



Forsyth County Animal Services Advisory Board

January 17, 2019

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Forsyth County Animal Control Department
5570 Sturmer Park Circle
Winston-Salem, NC 27105

Bill Cowan, Chair
Priscilla Ivester, Vice-Chair
Janice Freeman
Tara Stebbins
Mitch Cromer
Terry Jessup
Amy Pugh, DVM
Cristina Griffin
P.J. Lofland
Joseph Chrobak
Andrew Martin

Members Present

Tara Stebbins	P.J. Lofland	Tara Stebbins
Priscilla Ivester	Janice Freeman	Joseph Chrobak
Bill Cowan	Terry Jessup	
Mitch Cromer	Amy Pugh	

Staff Present

David Morris
Scott Bird
Tonya Ward

CALL TO ORDER

- The Advisory Board meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm by Bill Cowan
- *Approval of meeting minutes November 15, 2018*
Discussion of minutes - Priscilla Ivester asked that a sentence be added under the pet limits discussion to note that she did not want pet owners targeted due to numbers alone. Staff said that would be added.
MOTION: Tara Stebbins made a motion to approve the amended minutes. The motion was seconded by Mitch Cromer and the amended minutes were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There was no public comment

OLD BUSINESS

- ***Partnership with FHS - Guest speakers Sarah Williamson and Darla Kirkeeng***
Sarah Williamson greeted the Board and said she was pleased to say the partnership between FHS and FCAS has been in place for a full year as of January 8th. She stated there has been a lot of teamwork from staff of both organizations and thanked Lt. Morris, Scott Bird, and Tonya Ward especially for their hard work. She stated the goal for the partnership was to raise the “save rate” of animals adopted or transferred to 90%, she explained 100% is not feasible due to aggressive or sick animals. Darla Kirkeeng showed the Board a presentation. She and Sarah discussed many of the ways FHS is working towards their goal such as their extensive foster program and transferring specific breeds and very adoptable dogs to rescue groups. They stated that most foster homes have 1 or 2 animals at a time for a period of 2-6 weeks and the program has a 30% “foster fail” rate in which fosters adopt the animals. FHS has a new marketing campaign being unveiled using the hashtag #savefursyth to promote fostering and adoption. Priscilla Ivester asked if FHS has information regarding the number of animals adopted locally as opposed to those being transported out of states and Sarah said she would look into that and get a figure.

- ***NC Debt Set Off***

Shelter Manager Scott Bird stated the Debt Set Off program is still going well but there was not a lot new to report. Due to lack of staff at the moment, not many letters have been sent out recently but FCAS expects to begin receiving more payments once tax refunds are processed in the next few months.

- ***Pet limits***

Bill Cowan stated his position has not changed since the last meeting, he feels limits would only punish good owners and there are already laws in place which address many of the issues. He recommends no limits be established. Mitch Cromer said he would like the Board to make a formal recommendation against pet limits. Tara Stebbins said she feels there need to be clearer guidelines. There was discussion of other agencies potentially being involved. Lt. Morris stated he would like all agencies to cooperate to assist the community and has made FCAS officers aware of available resources. He has also met with representative of many other departments. Mitch Cromer said he feels everyone should have due process and would like a motion to recommend against establishing pet limits. Priscilla Ivester seconded the motion and said she feels there is no good way to write such a law. Amy Pugh said she has looked into information from Wake County against having a limit, she said she is looking at the issue from the perspective of a veterinarian. Cristina Griffin said she has dealt with harassment in the past due to animals and feels having limits would open the door for even more. Bill Cowan said some counties have limits tied to square footage but that is problematic due to variables such as breed and size of the animals. Tara Stebbins said she would like Animal Services to have a “foothold” to be able to investigate. Bill Cowan replied that there are already plenty of laws on the books and he does not feel there need to be more. The motion was voted on, to recommend that the County not establish any type of pet limits. There were nine (9) “aye” votes and one (1) “nay” vote. Lt. Morris stated he would communicate this to the Commissioners and it would also be placed into the Annual Report.

