

Washoe County Regional Animal Services Advisory Board

MINUTES-VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

Friday, January 29, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.
WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES
CENTER CLASSROOM
2825 LONGLEY LANE, RENO, NEVADA

MEMBERS

Naomi Duerr (Chair)
Annette Rink
Paul Anderson
Jill Dobbs
Irene Payne
Al Rogers
Kitty Jung (absent)

STAFF

Shyanne Schull (Director)

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jen Gustafson (Deputy DA)

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL [Non-Action Item]

The meeting was opened and a quorum was established.

PRESENT: Naomi Duerr, Annette Rink, Paul Anderson, Jill Dobbs, Irene Payne, Al Rogers

ABSENT: Kitty Jung

2. PUBLIC COMMENT [Non-Action Item]

No public comment.

**3. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 23, 2020 MINUTES
[For possible action]**

Member Payne: Motion to approve the Minutes.

Member Rink: Sought clarification about the meeting whether she was absent or present due to technical difficulties. Seconded motion to approve Minutes. Minutes passed unanimously.

4. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

[Non-Action Item]

Director Schull: General discussion of the upcoming session as a result of the climate. Discussed that COVID and the budget took priority. It was determined that it would not be open to the public.

Meetings were held between the last Advisory Board meeting and this meeting with stakeholders in Clark County, NHS and legal representatives. Discussion was had re: direction of priorities and suggestive language. Overview of summary of legislation priorities and a question/answer session will be presented.

Legislative Update Summary was presented for Members to view. Nothing new was added. The list was paired down and suggested amendments were shown.

NRS 171.17751(1) was identified as a priority to clarify what are the authorities of an Animal Control Officer. This was priority number one. Items presented in “red” was suggested new language or edits.

#6. Giving clarification that an Animal Control Officer that’s employed by a City or County has the authority to prepare, sign and serve a citation to enforce an ordinance of the City or County which the employee is employed, and they also prepare, sign and serve a citation to enforce cruelty statutes of NRS.

Definitions that were added:

1. Abandon and abandonment. Gives enforcement authority and capability to actually have a benchmark to utilize when someone abandons an animal, and a definition to go along with it. Abandonment occurring whether the animal is left on their own property or on the property of another, in a public place or on open land. When a person abandons an animal on their own property, if the animal is left for over 72 hours. A person does not abandon an animal when the person delivers an animal to another person who will accept ownership and/or custody of the animal; or the person makes arrangements with an

animal rescue organization, as defined in NRS 574.202, to deliver the animal to the animal rescue organization and actually deliver such animal. And as used in this paragraph, minimal care means the provision of proper sustenance for food reasonably sufficient to meet the animal's nutritional needs, deficient potable water and accessible shelter.

Member Rink: Commented that for ten months out of the year, that will be sufficient. But in winter or summer weather, 72 hours for an animal without shelter will be fatal. Inquired if there was latitude that if an animal is abandoned outside without shelter, that action can be taken as soon as it is reported.

Director Schull: Commented that the situation wouldn't necessarily be handled as abandonment, it would be handled as appropriate shelter. There isn't anything that would inhibit the ability to enforce it. Abandonment doesn't come into play unless the animal has been left for 72 hours and needs are not provided. Welfare complaints would be handled, but the abandonment definition provides the clear cut definition of when an animal is left without care or when it might be considered without an owner for 72 hours.

Chair Duerr: Asked Director Schull to clarify abandonment means they no longer have ownership.

Director Schull: Confirmed. A time frame is trying to be established that an animal can be declared as no longer being provided care, and there is reason to believe it's been abandoned.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know if when the animal is abandoned, are ownership rights terminated?

Director Schull: Ownership rights aren't necessarily terminated, but the ability is there to see the animal if it's on someone's property. It provides grounds to go in and take the animal.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know what the owner has to do to get it back.

DA Gustafson: Clarified that right now in current animal cruelty law, it's illegal to abandon an animal, but there was no definition of abandonment, which is why they are seeking a definition. Adding a definition provides a definition for the criminal law. As far

as going into someone's house and taking an animal if a report is received that the animal has been left for a long period of time, it allows a Search Warrant to be obtained so the animal can be taken.

Chair Duerr: Confirmed the clarification.

DA Gustafson: Upon service of a Search Warrant, the animal is impounded at Animal Services, and there is potentially pending criminal charges, and the normal civil process would determine the ownership rights. A hearing would be conducted in Justice Court to determine if the owner can keep or not keep the animal.

