. If anyone would like to bring additional information, they can bring it to other commissioners, law enforcement. If there was a concern about the misuse of controlled substances or substances that were being misused, that should be a law-enforcement issue. Now this is self-reported and is being followed up by an external source. The media has already reached out, there will likely be additional requests from the media. But there will be no comment until the investigation is completed. There was no retaliation for Dr. Kline. He was a contractor, not an employee, so there can be no whistleblower accusations. He was a contractor and so they did not renew his contract. He could not meet the needs of SCACC in terms of veterinary needs for the SCACC. That being said, I was taken aback by the meeting last night. It was very clear that there is vitriol happening and clear concern. However, the vitriol is not helping things and not helping the animals. So, when this is happening there is concern. Why is there such a concern and why aren't people talking to Rachel about them? I would like to have a discussion session with you. People are frustrated and I'm trying to understand why and what is the best way to discuss this. (frustrations with animals, being too full, not taking in more animals) So, can we bring solutions and ideas? One idea- why not have ACOs go out alone instead of together? Safety issue. We are responsible for keeping the ACOs safe. Also responsible for protecting the public purse. I'm 100% looking for what is the best way to have these conversations and get to the solutions and address these concerns?
- d. Jennifer stated communication is the answer, but the how and when and who is the question. Mary Catherine stated, in a vacuum, people will make up the information. Alissa Specht stated things that you were saying are vaguely mischaracterized. What I said is that we pay for 2, there is one on call, we have 4 road officers. You came to me and told me that I could be an ACO and teach them not to be scared. When they took this job, they knew what it would entail and not be scared. We need these ACOS on the road and we need this community covered.
- e. Mary Catherine stated: This is a resource-constrained environment. But realistically, we must work within the budget constraints that we have and monitor the ACOs safety. We would have 10 ACOs if we could. This is a larger systemic issue because we are always scrambling because we are on the back end and always trying to catch up.
- f. Alissa Specht stated then make sure every dog that leaves is fixed. Mary Catherine replied we are working on catching up on the spay/neuter list, but again that is a budget constraint. So how do we impact that because we know that there are dogs coming from the Saginaw proper and the community township. What are the drivers? Dog fighting, low-cost spay/neuter, etc.

- g. Jennifer stated something that we need to happen, but it is not going to happen overnight and that is expanded hours. We need expanded hours for adoptions. I know it is a work in progress, and that can't happen overnight. Chair Slodowski stated it makes sense to have more hours.

VIII. NEXT MEETING

1. Next meeting will be held Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

1. Meeting ended at 5:28PM. No quorum present.