

Approval of the meeting minutes from July 14, 2016

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL CENTER FOR ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION HELD AT 11:00 A.M. ON THURSDAY, JULY 14, 2016, IN THE COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT THE NOEL C. TAYLOR MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 215 CHURCH AVENUE, ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan O'Donnell  
Christopher Morrill  
Barry W. Thompson  
Tim Jones  
Gary Larrowe

OTHERS PRESENT: David Flagler  
Anne Marie Green  
Andrea Trent  
Tony Zerrilla  
Anne Cantrell

Mr. Morrill called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and Ms. Trent called the roll.

Mr. Morrill asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Mr. O'Donnell requested to add under Section 3, Operations, Item G, a discussion of the review of the process of decision making pertaining to euthanasia of animals in light of the recent concerns of the public and volunteers.

Mr. Larrowe made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2016 meeting; the motion was seconded by Mr. Jones and carried by a voice vote, all members present voting in favor.

The next item on the agenda was the operations update. Mr. Flagler commented that they have subscribed with Google to assist individuals that have questions about the RCACP and for the last three months they have been receiving statistics. They have been averaging around 9,000 hits a month with 242 searching for the telephone number and 93 searching for directions.

The report with the agenda provided the statistics for April, May and June. He next commented that during the quarter there was a total intake of 1,274 dogs and cats with a total live release rate of 82% (73% for cats and 96% for dogs). With regard to a history of the live release rate, the records go to 2008 which showed a total live release rate of about 40%. Through the years a 30% rate was maintained until around 2011 when it began to increase. In 2011 the rate was 47%, in 2012 it was 67%, in 2013 it was 62%, in 2014 it was 70% and in 2015 it was 75% and the average for 2016 is 81%. In comparison to other shelters in Virginia, the live release rate for county shelters is about 80% and for cities it is about 85%. We are about 10% above other shelters in Virginia.

With regard to adoptions, there were 40 in April, 40 in May and 50 in June. They are in the process of filling the Adoption Coordinator position. Under General Operations, the Roanoke County Human Resources Department conducted a staff survey to look at employment satisfaction and have been providing training for the RCACP staff.

With regard to the Volunteer Program, for April, May and June, they averaged around 250 hours each month with an average of two-three new volunteers a month. Also, during this quarter, averages of 150-200 volunteer hours were reported completed from at home.

Mr. Flagler commented that they had teamed up with the Roanoke Police for their Etch & Pet event in April and in June they had an adopt a Kitten Me'ow event where six animals were adopted.

For the grant update, at the last meeting, he requested permission to go to PetSmart Charities. PetSmart Charities is in the process of closing their Rescue Wagon transport program. This will be the last month that animals will be transported out of state to other shelters. When the decision was made to close the program, they visited each of the shelters and indicated they wanted to provide some funding to be able to continue the transport programs. He had requested to be allowed to start a program of pet retention. One of the items discussed at the last meeting was the shelter being prepared for disasters and he had also approached PetSmart Charities about the possible purchase of a generator. They will fund most of it, but RCACP may have to supplement the installation costs.

Mr. Morrill asked about the impact of the loss of the PetSmart transport. Mr. Flagler responded that they were committed to provide 15 animals per month, but it was a struggle to meet that commitment. Also, they have discussed concerns that some of the local rescues would like to have access to those animals which would allow more animals to be rescued and available for adoption locally. Mr. Morrill next asked for some scenarios where this might be beneficial to a pet. Mr. Flagler commented that often times the animals that come into the shelter have medical issues that have created a financial burden too great for the owner. They will be networking with Angels of Assisi to assist in providing the medical treatment for these animals. Some animals may be exhibiting behavior problems and they have a couple of behaviorists in the area that are willing to work with the shelter and the shelter will pay for the first visit. Also, they always provide food for owners who may be short on funds to hopefully prevent them from immediately having to surrender their animals. Another scenario can be to provide temporary housing for animals for a family that might become homeless to give them a chance to get their feet back on the ground.

Mr. Morrill requested that Mr. Flagler step up the spay/neuter program to try and get the intake numbers even lower than they are and to target different neighbors and increase education out in the community. Mr. Flagler responded they would do that and commented on the community being very fortunate to have two low-costs spay/neuter clinics which they work to assist in getting grants and some of the successful programs have been targeting specific zip codes. They also have increased their fostering program and currently have 47 cats in foster care.

The next item on the agenda was the item relating to the euthanasia procedures. Mr. O'Donnell commented that based on the concerns that have been in emails and media reports from the public and some volunteers about the euthanasia practices at the shelter, it is important to understand the process that is set up in the intergovernmental agreement as well as the internal policy and operational documents such as the volunteer's handbook. Essentially, there is a separate Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee which oversees more of the day to day operations and the budget. It is important that all of the concerns be heard and that the proper mechanism to have those concerns reviewed carefully and consistent with the agreement and policies is to refer them to the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee. He requested a special meeting in 30 days to for the Committee to report on their recommendations. Mr. O'Donnell made a motion to refer the issues to the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee and convene a special meeting for the Executive Committee 30 days from receipt of the report.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Jones. Mr. Thompson commented that this is the appropriate Committee to review these issues after which the motion was carried by a voice vote, all members present voting in favor.

With regard to the Operations Committee report, Mr. Flagler commented that this Committee made up of the Chief Animal Control Officers for each jurisdiction met on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Two items that were discussed were the discrepancies between the jurisdictions as to the hold times they are using and the increase in medical costs to each of the jurisdictions. Mr. Morrill asked Mr. Flagler to describe how the process currently works.

Mr. Flagler responded that animals that are brought in during their stray-hold time and the hold time is based on the policy of the jurisdiction. If the animal has a medical issue during that time, then the Animal Control Officer on call will take the animal to the veterinarian and bring it back to the shelter if it is found to be fit. If the animal is owner surrendered, then it immediately becomes the responsibility of the shelter and after it completes the stray-hold period, becomes the responsibility of the shelter. At the end of the stray-hold time, all of the responsibility for medical care falls on the shelter. Over the last several years, a lot of the jurisdictions were finding veterinary clinics that would provide discounted services for them, but many of them have gone away. Now, they are paying the full price for the medical treatment and having to wait their turn which is tying up the officer.

The next item on the agenda was the Fiscal and Administration Operations report. Mr. Zerrilla commented that the financial statements provided in the agenda are from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. They are preliminary and there could be adjustments to the figures going forward as the fiscal agent finalizes them on an accrual basis. With respect to revenues and eliminating the beginning balance shown and the transfer of an additional deposit to reserve and compare to the actual revenues, they were \$1,200,000 compared to \$1,194,000, which is \$7,000 more than budget and those are reflected in donations and fees over and above budgeted revenues. The budget expenditures were \$1,282,000 and actual expenditures were \$1,254,000 with expenditures being 2% less than budgeted for the fiscal year. If the encumbrances are added in, that would make a \$23,000 savings versus budget on the expenditure side. The Reserve Utilization report will be covered under old business. Ms. Trent commented that there is included in the agenda package is an engagement letter from the auditing firm Robinson, Farmer & Cox for the annual audit.

Under new business, Mr. Morrill commented that the Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Board meeting schedule was included in the agenda package. Mr. O'Donnell commented on adding the special meeting in 30 days.

Under old business, Ms. Green commented that the roof replacement and skylights were discussed at a prior meeting. An estimate was provided at that time of \$164,000 for the roof and \$13,345 for the skylights. The bids came back slightly above this amount with the low bid being \$175,000 and the skylights were less at \$13,000 plus some ancillary small costs which will be slightly more than the estimate. There is funding to cover this, but wanted to let the Executive Committee know. There were three bids received and the others were substantially higher. The company that came out for the mandatory pre-bid did not put in a bid. The others exceeded \$200,000. She will tell General Services to go ahead and proceed, but she does not know when the work will be started. It should not cause any disruption of services.

Under public comments:

Robin Barnhill - suggested two Board members, two staff members, two volunteers and two individuals from the outside review the policies, procedures, criteria so everyone understands.

Megan Spence - read a letter from her father Dr. James Franko which is attached to these minutes and made a part of the record.

Melissa Simmons - commented on her attempt to adopt a dog from the shelter that was euthanized before she could adopt it.

Karen Crawford - suggested combining the positions of Director and Director of Operations as they have been in the past, the need for a full-time veterinarian at the pound, Volunteer Service Specialist/Rescue Coordinator position is a lot for one person to handle efficiently and the Kennel Director needs more staff.

Sarah Martin – requested thorough investigation into the structure, policies, practices and the quality of animal care at the pound and require that the Director and Director of Operations be required to step down pending the outcome.

Delores Joiner – commented on the dress code policy for the shelter and the fact that it is the only shelter that does not have an organized play area.

Bonny Lee – commented on the number of deaths in the United States from canine attacks. She asked if the county had passed an ordinance that allows up to four dogs in a household as long as at least one of those dogs is a “foster” and Mr. O’Donnell responded yes. Another question regarding dogs that have been deemed dangerous will be addressed when the euthanasia policy is reviewed. She also asked if Roanoke County had leash laws. She asked Chief Tim Jones who the Animal Control reports to in the City of Roanoke and he responded Lieutenant Daniel Hartman. Other questions that she posed are attached to these minutes and made a part of the record.

Karen Williams – mother of Jordan Pruitt who made it clear to staff and everyone at the RCACP that she wanted to adopt Smokey and Murray if they posted as going on the list, but she never received a phone call, commented that dogs should be re-evaluated instead of making the decision to have them euthanized.

Dennis Yarnold – commented on dog breed branding, wanted to know if the public has a voice on how the pound is being run and read a letter he wrote to Karen Crawford concerning the putting down of Smokey and other animals. He volunteers and fosters for Campbell County and it is much more difficult to foster here. He had an idea of taking dogs that were friendly to the dog park as a volunteer and he was told that is not possible and did not understand why.

Trina Tampa – commented on the adoption of a dog named Trap and her inquiry about other dogs. She was not advised of his medical history and he became ill four days later and was told by their veterinarian that he was dying with pneumonia and could have distemper. She also commented that after she took dog back to pound and told them she had been lied to, some volunteers put derogatory remarks on Facebook. A gentleman also made comments, but was not identified on the recording.

Teresa Love – commented that the RCACP pound and procedures need to be evaluated, it needs to become a no-kill shelter, needs to be more education about spay and neutering and micro-chips, website needs to be updated regularly, there is no customer assistance if you call the pound and there needs to be education on the difference between kennel stress and actual aggression.

Cassandra Knipp – commented on how volunteers feel when they go into the facility and provided copies of statements from individuals and other documents that are attached to these minutes and made a part of the record.

Marion Jordan – commented on the disrespect shown to the volunteers and she would like to see things change.

Vickie Sanders – expressed thanks to volunteers and requested the resignation of the Director.

With no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry W. Thompson  
Recording Secretary

Approval of the special meeting minutes from August 26, 2016

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL CENTER FOR ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION HELD AT 2:00 P.M. ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 2016, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT THE NOEL C. TAYLOR MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 215 CHURCH AVENUE, ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan O'Donnell  
Christopher Morrill  
Barry W. Thompson  
Tim Jones  
Gary Larrowe

OTHERS PRESENT: David Flagler  
Anne Marie Green  
Andrea Trent  
Tony Zerrilla  
Anne Cantrell

Mr. Morrill called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and Ms. Trent called the roll.

Mr. Zerrilla first commented that at the last meeting of the Executive Committee on July 14, 2016, the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee was directed to review the concerns of the volunteers and citizens, along with the input from RCACP staff, regarding euthanasia decision making practices and report back to the Executive Committee as to the propriety of such decisions. The members of the Committee are Tony Zerrilla, Andrea Trent, Anne Marie Green and Anne Cantrell.

The Committee members gave a PowerPoint presentation and provided a report of their findings which included a recommendation from the Committee. The PowerPoint presentation and printed report are attached to these minutes and will be made a part of the permanent record.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if there is a legal length of time that the shelter has to keep an animal. Ms. Trent responded there are stray-hold periods depending on how the animal comes to the shelter and whether or not there is identification. If it is totally unidentified, it is a shorter period of time. In order to increase the live-release rate, the shelter does house them longer than is required. Mr. O'Donnell next asked if there is a process to accredit open-intake facilities like the shelter. Mr. Morrill asked if this would be part of the Police Department's accreditation and Mr. Jones responded that they do look at animal control.

Mr. Morrill asked about the play area and how could we make that happen. Ms. Green responded that she had done some research and had received information from individuals who would be willing to assist by making this a project of their own. They have some funding and are looking to get other sponsored funding. In working with Mr. Flagler and his staff, they have identified three different areas as a possible location for the play area. They agreed it is a viable option and are looking for a recommendation from the Executive Committee.

Mr. Morrill commented on the volunteer program and with the Board approval, he would like to appoint an outside task force that can look at the volunteer program and at best practices around the State. He has asked Lisa O'Neill if she would chair the task force because Angels of Assisi has a very active and successful volunteer program. He will work with her to put together this task force and that group can come forward with some recommendations.

Mr. Morrill commented that the information provided today would be made available on the RCACP website and the Committee can do a follow-up on the information at the October meetings. He would try to have the recommendations on the volunteers program.

He next commented to those in the audience that during this process we have to be a community where we can hear each other's views and talk respectfully. He understands that people are passionate, but that does not provide a license for character assassination and harassment. He asked that if anyone sees that happening to please let those individuals know that this not how we do things in our community.

With no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry W. Thompson  
Recording Secretary