Chair Duerr: Commented on Dr. Rink's example and wanted to know the process of what can be done in the 72 hours.

Director Schull: Commented it depends on the exigency of the violation. If Animal Services attempts contact and no one is home, depending on the circumstances, a Warrant can be obtained – happens more in the summer. The officers have the ability to take the animal if exigent circumstances apply. All depends on the situation.

Chair Duerr: Asked for clarification. Not abandonment but what?

DA Gustafson: Confirmed it is an exception to the Warrant requirement and is an exception for exigent circumstances.

Chair Duerr: Sought confirmation if it can also apply if the animal is inside.

DA Gustafson: Discussed animals left in hot vehicles, for example.

Chair Duerr: Agreed that Dr. Rink brought up a good point. Still seeking clarification as to how it applies and that the difference was understood.

DA Gustafson: Commented that it provides a definition of what abandonment is because it's illegal to abandon an animal. In order to enforce the provision, you have to know when the animal is considered abandoned. Is aware that it is an issue in Clark County and other jurisdictions of not knowing when that section can be used when an animal is abandoned.

Chair Duerr: Wondered if it was too long of a time period. Wondered if it could be 48 hours.

DA Gustafson: The 72 hours only applies if the animal is abandoned on their own property. There's no time line for any other areas. If an animal is left on their own property, it's hard to tell whether the owner is just not home, if they've left for the day. When is the time line set for when an animal is considered abandoned? The group consensus was 72 hours for the time line.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know who the group consisted of?

Director Schull: Advised that the Humane Society of the United States, Nevada Humane Society, Clark County, and WCRAS staff, and also Nye County, are the known stakeholders.

Chair Duerr: Encouraged comments regarding the process.

Member Dobbs: In support of reducing the time frame to 48 hours if it is reasonable. Otherwise, supports the 72 hours. She would not hold up acceptance if the group decides 72 hours is adequate, but she would like to see it dropped down to 48 hours.

Member Rink: Doesn't have an objection to the 72 hours. Felt it is a good threshold because it is a significant time period, as opposed to 48 hours. 72 hours is a truly threatening time period that a lay person can identify with as abandonment.

Chair Duerr: Gave an example about a cat being left 2-3 days. Feels it is a somewhat common practice. Is that a common situation? How does it play out?

Director Schull: Commented that most of those situations are unknown circumstances and they have no way of knowing what's going on inside the home. Unless it is determined there are grounds for exigency, then it will be determined. Provides clearer criteria to declare the animal being abandoned. It's more difficult when the animal is inside.

Chair Duerr: Suggested words like "clarity" or "bright line" could be other words used.

Member Rink: Agreed that with cats, 72 hours is not abandonment.

Chair Duerr: Agreed everyone was okay with the definition.

Director Schull: Suggestive language added was for shelter, and clarifying it was for dogs. Cats are not provided required shelter as they are free-roaming animals. Dog shelter has been somewhat ambiguous in terms of Nevada weather, so more criteria was

added for what's acceptable enclosures or shelters for dogs. It was added terms such as "moisture proof" "wind proof" "suitable size to accommodate animal" "allowing for freedom of movement to make adjustments to sit, stand, lay down, turn around" "the enclosure should be made of durable material with a solid, moisture proof floor" and "have a roof which extends over the doorway so as to prevent rain and snow from entering."

That language provided more enforcement capabilities for what is an appropriate shelter. Commented that some shelters they've seen are not appropriate for the Nevada climate and weather.

Chair Duerr: Commented it was a huge improvement. Wanted to know if there was a previous definition of shelter and if it was being replaced entirely.

Director Schull: Agreed that the colored comments were from Director Schull and DA Gustafson.

DA Gustafson: Different colors don't mean anything – her edits versus Director Schull's edits. The black is the original language, and any color is edit.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know if there never was a definition of shelter.

DA Gustafson: Confirmed.

Director Schull: Section 3 or 574.080 is a clean up of the language that's within it. No significant changes, but clarifying that existing law that a peace officer or Animal Control Officer who is authorized to make arrests, may impound animals and implements used in animal fighting. Wanted to make sure that because Animal Control Officers are not authorized to make arrests and that the language is taken out.

Chair Duerr: Wanted confirmation on "place of work."

DA Gustafson: Agreed that it would be the name of the organization that you work for. It's just meant to insure that there was no misunderstanding that the personal residence of a law enforcement officer would be required to be given to somebody.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know if changing "place of work" to "organization," or both.