NEW BUSINESS

- ***Forsyth Feral Fix Event - Guest speaker Leila Warren, Humane Solution***

Leila Warren greeted the Board and explained that she is with Humane Solution, an organization dedicated to assisting with pet overpopulation by offering reduced cost spay/neuter vouchers at events throughout the year. She stated she had seen a program to assist spay/neuter of feral cats while visiting the Outer Banks and decided to look into this program for Forsyth County. She contact the Veterinary Program at NC State University and they were very interested. They will be coming to Forsyth County this weekend, January 19-21 to spay/neuter feral cats brought in by colony caretakers. In addition to being altered the cats will receive vaccines (rabies and FVRCP), a microchip, and flea treatment. Their ears will be notched for identification.

- ***New Members***

Staff stated that two new members have been appointed to the Advisory Board. Joseph Chrobak of the Forsyth County Health Department was present and introduced himself. It was suggested he try to observe the January Hearing Tribunal and he said he would attend. The second new member, Andrew Martin was not present.

- ***Hearing Tribunals***

The docket and panel participants for the Tribunal Hearing in January was discussed. Priscilla Ivester will not be able to attend so Tara Stebbins as alternate will attend. The February hearings on the 20th have been scheduled and Cristina Griffin, Amy Pugh, and Janice Freeman said they are available on that date. Joseph Chrobak offered to be the alternate since he plans to observe in January. Staff stated that, despite adding this date in January, there are still a large amount of pending appeals and asked if an additional date could be added in March 2019. March 14th or 28th were suggested. Cristina Griffin asked if it would be possible to have hearings on both dates to expedite the remaining appeals. There was a discussion of whether this was feasible and it was determined to be. The March 14th date is to be written appeals only and the 28th will be hearings. Cristina Griffin, Bill Cowan, and Mitch Cromer said they were available on the 14th.

Priscilla Ivester, PJ Lofland, and Tara Stebbins said they were available on the 28th . Cristina Griffin said she would be available as alternate. It will be added to the appeal calendar.

- ***Monthly Report***

Lt. Morris presented the department monthly statistical report for December 2018. Response time on all calls continues to go well. The number of citations issued is still down slightly due to the department currently being short officers. The Patrol division is continuing to conduct enhanced patrols, meeting in the field then targeting a problem area of the county. Lt. Morris pointed out that the new categories he had added to the monthly statistical report do not yet match up with the previous year since the partnership with FHS but stated they should balance out soon since the partnership has been in effect for a year. Mitch Cromer asked about the drop in licensing transactions. Staff member Tonya Ward answered that there could be several factors involved including staffing. Licensing overall was discussed as to whether community members avoid vaccinating animals due to license requirement, staff said this was not the case since FCAS receives rabies reports from many vet offices monthly. This was determined to be a topic for future discussion as the Board will continue to observe licensing numbers.

- ***Additional items***

Bill Cowan said he had one further topic to mention. He stated that some years ago there had been some discussion within the community as to whether Animal Services should be a part of the Sheriff's Office or possibly the Health Department. He said this topic has resurfaced and he wanted the Board to be aware, do their own research, and be informed. Bill said he feels that, while Animal Services could have more authority as part of the Sheriff's Office, he thinks there could also be more problems. He said in another county the Sheriff took over the Animal Services department but later changed his mind, causing a great deal of problems. Lt. Morris pointed out that Animal Services is a stand alone department within the County. PJ Lofland said she thinks it would be a terrible idea for AS to be under the Sheriff. Priscilla Ivester said at the meeting she attended earlier that day one of the speakers had no compassion and she is concerned about the appeal process. She said if the person holding the office of Sheriff is not good, it could cause a very bad situation. Bill Cowan said he just wanted to bring it up so the Board is aware if they are asked about it.

ADJOURN

MOTION: With no further business, Bill Cowan asked for a motion to adjourn. Mitch Cromer made the motion, which was seconded by Priscilla Ivester. Bill Cowan adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm.