

Washoe County Regional Animal Services Advisory Board

**DRAFT OF MINUTES-VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING**

Friday, April 23, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.  
WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES  
CENTER CLASSROOM  
2825 LONGLEY LANE, #A, RENO, NV

**MEMBERS**

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

**ABSENT:** Irene Payne, Kitty Jung, Al Rogers

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT [Non-Action Item]**

MS. CYNTHIA: Read e-mail into the record re: 01/24/2020 and proposed changes to Washoe County's Dangerous Dog Code. Inquired as to revisions to the Code. NRS 202.500 was discussed. Washoe County Code 55.790 also discussed. Sought clarification of "vicious" and "dangerous." Her comments exceeded the three minutes of comment, and she was invited to provide public comment later at the meeting.

**3. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 29, 2021 MINUTES [For possible action]**

Member Anderson: Motion to approve the Minutes.

Member Dobbs: Seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

#### **4. UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT FOR TWO UPCOMING ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER POSITION OPENINGS [Non-Action Item]**

Director Schull: General discussion of National Lost Dog Awareness Day. Raising awareness through social media and drawing attention to the free microchip program.

Confirmed there are two upcoming openings for two Board seats on the Advisory Board and will be recruiting through May 14, 2021. The BOCC will appoint members once applications are received. The veterinary technician seat (Dr. Rink currently holds) and seat for real estate or business professional (Al Rogers currently holds). The terms are four year terms.

Chair Duerr: Asked about who actually makes the choice for the seat vacancies.

Director Schull: Applications are presented to BOCC and they make the selection.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know if the Advisory Board makes a recommendation for the position.

Director Schull: Confirms that it is for informational purposes only to the AB.

Chair Duerr: Encouraged Dr. Rink to reapply.

Member Rink: Confirmed she is not going to reapply. She has done 4 years, and enjoyed it very much, and will be volunteering elsewhere.

Chair Duerr: Suggested the members reach out to people who would be interested in applying.

Director Schull: Has not heard from Al Rogers if he will reapply. Terms will end on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Expressed her thanks to Al Rogers and Dr. Rink for their time to the community and the department.

Chair Duerr: Confirmed this will be their last meeting.

Member Anderson: Thanked Dr. Rink for her service and he enjoyed working with her.

Member Dobbs: Agreed with Member Anderson and Chair Duerr's comments.

Chair Duerr: Confirmed Member Payne will be joining the meeting shortly. She had it mis-calendared.

Director Schull: Confirmed that May 14, 2021, is the closing the recruitment. Offered to re-send the link to the Board for reference for the applicants.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know when the matter would be brought to BOCC.

Director Schull: Would like to bring it to BOCC no later than the first part of June.

Chair Duerr: Would like the memo and attached applications sent to the Board.

Member Payne: Joins the meeting.

Chair Duerr: Brought Member Payne up to speed on the meeting.

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

Director Schull: Discussed quarterly data that is shared with all members of the last quarter, and a comparison of the previous four years quarters of data.

Animal Intake. Experienced the lowest quarter of intakes this last quarter in five years. A 10% decrease. Had 2,092 animals this last quarter which is down 10% from 2,334 in 2017. Feels that the decrease may have to do with COVID and still many working from home.

Discussed the incident of the multiple dogs that were dumped in the Sun Valley Park recently. Discussed the issue with the press to raise community awareness to any potential tips of who might be dumping the dogs and provide a more humane outlet if people have to dump/rehome animals. A total of 37 dogs were impounded – all small and similar breeds. It took approximately 40 hours to trap, lure, build a trust with the animals. The community got involved with feeding them which made it more difficult to catch. Also indicated there were five dogs dumped in Red Rock at the same time and could be related to these dogs and came from the same place.

Worked with the community, NHS and Res-que and every dog from Sun Valley Park has either been adopted or in a foster home preparing for adoption. NHS got involved and the community stepped up in providing homes for all the dogs. Really wanted the community to know there are better ways to rehome animals and to use the available resources.

Member Dobbs: Congratulated Director Schull on a job well done.

Member Payne: Agreed with Member Dobbs and appreciated all the work done.

Chair Duerr: Agreed with all comments.

Director Schull: Animals impounded that were already microchipped. Small decrease from same quarter in fiscal year 2017. COVID-19 prevented microchipping in 2020 to limit the exposure of the public and staff and was by appointment only. Hopefully, will resume normal business practices. 858 animals were chipped already versus 859 from five years prior.