Director Schull: Section 4 – related to amendments made in 2019 where a court hearing or process for persons arrested for animal fighting – 574.070 – were allowed a

hearing process to provide if the arrested person wishes to contest the forfeiture of impounded animals. Hearing has to be requested within five days of the impoundment to determine whether or not they may continue to own or possess impounded animals, or whether the animal should be transferred to an animal rescue organization, animal shelter or another person.

Existing law at that same time in 2019 required the impounded animals to be held in impound pending the disposition of the criminal case. It conflicts, so they are attempting to clean it up to clarify the conflicting process by adding:

“Upon the conviction of the offender, the animals, if not already forfeited in accordance with 574.203 or 572.0235, that the implements and the property shall be adjudged by the court to be forfeited.”

DA Gustafson: Wanted to emphasize that the reason changes were made to this section was because it conflicted with NRS 574.203 and 2035 which now allows if your fighting animals have been impounded, you have the option of requesting a hearing to determine whether the person can keep the animals. The statute was conflicting, so it was to clean up and clarify the animals don't have to be held until conviction.

Director Schull: 574.100 – the cruelty statute that is utilized on a routine basis. Discussion was had to add a lot more criteria within the statute to allow to properly charge for things seen on a routine basis that qualify as cruelty or neglect.

Skipped down to 574.100(1)(c), where there are significant changes where an animal is deprived of proper sustenance or reasonably sufficient food to meet the nutritional needs of the animal or to refuse to furnish the animal with quality sustenance food. More descriptive criteria was added for what type of sustenance should be provided to the animal.

- D. Depriving an Animal of Sufficient Potable Water; Neglecting or Refusing to Furnish it With Such Water.**
- E. Depriving an animal of proper ventilation and/or wholesome air or neglecting or refusing to furnish it with proper ventilation or wholesome air if such animal is confined inside of an enclosed area.**

Particular situations will require this additional language added to the cruelty charges.

Chair Duerr: Suggested “liquid” for D, to eliminate frozen water issues, etc.

Director Schull: Wanted to be specific that it is “proper ventilation for animals contained inside of an area.”

F. Depriving an ill or injured animal of veterinary care or refusing to furnish it with veterinary care causing the animal to experience unnecessary or unjustifiable pain or suffering.

Agreed it was one of the most important components of this proposed language as it happens quite frequently.

G. Depriving an animal of grooming or sheering to the extent that such grooming or sheering is reasonable necessary to prevent adverse health affects or suffering; or neglecting or refusing to furnish the animal with such grooming or sheering.

This is another one seen frequently.

H. Causing or procuring an animal to ingest alcohol or narcotics.

This is seen from time to time.

Chair Duerr: Wanted clarification if narcotics is the right word. Wanted to know where marijuana comes in since it’s a legal substance.

Member Rink: Confirmed that marijuana is not considered a narcotic.

Chair Duerr: Discussed what common drugs that are not acceptable for animals and could be considered poisoning. Asked for thoughts from the group.

Member Rink: Suggested using “illicit drugs.” Tramadol is a narcotic, but is also a prescription pain killer for both humans and animals. Use “illicit drug” or “species inappropriate narcotic.” Suggested more specific language.

Chair Duerr: Suggested using “non-prescribed compounds or substances.” Non-prescribed substances would cover marijuana, wrong pills. Over-the-counter drugs can be used for animals.

Member Rink: There are a lot of over-the-counter drugs that are toxic to animals. Unless it is prescribed by a veterinarian, people should not use them. Illicit drugs, like when animals are exposed to crack cocaine and other street drugs. Tramadol is an exception and is prescription only, but is good for pain for dogs and cats.

Chair Duerr: Suggested using “illegal narcotics” or “non-prescribed substances.”

Director Schull: Would work on the wording.

Member Dobbs: Agreed that “non-prescribed” was a good inclusion. The federal drug definition was reviewed by Member Dobbs.

I. Abandoning an Animal – Whether Animal is Maimed, Diseased, Disabled or Infirm.

Director Schull: Confirmed it is illegal to abandon an animal. Suggesting omitting the “prior abandonment” terminology that required the animal to be infirm or disabled in order to be classified as an abandoned animal.

Asked for further questions on 574.100(1). No further comment.

Member Anderson: Commented on Section E, and the poor air quality. Wanted to know if someone could be fined or found in violation because of not having wholesome air. Sought to clarify “ventilation” and was concerned about the wholesome air portion of the description.

