

## ANIMAL COMMISSION MINUTES FOR MEETING HELD MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

- A. CALL TO ORDER** – the meeting was called to order at 5:30pm
- B. ROLL CALL of Commissioners – In attendance:** Susan Stanek; Anna Accetta; Karen Dorney; Cathy Kamen; ACO Scott Ellingson; Lt. Luke Holder. **Staff:** Susan LaFond, Recording Secretary  
**Absent:** Karen Dorney (resigned 9/5/23)
- C. PUBLIC COMMENTS** - none
- D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 8/14/23**  
Motion to approve by Ms. Stanek; Ms. Kamen seconded. Passed unanimously.
- E. CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT** - none
- F. TREASURER’S REPORT** – Ms. Accetta reported the available balance of unallocated contingency is \$174,293. Cash donations totaled \$114 for the month. ACO Ellingson reported Petco donated dog costumes, jackets, leashes, and other items. He also reported purchasing a garden hose with a portion of the Ocean State Job Lot gift card. Report was approved without motion.
- G. COMMITTEE REPORTS** – Ms. Stanek and Ms. Kamen created a preliminary shelter update renovation proposal, prioritizing items into an immediate need and items needing a coordinated effort. The list was distributed to the Commissioners. She was unable to create a cost list for repairs or renovations. Proposal was distributed to the Commission members. The immediate needs list includes replacement of the rear door, which is still boarded up from the August 9, 2023, break in. Also included are kennel replacement windows that open and close, air conditioning and heat repair/replacement/purchase, and cleaning of all fans being used for air circulation in the kennel area. Pen gate does not swing properly; should be an easy fix. DPW Director Chris Saley joined via phone. List was relayed to him by Ms. Stanek. Mr. Saley said there has never been air conditioning, only heat, in the kennel. He mentioned Ms. Kamen previously approached Pat Devine about replacing windows in the kennel and explained the DPW chain of command. He asked that all requests be made officially through the Police Department or ACO Ellingson directly to him in DPW. He said DPW has not done a lot of work in this building and the building itself is not in great shape. He asked what ACO Ellingson had available in his budget for updates and repairs; ACO Ellingson said he could provide up to \$200K depending upon how much his office’s new Ford Explorer will cost. Mr. Saley said a new building should be the long-term plan. DPW can replace the back door. Air conditioning for the kennel area will be discussed between Mayor Smith and Mr. Saley. The Commission offered to help offset the price of the air conditioning with some of their available funds. He advised ACO Ellingson more funds will need to be allocated to the electricity account if or when air conditioning in the kennel area is added. He said between now and next June, the air conditioning, rear door replacement, and new kennel windows should be taken care of. Some discussion of potential addition to the existing building; Mr. Saley advised the existing Animal Control building is not FEMA compliant. He indicated what happens with the building is the jurisdiction of the Police Department. He said the Public Works Department staff decreased from 155 people to 126, with 23 current vacancies including positions in the building repair sector. Mr. Ellingson shared with Mr. Saley a steel replacement door may have already been ordered by DPW. Ms. Kamen asked if the subcommittee should create a proposal of renovations to the existing space. Mr. Ellingson said privacy screening for Quarantine Kennel should be added to the non-urgent list. Ms. Kamen offered to install whatever is purchased if need be. Discussion about new, elevated building, or elevated addition for FEMA compliance. Discussion regarding how loud the dog kennel area is when fans or heat are running. Discussion about state law for kennel temperature. Building a new shelter will require it to be built to code which will increase the cost over the existing concrete block structure. Ms. Kamen requested other ideas from the Commission at the next meeting.
- H. WARDEN’S REPORT** – ACO Ellingson distributed copies of the monthly report. Motion to approve by Ms. Accetta, second by Ms. Kamen. Passed unanimously.
- I. DEPARTMENT REPORT** – Dogs: Spice, Reggie, and Russell are still up for adoption. Petey, the Cane Corso, is also now available. Veterinarian said Lazlo’s injuries may take another month or so to completely heal. Sasha was adopted, and Assistant ACO Fiore adopted the Akita. A dachshund currently under quarantine has three adoption applications.  
Cats: Tory, the tortie female whose owner passed away, has been adopted. Tommie Boy was adopted. George and Purdy, whose owner passed away, were adopted. All six kittens from the group born June 23, as well as their mom, have been adopted. The older black and white kitten was adopted. Three kittens were adopted of the 6 brought in from Munson Street. The mother cat is still at the shelter and consideration being given to send her with Jessica’s Rescue.  
ACO Ellingson said the ants are gone and pantry moths are mostly absent. The food room has been reorganized.

- J. CORRESPONDENCE** – none

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## K. NEW BUSINESS

- 1) **Facility Improvement Recommendations and Prioritization** – discussed under Committee report.
- 2) **Resignation of Karen Dorney** – September 5, 2023. Capt. Delmonte asked the Commission to refer any parties interested in becoming members of the Commission to the Mayor's office for consideration; then the Board of Aldermen can vote.

## L. OLD BUSINESS

- 1) **Lazlo's medical issues** – addressed under department report.
- 2) **Hiring of Animal Control staff** – Posting closed September 1, 2023. Capt. Delmonte has no news from Human resources and will reach out to them for updates.
- 3) **Volunteers** – Ms. Kamen asked how many active volunteers we have now. ACO Ellingson could not provide an exact number. Ms. Kamen asked how many dog walkers there are; ACO Ellingson said it varies; some are no longer coming in and some are coming in sporadically. He advised volunteer hours are 11am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. He is looking for trustees who would be responsible to supervise dogs being taken outside of the building for walking purposes. Discussion about cat volunteers; ACO Ellingson explained why they can only visit with the cats when an ACO is present; cats have gotten away from the volunteers in the past. Ms. Kamen asked if any dogs can be available before 11am for walking; ACO Ellingson explained that having volunteers in the kennels while the dogs are being fed and the kennels being cleaned creates safety and liability concerns. Ms. Kamen said she understands dogs cannot be walked on Saturday or Monday due to shortage of staff; asked if someone may take a dog into the outside pen adjacent to the building between 11am and 4:30pm. Ms. Stanek added that, since they will call first, that should not be a problem. ACO Ellingson said once fuller staff is hired, more availability will be provided. Discussion regarding volunteers being sent away and the manner in which that is done. Discussion regarding the way clerical staff interacts with volunteers. Question as to why Mr. Farrar is not offering to pitch in during this time of the officers being shorthanded. ACO Ellingson said previous clerks have not dealt with the animals either. Ms. Kamen brought up grooming. She said the dogs are dirty and would like recommendations on how we can arrange that. ACO Ellingson said Holly from Shoreline Grooming has done some grooming for them in the past. Capt. Delmonte suggested a subcommittee. Lt. Holder recommended getting the costs and frequency based on an estimate of how many dogs will be groomed each visit. The ACO may want to put a hold harmless clause into any agreement. Process for submitting invoices for payment was reviewed with the Commission to make it clear that any payments for services rendered will take a month or more and any contractor will need to expect that delay.

## M. ADJOURNMENT – meeting adjourned at 6:44pm.

**New Business, not on the agenda, may be brought up by a two-thirds' vote of those Members present and voting. ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING SHOULD CONTACT THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, (203) 783-3230, FIVE DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING, IF POSSIBLE.**