Animal Outcomes. 2,219 animal outcomes recorded last quarter. Down 52% in euthanizing animals. 13-1/2% increase in return to home animals. Generally maintains above 30% rescue transfer. The next Board meeting will provide information to further increase return to home strategies and goals. 51% returned by chip out of all returned to home.

The microchip program is very successful since 2013. They have microchipped over 30,000 animals in Washoe County.

Presented sick cat story. Stray cats are generally not picked up unless they are injured, sick or they've bitten someone. The cat was impounded and it had a microchip that went back to someone who lost the cat 14 years ago. Commented that it was the longest separation/reunification experienced in the department. The microchip program is very successful.

Chair Duerr and Member Dobbs commented on what a great story it was.

Director Schull: Discusses the return to owner in the field versus shelter. There was a small decrease in the number of animals returned in the field versus in the shelter. Still continuing to get as many animals reunited with owners as soon as possible.

Presented the story of Evie, an Australian-Shepherd that was separated from her owner and running around McCarran and Prater in and out of traffic. Evie was eventually captured and was returned to owner. This story was used to share most recent addition to the services of the personal ID tag machine. All tags are pre-engraved with WCRAS information as well as the owner's information. The tags are a donation basis only.

Chair Duerr: Commented on the program and shared a story about successful reunification by having the tags identified.

Director Schull: Will provide information at the next meeting about other strategies to empower the community to be the reunifier. States there are a number of community members who want to reunite an animal without having to bring it to the shelter.

Chair Duerr: Commented about neighbor's personal horses and goats that were loose in her neighborhood and returned because of identification.

Director Schull: Discussed welfare calls. WCRAS is following along with the uptick in welfare calls with stronger case reports, stronger relations with DA's Office. In 2020, it felt like a lot of cases were reported, however, particularly egregious cases. 641% increase in number of cases prosecuted with charges versus five years ago.

Field Calls for Service. There was a decrease in the calls for service in the last quarter. 6,876 calls for service last quarter; which is 7.6% decrease from four years prior. Complexity of the cases to include permit applications, more cruelty cases, more work involved with each call.

Emerging Developments. Animal Services has been tracking 11-12 Bills in the Legislative Session this year. Unable to successfully find a sponsor for priorities. Many priorities were to strengthen the cruelty statues, as well as NRS 171.1775(1) which clarifies an Animal Control Officer's authority to cite under NRS. Will continue with priorities.

Chair Duerr: Recap. Wanted to know about Dangerous Dog. Wanted clarification on what Bills got picked up in the legislative session.

Director Schull: Stated NRS 171.1775(1) has been picked up and included in AB 170. If it passes, the amendment will be included that clarifies an Animal Control Officer's authority to cite under local code as well as NRS 574. That was the number one priority.

The next priorities were strengthening some of the animal cruelty codes, defining abandonment, tethering. None of these were able to get a sponsor. All the work put in thus far can be carried forward to the next session and hopefully identify a sponsor for next session.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know who the sponsor was for AB 170.

Director Schull: Martinez.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know if letters in support would help.

Director Schull: Agreed that letters would help.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to confirm that the bills have been passed to the Senate now.

Director Schull: Wasn't sure.

Chair Duerr: Confirmed that the Bill starts in the Assembly. It goes to Committee, get voted out, be on the floor. Wanted to know if the Bill has been voted off the floor of the Assembly.

Director Schull: Could not confirm.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to know if an update could be provided without violating the open meeting law by sending an update without members responding. Encouraged members to write a letter of support so Assemblyman Martinez is aware of support. Wanted to know if Director Schull testified on the Bill.

Director Schull: Confirmed she did not testify. Feels there are still some challenges in the Bill and attempting to convey concerns and changes.

Chair Duerr: Wants that information so letters of support can have correct information. Requests further coordination and for the Advisory Board to be further involved.

Director Schull: Providing update on Dangerous Dog Code revisions. A working group is set up with all involved to continue the code amendment for Dangerous Dog Code. No time line for presentation, but language is consistently being updated.

Discussed National Animal Care & Control Appreciation Week. Made a video to raise level of awareness in the community and presented to Advisory Board. (Plays video for AB). Commented on the hard working staff and complimented them.

Member Dobbs: Commented on WCRAS and other shelters, as well as SPCA, that she's doing presentations to news staff, volunteers, donors, members of the community, how all work together in Northern Nevada.

Member Rink: Congratulated Director Schull on the quality of work.

Member Anderson: Echoed comments. Director Schull and staff are doing a great job.