Director Schull: Aiming to just address animals enclosed inside of an area, i.e., a hoarding situation with 24 cats locked in a bathroom with no air conditioning or air exchange. Wanting to hone in on those situations where there is no air exchange at all and the animals are in an inappropriate enclosed area without the appropriate exchange of air or air at all.

Member Anderson: Suggested that the phrase “wholesome air” is too restrictive because it says “and/or.” Suggested it be left at “ventilation” because that implies you have a circulation of air passing through.

Chair Duerr: Asked Director Schull if it could just say, “Deprive animal of proper ventilation or neglect or refuse to furnish it with proper ventilation.”

Director Schull: Provided an example where there are cases with unsanitary conditions inside of a residence and there is a large amount of fecal material, waste, garbage and trash, and 30/40 cats are impounded out of a residence, whom all have upper respiratory disease because they breathe such high levels of ammonia from the urine and waste material that's just been sitting inside the residence. Those animals suffer from health issues as a result of not being given wholesome air and that's what they want to capture because it happens on a frequent basis. Air conditioning and/or fans don't provide wholesome air to the animals that are breathing the bad air.

Member Payne: Supports using "wholesome air."

Chair Duerr: Shared her story when looking for a house to purchase. The house was full of animals and poop everywhere. She couldn't breathe as a human, and much less an animal. Supports "wholesome air."

Director Schull: Discussed that her staff has to wear protective equipment and use ammonia readers to substantiate the conditions in some of the places that animals have been rescued from.

Chair Duerr: Asked for Member Anderson's comments again.

Member Anderson: Understands, but is afraid it is being narrowed down too much. Still feels that if it is well ventilated that the build up of the gases would not occur. He disagrees with the wording, and is concerned that it's been narrowed down too much.

Chair Duerr: Liked his example. One way to get around it is to define what ventilation is – that it's not just air moving, but wholesome air. Possibly put in the definition section as to what ventilation means and maybe address the outside smoke issue, etc.

Member Dobbs: Wanted to point out: E states, "if such animal is confined inside of an enclosed area." Feels that part of the definition avoids Mr. Anderson's concern of being left outside in smoky air. However, if a dog is left outside for 48 hours in heavily smoky air, it can give the animal respiratory illness. Feels that the proper steps would be followed if the animal owner was cited, get an administrative hearing. Agrees there are other processes in place that prevents an abuse of this term – "if such animal is confined inside of an enclosed area."

Member Rink: Discussed in livestock production, there are thresholds for certain chemicals that can be in the air. Agrees with Member Anderson. Where is the line drawn as to the protection of a pet because some animals aren't able to be inside an air conditioned

house, i.e., a dog outside in the smoke and the horses that stand outside in the smoke.

So if it is a climatic occurrence, it will be very hard to enforce. Inside is really where the emphasis needs to be.

Chair Duerr: An enclosed area could be a barn or a pen. Suggested to define inside a structure versus an enclosed area and maybe distinguish between barn and house. And add “except in the case of a designated air quality emergency.”

Suggested to be more definitive about “enclosed area.” If it was meant to be a van or a vehicle; or horse trailer versus a shipping container; or a barn or a house. These are suggestions that if these are adopted, there are no additional loopholes.

Member Dobbs: Discussed prior situations where it wasn’t reasonably foreseen that animals would be held in those circumstances. Wants to be careful in getting too narrowly defined in an “enclosed area” because leeway has to be available for things that a reasonable person would foresee. It is a statewide law. There is a reasonableness in the enforcement. There is an administrative hearing process that if someone were to get fined for an animal in smoky air, they can fight it.

Chair Duerr: Agreed it was hard to foresee every circumstance. Can’t recall any emergency air situation in the last 50 years except what happened recently. Suggestions are just so people don’t try to escape the reasonable enforcement.

Director Schull: Thanked the group for all the feedback.

J. Tethering.

Recalled more criteria regarding dog tethering. It was entertained to lessen the amount of time, using weather for a benchmark of whether or not an animal can be tethered and for how long. Other samples of tethering regulations were looked at to put more stringent criteria that will provide for the welfare of the animal while they are tethered. The criteria would be:

- * For the animal to have access to food, water, shelter.
- * Failing to allow them an area to sit, stand or lay down outside of its excrement or urine. Wanted the criteria to enforce that the animal had appropriate space to move around outside of the excrement. If the tether is too heavy for the dog to prevent it from freely moving around.

