

The meeting of the Animal Commission was called to order at 5:27pm.

A. ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Scott Ellingson, Colby Collier, Anna Accetta, Cherie Aronson, Karen Dorney, Cathy Kamen, Susan Stanek, Capt. Garon DelMonte. Staff: Susan LaFond, Recording Secretary

Not Present: Lt. Luke Holder

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS – none

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 3/13/2023 Motion to approve by Ms. Stanek; second by Ms. Dorney. Approved unanimously.

D. WARDEN'S REPORT – Mr. Ellingson provided the State report for review. Motion to approve by Ms. Accetta; Second by Mr. Collier. Approved unanimously.

E. DEPARTMENT REPORT – Mr. Ellingson reported Milford is currently housing six dogs. There are currently five cats and five kittens in ACO care.

Individual updates – dogs:

Barney – still available for adoption.

Chloe – still available for adoption.

Spice - still available for adoption.

Elijah – still available for adoption.

Two dogs were picked up in Milford, which were previously found roaming in Hamden. Scott offered for him to surrender the dogs, but the owner opted not to.

A golden retriever was brought in but picked up by the owner today.

One dog is in quarantine at the shelter due to a dog bite incident.

One small female terrier mix was picked up and is currently being evaluated.

Individual updates – cats:

Female cat and her five kittens still at the shelter; kittens approximately 6 weeks old.

Black long haired male cat, feral, potential adopter after testing/vaccinated for FIV.

The black male cat with a wound of unknown origin is now believed not to have been a victim of an animal induced injury and is no longer under 6-month quarantine. When his sutures are removed, a person in the area where the cat was found would like to adopt him and bring him indoors.

The gray and white male with ligament or other damage to leg was taken under care but has passed away. Homeowners who were looking to adopt him were advised.

Female tortie picked up at Taco Bell was adopted.

A black cat was dumped at the shelter Saturday in a cardboard carrier. Sex unknown currently.

Work performed during the past month: office has been painted, and new LED overhead lighting installed to replace the old fluorescent bulbs.

The vacant assistant ACO position has not yet been posted. Pending posting after HR/Mayor's office approval. Chief of Staff Rosen will get it moving forward and HR will post. Ms. Accetta asked what the commission can do to assist Dan to move into the currently vacant role. Capt. DelMonte explained the various challenges; rewording the role requires contractual and budgetary action. Budget discussions will not be occurring until October. Chief of Staff Rosen is aware of Dan's interest. Consideration to eventually

moving toward making each assistant ACO position the same; however, that would need to be brought up during DPW contract negotiations.

Ms. Dorney made a motion to approve paying for FIV testing and/or vaccination for the long haired black male cat Dan is looking to adopt. Ms. Kamen seconded. Approved unanimously.

Mr. Ellingson updated the commission on the rabbit spay; the cost for the spay was heavily discounted from \$800 down to \$160. Payment is still pending but moving forward.

F. CORRESPONDENCE – none

G. DONATIONS – Donations reported as follows:

March 2023 public donations: \$615.00

H. COMMISSION REPORT – none.

Mr. Ellingson excused himself from the meeting at 6:13 pm for a Police call.

Capt. DelMonte had to excuse himself from the meeting at approximately 6:35pm.

The topics below were discussed both during and after their attendance.

- I. NEW BUSINESS** - Discussion regarding past votes funding various improvements to the shelter. The back room was to be updated and turned into a useful space (meet-and-greet). Noise was the issue then, and still. A recording of the noise was played for the commission by Mrs. Kamen. Mr. Ellingson said public works was aware of the noise from the heat exchanger and checked the unit a while ago. Mr. Ellingson stated the kennel was a later addition to Animal Control than the main building. The system can be noisy but is working and is what provides heat to the kennel.