Chair Duerr: Suggested taking apart the video so all comments could be read. Suggested it be posted somewhere that people could view it.

Director Schull: Advised that she is planning in integrating all information into the website which she hopes to present to the Board at the next meeting. Wants the community to have important information on the website.

Animal Services nominated DDA Chris Day for the National Animal Care Control Bill Lehman Memorial Award who has been so important to misdemeanor and felony animal cruelty cases.

Chair Duerr: Wanted to confirm it was national.

Director Schull: Clarified that it is an award for someone who has contributed to Animal Services, exceptional awareness in animal welfare and care, and merits distinction. He has provided excellent work to the department for the last 5-6 years. He has also provided training to the department to prepare cruelty case reports, conduct cruelty investigations. He has assisted with warrants and developed a streamline process for submitting felony cases directly to him.

Chair Duerr: Congratulated the entire process and suggested a visit with him at a meeting to get to know him better.

Member Dobbs: Agreed.

Member Anderson: Agreed.

Member Payne: Agreed. Suggested a press release and let local media know.

Director Schull: Advised that Mr. Day is no longer with the DA's Office, but still made sure to recognize him and provided information in the newsletter.

Chair Duerr: Suggested trying to track down Mr. Day and would like to meet with him.

Director Schull: Will try to bring him back to recognize him.

Turned over the presentation to Assistant Director, Tammi Jennings.

Member Rink: Wanted clarification on 50,000 or 500,000 for the grants.

T. Jennings: Presented information re: two different grants from the ASPCA that totaled \$50,000. They partnered with SPCA of Northern Nevada to start spay/neuter program. \$20,000 to start with which allowed the purchase of much needed equipment. It was \$20 for dogs, \$10 for cats for the public.

An additional grant was received for \$30,000 to allow for expansion of the program. Over 538 dogs and cats were spayed/neutered. Additionally, partnered with SPCA and Options Vet Hospital to assist with medical needs for residents of the community who may have had serious medical needs with animals, the grant provided assistance in paying for those services.

Also, some of the funds were used to provide supplies for Our Place to help transition people who are homeless families, women/children who wanted to keep their pets. Provided vaccinations and additional medical care.

Partnerships have been continued even though the grants have expired.

Chair Duerr: Inquired about Our Place and what percentage of people come in with pets.

T. Jennings: Did not have that information, but informed that many supplies and animal food were provided. Also worked with Options Vet Care to make sure all animals are vaccinated before they enter the shelter.

Chair Duerr: Wondered if that amount could be narrowed down.

T. Jennings: Would be able to get that information. Another presentation will be put together regarding Our Place and other groups and will be available at the next meeting.

Happy Tails. Presented Lobo who was confiscated from a terrible situation when he was tethered to a pole. In January of 2020, they kept Lobo until he was released in November of 2020. Lobo was very malnourished. He is now a happy, healthy dog and released to NHS and has a new home.

The owners of Lobo pled guilty to endangering an animal. They were fined and had to pay restitution and given community service. They are also not allowed to own animals for at least two years.

Presented Blaze and Red who came in January of 2020. They were in a bad situation and not being taken care of or fed properly. Red is 18-19 years old. Blaze is 5 years old. Pictures indicate how much they are underweight. Brought Red and Blaze in for vet work, dental work, farriers. Red had an abscess in his foot.

The owner was found guilty of animal cruelty and ordered to pay restitution for all expenses. Blaze and Red were released and have gained weight. Blaze gained over 100 pounds. Red gained 85 pounds. Teeth and feet in great shape. Blaze is actually running barrels in Oregon. Red has a great home and pasture.

Member Dobbs: Thanked T. Jennings for a job well done. Loved hearing the stories.

Chair Duerr: Agreed.

T. Jennings: Officer Faber was going out weekly and making sure they were okay so that when it went to court that there would be a conviction.

Director Schull: Commented on the complexity and nature of the work that the staff are doing, all staff are involved in the follow up that is required of these cases. The cases are extremely taxing but very rewarding when they come full circle and the animals go to great homes.

T. Jennings: Discussed future topics – the partnership with Our Place and other collaborations that follow in that same pattern. Also working with regional parks re: issues of off leash dog parks, on leash dog areas. Updates will be provided at the next Board meeting.

Chair Duerr: Confirmed the Director's Report was concluded and commented on a great presentation.

Member Dobbs: Agreed. Great presentation and liked the visuals on how the data is being presented. Enjoys the stories about the convictions of animal cruelty. Improvement is just fantastic.