* Using a prong, pinch or choke collar, or similar restraint, other than a properly fitted collar or body harness that provides enough room between the collar/harness and the dog's throat to allow for normal breathing and swallowing. This is another important component of animal welfare. When an animal is tethered inappropriately with a chain around its neck and the animal suffered an ingrown collar or chain because it was not appropriately fitted, size or type of collar or harness for an animal to be tethered.

* Decreased the time from 14 hours to 10 hours for tethering.

* If the dog is an unspayed female without a fence or a barrier to prevent other animals from accessing the dog. It was questioned whether or not this would be enforceable, but it was kept in there to at least try for because if an animal is not spayed and it's tethered without a barrier, any stray animal could come in and attack, kill, try to breed.

* If the animal is sick or injured, those animals can't be left tethered because they can be a sitting duck without a buffer from other animals.

Chair Duerr: Questioned "unspayed female." Wanted to know if it should be gender neutralized or is does it just pertain to females.

Director Schull: Initially, the language was an intact dog and there were questions from a legal perspective about how enforceable that would be. So the "unspayed female" component came into play because that's where the concern comes from – when a female is in heat and is tethered, but agrees it could go either way.

Chair Duerr: Wanted clarification.

Director Schull: Agreed and she sees the importance of both.

Member Rink: Agreed that a dog being tethered without a fence around it is very risky for the animal because there is only fight, no flight, for the animal. But with a female in heat, the pheromones can be distinguished over miles.

She agrees that tethering a dog without a fence around it is a risk for the dog. If there is a fence, why tether?

Director Schull: Confirmed there are a lot of fence jumpers and that is why people tether inside of a fenced area.

Member Rink: Stated that anything is better than nothing on the books, and thinks the language is an improvement and how much it cuts down on desirable situations. If it's not enough, it might have to be revisited in two years.

Chair Duerr: Confirmed that Washoe County only gets two Bills. Wanted to know who is introducing this Bill.

Director Schull: Discussed identifying who is going to sponsor some of the language. They have leads, but it is unclear at this time. Working with partners and NHS. They are not limited to two Bills because Washoe County has opted not to take any Bills forward this session. Currently working through sponsors aside from Washoe County.

Member Payne: Agrees with Member Rink that anything is better than nothing at this point.

Chair Duerr: Compliments Director Schull on all of the improvements. Inquired about #3.

Director Schull: #3 is a clarification. "Any pen or outdoor enclosure that's used to maintain a dog must be appropriate for the size and the breed of the dog with accessible shelter." They have to have the ability to access shelter.

DA Gustafson: Discussing #7 – Penalty Phase. "A person who wilfully and maliciously violates paragraph H (the alcohol and drug paragraph) ... it's essentially negligence if you allow your animal to ingest alcohol or narcotics in a negligent manner, you can be guilty of a gross misdemeanor. But if you literally feed your dog alcohol or narcotics, it's a higher penalty, so you would be guilty of a Category C Felony.

Chair Duerr: Clarified that it says "For your first offense and your second offense," and that the wilful and malicious language is "intentionally feed the animal." Whereas, the accident part would be dealt differently.

DA Gustafson: Confirmed that a person who wilfully and maliciously violates paragraph H.

Chair Duerr: Stated that if the owner is doing it on purpose, wilfully and maliciously, you have a first and second offense. First is a gross misdemeanor. Second is a Category C Felony.

DA Gustafson: Confirmed if an owner is negligent, not wilful or malicious, it is a misdemeanor.

Chair Duerr: Asked versus a gross misdemeanor? Wanted to know where it was covered.

DA Gustafson: Advised it was in new Section 8. “Except as otherwise provided in Subsection 6 and 7, a person who violates Subsection 1, 2, 3 or 5, for the first offense within the immediately preceding 7 years, is guilty of a misdemeanor.”

So it means if the owner is negligently doing the drug offenses, they are guilty of a misdemeanor. If the owner is purposely, wilfully and maliciously doing it, they are guilty of a gross misdemeanor. For the second offense, it would be a Category C Felony.

Chair Duerr: Asked if Section 8 is what the offenses are. Inquired if the new red should have been after the original 7 and 8.

DA Gustafson: Clarified the order of the Subsections – they go from the most egregious to the less egregious.

Director Schull: Discussed #10. “The Court may order the person convicted in violating Subsection 1, 2, 3 or 5, to surrender ownership or possession of a mistreated animal if ownership was not already divested in accordance with 574.203 or 2035.” Clarification only.