Ms. Kamen advised the commission that several years ago, Pat Devine from DPW performed a site walkthrough. After that inspection, he made the outdoor pens usable, and the dishwasher was hooked up after an extended period. Since, the following issues remain either outstanding, or funded but outstanding:

- 1) Replacement windows since March 2020
- 2) Upgrade of the outside rear area for dog pen to be used during favorable weather
- 3) New microwave, storage cabinets, table, and chairs for dining area – up to \$1000 allocated in 2021.
Capt. DelMonte suggested checking with Paul Mayo at Premier on Old Gate Lane. They have provided furnishings for the police department that are heavy duty and commercial grade. Ms. Kamen will follow up.
- 4) New dryer needed; \$2000 allocated. Not purchased.
- 5) Outdoor patio furniture approved for outdoor enclosure.
- 6) Furnishing of the cat room approved June 2021.
- 7) Main AC condenser was not working in August 2021; Mr. C. Saley provided two new window units in the interim which are still in place.

Further discussion included the statement that DPW has spent \$250K maintaining and repairing the existing building. The building is not FEMA compliant. The grooming table is never used. A clawfoot tub may be used occasionally. A new shelter walkthrough is needed; Ms. Kamen will contact Mr. Devine to schedule and obtain a list of what can be done, and the costs for each item.

Motion of Mr. Collier to invite Mr. Farrar to join the commission at the next meeting. Ms. Kamen seconded. Approved unanimously.

J. OLD BUSINESS –

- 1) Facebook account consolidation: Capt. DelMonte spoke with Mr. Farrar Thursday, and the account has been deactivated.
- 2) Long-term shelter resident adoption plan – not discussed.
- 3) Benches – not discussed.
- 4) Mama cat, calico on the hill – “sneak-up net” – net is available at the Animal Control office. No discussion on attempting to use currently.
- 5) Volunteer coordination – Mr. Farrar taking over per Capt. DelMonte. Mr. Ellingson shared a spreadsheet to show how scheduling will be done. He was awaiting the liability waiver, which Mr. Collier produced. Atty. Berchem of the City Attorney’s office said the initial review looks good, awaiting final CAO approval. Jen and Brad have offered to perform some volunteer training. Training hours on the spreadsheet do not include Brad or Jennifer. Mr. Ellingson stated it is his rule that an officer be on site during volunteer dog walking in case of emergency. Further commission discussion would like to discuss that when there is only one ACO on duty, the dogs may still be exercised, either in the outdoor pen, or walked within sight of the building so the walker may be summoned in if that officer needs to respond to a call. Mr. Ellingson, Brad, and Jennifer will work out the volunteer program to get it started. They have ten volunteers who may be able to fill in where needed.

Ms. Accetta brought up the difficulty in being able to work with the kittens and cats at the shelter as a volunteer due to rigidity of time and need for an ACO to be onsite. Discussion determined there needs to be more communication with and appreciation for the volunteers and the value they add to quality of life for animals in ACO care. Can we verify whether there is a statute barring volunteers from socializing kittens younger than 6 weeks of age? Kittens benefit from the early onset of human interaction.

- 6) The dates for VCA Baybrook partnership event – Capt. DelMonte suggested June 14 or 24 – will not work for VCA staff. New Saturday dates in July to be considered. Contingent upon adoptable cats available to be transported to the facility for the dates in question.
- 7) AED device acquisition – Capt. DelMonte checked with the Fire Department. They will not purchase a unit but will maintain it if purchased by Animal Control. Vendor information shared with Mr. Ellingson; equipment cost is \$1100 currently. Discussion regarding CPR training for Animal Control staff in lieu of a defibrillator; the combination of no staff trained in CPR, along with the lack of an AED, could become an issue.
- 8) Capt. DelMonte asked Mr. Ellingson if he was aware the CPCA runs a written Animal Control Officer test yearly, and that we may be able to access a list of candidates who pass. The State of Connecticut offers a 40-hour class once per year as well. Mr. Ellingson said that class focuses a great deal on zoonotic, rabies, and the like rather than day-to-day Animal Control facility operation.

- I. **ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 6:46pm.