Member Anderson: Wanted Director Schull to let the team know how much they are appreciated. Looking forward to Our Place information.

Chair Duerr: Recognizes the amount of work required to make such a difference. Wants to make sure the Advisory Board is remembered as support. Wanted thoughts from Director Schull about the interactive process with the Board and how they can continue the support.

Director Schull: Appreciates the dialogue and partnership with the Advisory Board. Feels it is becoming more systematic in preparing for things and tracking statistics. Appreciates the purpose of the Board and contributions. Very happy with the progress.

Thanked everyone who attended the BOCC meeting in support. Has not heard back on the periodic report or recommendations. Staff meetings have occurred re: social media platform and more discussions will be held. She presented to the BOCC as to why Animal Services would benefit greatly with their own social media.

Chair Duerr: Appreciated the comments.

Member Payne: Agreed that the Advisory Board are biggest advocates. Invited Director Schull to send information and she will forward it. Will advocate and attend zoom/in person for Animal Services having the ability to post on social media.

Chair Duerr: Reminded that Member Payne was the communications director for WCSD and is advocating the individual social media presence.

Member Payne: Feels that immediacy for social media is necessary. The communications team sometimes delays the process in posting for lost pets, and social media platform just for Animal Services would be so beneficial.

Member Rink: Congratulated Director Schull on a job well done. Appreciates the format the reports are in. Transparency is important. Feels that the

recognition of staff is a strike of genius. The whole program is working so well.

Director Schull: Would really like to have her staff speak on camera and to represent the boots on the ground who actually do the hard work, however, staff is extremely camera shy. Baby steps.

Member Payne: Advised she's done a substantial amount of media training. Offered to come in and do media training with the team.

Director Schull: Advised that some of the staff has taken the Washoe County Media Training through the communications team. Most are terrified.

Member Payne: Understood it's not comfortable going in front of a camera. Practice is necessary and makes perfect.

Chair Duerr: Closing out agenda item.

**6. 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: Inquired if anyone had anything to request or announce.

Member Dobbs: Sought clarification regarding the Align Care program which helps provide access to qualified individuals for vet services, and wanted to know if she could share the information, but include "Do Not Respond" on the email.

DA Gustafson: Agreed that process should be followed if sending something to Advisory Board members. But if it's information under the jurisdiction of the Advisory Board to make a recommendation on, she recommends there would be no discussion about the item. Suggested "Do Not Hit Reply All." Items can always be put on the Agenda for the next meeting.

Member Dobbs: Advised she will be sharing the information so the community is aware.

Director Schull: Suggested to send the information out to the masses prior to the next meeting, and share with the Board as well.

Member Dobbs: Requested the matter be agendaized for Align Care Veterinary Financial Assistance Program for the next meeting.

Chair Duerr: Discussed a recent situation wherein they all received letters from a resident re: a situation where their dog had bitten someone off property. It was reported to a doctor who are required to report dog bites and the dog was impounded. The dog was quarantined for 10 days.

Wants this matter to be agendaized. Thinks this matter should have discussion with the Advisory Board to determine possible changes and further discussion.

Discussion re: next meeting was requested.

Director Schull: Next scheduled Advisory Board meeting is July 23, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. Not determined yet whether it will be in-person or virtually. Updates will be provided to the Board.

She will delete the calendar request that exists. Mandy will create a new calendar request for the entire calendar year.

All Members in agreement that July 23, 2021, works for their schedules.

Director Schull: Thinks a legislative update would be available by the next meeting. Possibly a Dangerous Dog Code update. Also, Our Place and regional park partnerships will have substantial updates.

Chair Duerr: Inquired if it will be a bigger meeting.

Director Schull: Agreed it could be.

Chair Duerr: Requested any further comments.

Member Dobbs: Announced that WCRAS and SPCA ran a joint campaign about hot cars and pets left inside. The same campaign will run again. Requested support to share information from the Board to help get information to the community. Trying to figure out a way to see if the animal is actually in a need.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENT [Non-action item]**

Ms. Nielsen: Wanted to make sure her email gets to those who are working on the Dangerous Dog Code and was hopeful the next meeting would provide updates.

Chair Duerr: Thanked Ms. Nielsen for being involved. Also clarified the positions of the members of the Board and their positions as such.

**8. ADJOURNMENT [Non-Action Item]**

Chair Duerr declared the meeting adjourned and thanked Dr. Rink again for her services and wished her well.

Member Rink: Thanked everyone.