Section 6. Suggested to repeal the entire section. Suggesting replacing it by the new abandonment definition.

Updates will continue to be brought to the Board because the language will change more before concluded.

Chair Duerr: Agreed of the importance of the legislative session and updating the laws and making them current. Felt Director Schull’s entire staff will be excited.

Director Schull: Confirmed the process had been started two years ago. It is a constant process and feedback from staff has been provided to enforce statutes and codes.

Chair Duerr: Appreciated the opportunity for the Board’s ability to weigh in on the process. Very rewarding process for everyone.

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT [Non-Action Item]

Director Schull: Animal Intake. Sharing the most recent quarter of the fiscal year currently. Decreased 25% of the same quarter in fiscal 2017. COVID has changed the dynamics of the community and animal ownership.

Animals brought in that were already microchipped. 19% decrease from same quarter in fiscal year 2017. COVID-19 prevented microchipping in 2020 to limit the exposure of the public and staff.

Animal Outcomes. 8 animals died. 85 euthanized. 198 came in as deceased or requested to be disposed of as deceased. 950 were transferred to rescue. 1,070 were return to owner or 46%.

Chair Duerr: Asked for clarification between died, euthanized and disposed.

Director Schull: Confirmed the animals that died were animals that came into care that died while at the shelter or died en route to the shelter. Euthanized are animals that were euthanized at the shelter or animals that were transported to the vet that were injured and then euthanized. Disposals were the animals deceased on the roadway, or a resident whose animal passed away – deceased upon intake.

Euthanasia criteria varied between an animal who medically or behaviorally needs to be euthanized, or a requested euthanasia. Discretionarily, if someone is in a situation where they're unable to get their animal to a vet, or unable to provide the humane option, euthanasia can be provided for those requests.

Chair Duerr: Versus going in for adoption via rescue.

Director Schull: Agreed.

Tammy Jennings: Confirmed the animals that are requested to be euthanized are elderly animals that a senior can't get to a vet. The help is provided to low income and seniors so the animals don't die in their home.

Director Schull: Animals reunited due to a microchip. Field officers scan for the chip and also if a member of the public brings the animal in for scanning. 1,200 animals were returned and 62% were returned to owner. The program is on target for the microchips intended purpose.

Member Rogers: Wanted clarification if the numbers have been benchmarked against other similar programs. Where does 62% stand in comparison?

Director Schull: Hasn't benchmarked specifically animals reunited due to a microchip. Washoe County has one of the highest in the country for return to owner. The average RTO is in the 30's and Washoe County is consistently above 40% for dogs and cats combined. Work is continuous in data and statistics. In many shelters, the free microchip program is out of reach to use as a tool to reunite animals/owners.

Member Dobbs: Another high statistic for Washoe County is the percentage of RTO in the field so they are never entered into the shelter system.

Director Schull: 330 animals reunited in the field last quarter and never entered into the shelter. Most animals that come into care do have a home, and the efforts are crucial to reunite. Many more efforts are being made to get animals reunited prior to being impounded. Strategy continues to bolster the field return percentage.

Animal welfare calls. Did not have an uptick in calls, but in the egregiousness of the nature of calls, and the number of cruelty cases verified with solid evidence. That is the increase. Not able to discuss the outcome due to the back log with the courts, but confirms there are multiple felony cases. 712 calls – down 29% from fiscal year 2017. Citations and NCP's are up 5%.

Tammy Jennings: Presentation on shelter animals. Christmas Enrichment Drive was discussed. Numerous donations came in. Second annual Christmas feast was had for the animals who got a special Christmas dinner. Community members donated beds. A raffle was held for a Roomba. Presented Dori, a young Shepherd, who staff worked with and was adopted.

Director Schull: Confirmed that legislative feedback will continue to be brought to everyone's attention.

Chair Duerr: Congratulated Director Schull on a great report.

6. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD PERIODIC REPORT [For possible action]

Chair Duerr: Discussed that the report covers 2018 and 2019, but not 2020, and is behind.

Director Schull: A lot of feedback and suggestions were incorporated into the report. Moving forward, the template has been made based on the first report. In the fall, the next periodic report can be prepared.

Chair Duerr: Wanted update on presenting to the County Commission.

Director Schull: Changes with the actual report have been made, as well as a power point presentation that will be presented to BOCC. Changes have been made since the public posting and the power point presentation is on BOCC Agenda for February 23rd.

Chair Duerr: Suggested how the Board can be present and participate in BOCC meeting. Commented on how long the meeting was going currently and would accommodate Members accordingly.

Member Anderson: Has to leave at noon.

Member Rink: Needs to leave at 11:30.

Chair Duerr: Confirmed a quorum will remain. Skipping to Item 8.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS [For possible action]

Chair Duerr: Election nominations for election officers. Naomi Duerr is Chair and Dr. Rink is Vice-Chair. Asked for recommendations.

Member Anderson: Made a motion to keep the current slate of officers – Naomi Duerr for Chair and Dr. Rink for Vice-Chair.

Chair Duerr: Thanked him for the nomination and asked for a second.

Member Payne: Seconded the motion.

Chair Duerr: Asked for public comment, and seeing none, vote passed unanimously.

6. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD PERIODIC REPORT [For possible action]

Director Schull: Continuing Item 6. Provided overview of changes made. Table of Contents has been added, and the cover reformatted.

The Board Members list was at the end of the report. It was changed and listed Board Members and contact information at the beginning of the report.

Chair Duerr: Suggested a header “Animal Advisory Board.”

Director Schull: Introduction and Purpose of Advisory Board discussed. Not discussed line by line.

The Board suggested adding 2018 and 2019 statistics, which was included. Everything has been changed to fiscal year statistics, by quarter of fiscal year. Grammatical changes on pages 6, 7, 8. Page 9, changes and clarifications made re: benefit of cost savings for microchip program. Discussed the Free Ride Home program. Discussed the feedback and face-to-face dialogue with field staff, returning animals home, and meeting with owner. Page 10, no substantial changes.

The Board suggested adding a subset with a video. The video also tied into the Enrichment Drive.

Clarified budget and Special Revenue Fund and how the budget is funded by the property tax.

Chair Duerr: Commented on the headings being tied back to Table of Contents which made the report much more readable.

Director Schull: Added changes to simplify the visuals for the budget – tables and actual charts, but no substantive changes to the content (pages 13 and 14). Basic format clean up.

Chair Duerr: Commented on the report’s consistency.

Director Schull: Page 15 – nothing substantive. Discussed strategic objectives, but no major changes.

Page 16 – not many changes. Clarified the importance of training under #4 – FEMA training, NFPA training, etc.

Page 17 – just grammatical and format changes.

Page 21, Special Interest Project – no major content changes.

Page 22, Recommendation to BOCC. Added a new graphic, but no major changes. Last page, Long Term Projects and Objectives – no major changes at all.

Appreciated the feedback from Chair Duerr and ADA Gustafson’s feedback. Hopeful the Board is pleased with the progress made. Wants to polish the report.

Chair Duerr: Agreed the report looks more polished and presented. Feels proud of achievements. Appreciated all the hard work and effort. Asked for comments from the Board.

Member Dobbs: Thought the report was fantastic. Thanked Director Schull on the presentation of the report for Animal Services and the Advisory Board.

Member Payne: Agreed with Member Dobbs. Offered assistance with final proofing.

Member Rink: Commented it could be used as advertisement for WCRAS. Feels that many animal services in the country don’t have what Director Schull has put together.

Chair Duerr: Agreed Member Payne should assist with final proofing.

Director Schull: Asked if Member Payne was interested in additional work.

Member Payne: Offered assistance.

Chair Duerr: Agreed that an extra pair of eyes is helpful. Asked for thoughts on the next report.

Director Schull: The timing would be fall which provides time for end of fiscal year closing projects. Would utilize additional program formats in the next report. Has ideas to integrate for the future report.

Chair Duerr: Asked if the next report would cover FY ‘20 and ‘21.

Director Schull: Confirmed yes.

Chair Duerr: Agreed a two year time period is good.

Director Schull: Agreed. Offered to share power point, if requested.

Chair Duerr: Suggested they move to Item #7 – Guest Presentation.

Member Payne: Agrees it makes sense to move to Item #7.

Chair Duerr: Suggests motion for report be made.

Member Payne: Makes a motion to approve the report for presentation to the BOCC on February 23rd.

Member Anderson: Seconded the motion.

Chair Duerr: Further discussion to inquire if Members could attend, and in what role.

Director Schull: Provided information via Zoom during public comment portion of the meeting.

Chair Duerr: Wondered the time of the BOCC meeting.

Director Schull: Meeting starts at 10am.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know the length of the meeting.

Director Schull: Advised the length of the meeting depends on the Agenda, and will share an update at a later time.

Chair Duerr: Motion carried unanimously.

7. GUEST PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION [For possible action]

Chair Duerr: Introduces presentation from the Nevada State Director for the Humane Society of the US, Jeff Dixon.

Jeff Dixon: Introduced himself to the Board. His presentation is seeking the support of the property tax bill. Shared basic information, however, a Bill is not available yet. He asked for a statement of support from the Board to the State Legislature on the Bill.

He is advocating for ways to save and improve animals' lives. When asking animal welfare organizations about barriers to placing animals, a common refrain is landlords and HOA's breed policies due to the fact that their property insurance requires the breed policy.

State Farm and USAA do not require breed policies.

It's been concluded that fear and stigma has attached to breeds which has made its way to underwriting policies of insurance firms. The Bill proposes that property insurance firms may not consider a dog's breed in their underwriting decisions unless, and if, they can show their work to the State Insurance Division. It doesn't apply to lawfully determined vicious dogs. Pennsylvania and Michigan have a similar law. Vermont, Connecticut and Massachusetts have issued desk drawer rules prohibiting breed discrimination. Illinois and New York are currently considering similar bills.

If Nevada joins the other states, there will be great benefits to the breed restrictions. The breed restricted dogs take longer to be rehomed and also are euthanized for space considerations. The law would require the HOA's and landlords to allow the dogs included in the breed policies.

The Bill would benefit Nevada public to rent or buy because more units will be opened up for families to have a stigmatized breed. Families won't have to look for scarce housing in order for their animals to be accepted. In Southern Nevada, this situation leads to owner surrenders.

If there is more available housing that will accept the breed restricted animals, the animals spend less time in a shelter, don't get euthanized for space. The Bill is good for dogs, people, animal welfare partners. Feels that Nevada needs to be a state that opposes breed discrimination and honors the lives of the animals.

Chair Duerr: Asked the Board Members for questions.

Member Anderson: No questions, but thanked Mr. Dixon and advised he's in support of the Bill.

Member Dobbs: Thanked Mr. Dixon for the program. Provided a statement of support and discussed how emotionally hard it is for families who love their pets, and then are required to surrender their animals. Discussed how hard it is to find a loving home for an animal that already has a loving home, but has to be surrendered. Personally knows landlords who are willing to open up to more dogs, but because they can't obtain insurance coverage, they can't rent to those individuals.

Member Payne: Voiced her support.

Chair Duerr: Thanked Mr. Dixon for the presentation.

Member Dobbs: Added that Mr. Dixon shared with SPCA a survey link to get stories from Nevadans on how breed discrimination has impacted their ability to find adequate housing. Encouraged all to share via email, social media.

Member Anderson: Made a motion to approve proposed letter of support.

Chair Duerr: Noted no public comment and affirmed motion.

Member Anderson: Clarified the motion to be a letter of support to prevent property insurance companies from excluding specific breeds of dogs from policy coverage.

Member Dobbs: Seconded the motion.

Chair Duerr: Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Dixon: Thanked the Board.

Chair Duerr: Inquired if there was other discriminatory language with HOA's, like size of the animal, and should it be a future conversation? Or should it be left to the landowner to set size restrictions?

Mr. Dixon: Discussed last legislative session with Assemblywoman Hansen, they went after no pet policies, and prohibited those going forward in HOA's. Size of the animal hasn't been dealt with. No efforts currently to take on size restrictions, although it's not ruled out yet.

Chair Duerr: Confirmed that he went after a policy that said "No Pets."

Mr. Dixon: Confirmed and advised it was passed. The commercial rental property owner cannot have a policy for "No Pets" unless they had a policy before the Bill passed already.

Chair Duerr: Wanted it to know if it was all commercial facilities and/or private landlords.

Mr. Dixon: Just applies to common interest communities – HOA's.

Chair Duerr: Appreciated the information.

9. WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS AND/OR STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS, REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS
[Non-action item]

Chair Duerr: Commented that Director Schull would provide a good presentation.

Member Payne: Commented in the Q&A, the gentleman who wanted to make public comment previously has fixed his microphone and would like to speak.

Chair Duerr: Asked for additional recommendations, announcements, agenda items.

Director Schull: Reminded everyone of the next scheduled Advisory Board meeting is April 23rd, at 9:30 a.m., and will be virtual unless otherwise noted.

Chair Duerr: Closed the item.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT [Non-action item]

Public comment was attempted by Lance, but the audio was incomplete.

11. ADJOURNMENT [Non-Action Item]

Chair Duerr declared the meeting adjourned.