

RCACP Executive Committee Meeting

August 26,
2016

The Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection (RCACP) (<http://rcacp.org/>) serves the City of Roanoke, the Counties of Botetourt and Roanoke, and the Town of Vinton, and is an “open intake facility.” The Regional Center primarily handles stray animals picked up by the Animal Control Officers employed by the municipalities, but also accepts strays found, and animals owned, by citizens of the municipalities.

Mission Statement

To provide temporary shelter for stray, abandoned, and surrendered animals to return them to their owners or find them permanent suitable new homes. To provide cost effective sheltering through a regional partnership to ensure the highest live release rate practical for our community.

Contents

Meeting Agenda.....	5
Fiscal and Administrative Operations Special Report.....	7
Background.....	9
Euthanasia Decision.....	9
The Decision Makers	10
Criteria for Evaluating Animals for Euthanasia.....	10
Summary	12
Recommendations.....	13
Appendix.....	14
Roll Call.....	15
Motion for Closed Meeting.....	16
Certification for Closed Meeting.....	17
Research Sources.....	18

Meeting Agenda

Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection (RCACP)
Executive Committee

August 26, 2016
Noel C. Taylor (Roanoke City) Municipal Building – Council Chambers
215 Church Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24011

2:00 PM

1. Roll Call
2. Report - Fiscal and Administrative Operations Special Report
3. Next Meeting – October 13, 2016, 11:00 a.m., Roanoke City Council Conference Room
4. Adjournment

Fiscal and Administrative Operations Special Report

**Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection (RCACP)
Euthanasia Practices
Special Report
August 26, 2016**

Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection Executives Quarterly Meeting, July 13, 2016 meeting minutes excerpt:

The Executive Committee directs the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee to review the concerns of the volunteers and citizens, along with input from RCACP staff, regarding euthanasia decision-making practices, and report back to the Executive Committee as to the propriety of such decisions. The RCACP Executive Committee will schedule a special meeting to review the report with the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee. Such special meeting will be held within 30 days.

The Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee presents the following information in support of the review requested by the Executives and the concerns expressed by both volunteers and citizens. Please note, as the committee compiled its research, a number of resources for information was utilized. Every effort has been made to summarize these sources in the appendix to this report to document the depth of information and data reviewed by the committee.

The Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection (RCACP) is an “*open-admission/intake*” shelter supporting the counties of Botetourt and Roanoke, the city of Roanoke and the town of Vinton, VA. This means every companion animal in need of shelter and care is welcome at the center. Animals are offered a refuge, regardless of whether staff believes that animal is adoptable, with a dedication to preventing animal suffering and cruelty, and to providing quality care for every animal. The mission of RCACP is to provide temporary shelter for stray, abandoned, and surrendered animals; to return them to their owners or find them permanent, suitable new homes, and to provide cost-effective sheltering through a regional partnership to ensure the highest live release rate practical for our community.

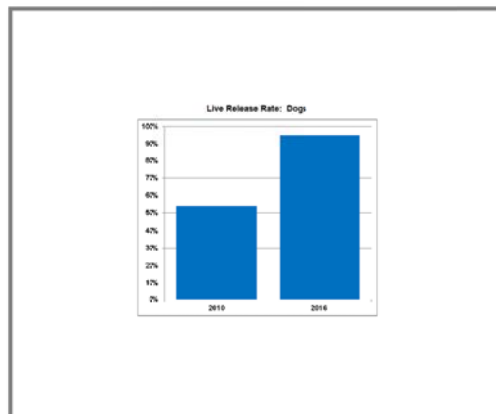
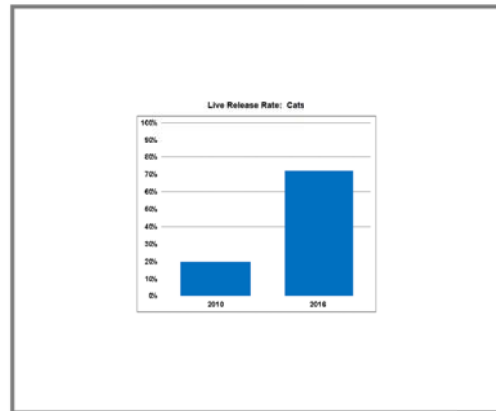
This report provides information on the Euthanasia Decisions, the Decision Makers, and the Criteria for Evaluating Animals for Euthanasia.

Background

The Roanoke Valley Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Inc. (RVSPCA) operated a pound facility in the valley for a number of years. In December 2001, the governing bodies of Roanoke City, Vinton, Roanoke County, and Botetourt (the “Participating Localities”) created a Regional Pound to create a secure space for the impoundment of animals running at large. This agreement provided for a formal arrangement between the localities and the RVSPCA for housing and care of animals. In July 2013, the governing localities updated the agreement and transitioned the administration and operation of the pound facility from the RVSPCA.

The Regional Center is an open intake facility and while our intakes have decreased year over year, the center continues to house in excess of 4,000 animals annually. Busy season has the center caring for between 400 and 500 animals per month. The “Live Release” rate has progressively improved as have our education initiatives and our commitment to spay and neuter programs. RCACP’s rates compare favorably to other shelters in the state.

The Pound and the localities have worked together to improve the live release rate of animals sheltered at the center. A number of outreach programs have helped in this initiative: a volunteer program, staff training, enhancements in medical services, focus on relationships with local rescue programs, a partnership with PetSmart Charities, and an adoption program.



Euthanasia Decision

Humane euthanasia of animals - a practice acknowledged by most animal protection organizations as an appropriate means for alleviating or preventing suffering - is still necessary due to either the overcrowding of animals received at the center or the inability to release animals into the community for health and/or public safety concerns. Euthanasia is not a decision taken lightly, but one that must be made nonetheless.

At RCACP, the health and temperament of each animal is evaluated on an individual basis. Experienced and credentialed professionals draw on both experience and protocol to evaluate an animal’s needs and balance those needs with the greater good of the animal population in the center.

Each animal who comes to the center is evaluated in its entirety by two separate reviewers; taking into account both behavior and medical conditions. Euthanasia must be considered:

- When an animal is assessed and found to be suffering mentally, emotionally or physically with a poor prognosis, protracted painful recovery, or incurable illness
- When an animal is deemed to pose an unacceptable danger to other animals, itself, or the public

Staff also recognizes the adoptability of animals in shelters may be impacted by:

- temperament
- previous history, age, breed, health
- ability to cope with kennel stress
- space and time of year
- foster care resources, human resources, budget
- personal attachments by staff and volunteers
- requirements ordered by the courts or Animal Control

The Decision Makers

Staff at RCACP who evaluate animals for euthanasia do so based on thorough understanding of euthanasia including all aspects of the process. Although the final decision for euthanasia lies with the Executive Director, efforts to make all personnel on duty involved in the decision-making process is considered in the best interest of facility operations.

RCACP continues to investigate and research appropriate applications of euthanasia methods, and only uses those methods that are as painless and rapid as possible, and that minimize fear and apprehension in the animal while maintaining technician and employee safety.

Criteria for Evaluating Animals for Euthanasia

The euthanasia of animals is an appropriate means for alleviating or preventing suffering. The euthanasia of any animal involves a difficult choice and each case must be evaluated on an individual basis. A number of questions are carefully addressed in determining the most appropriate course of action.

1. Is the animal in pain or distress? Is there a way to alleviate the pain or distress to allow a reasonable quality of life?
2. What are the possibilities of providing the animal with a quality life that will fulfill its basic physical and psychological needs?
3. Does keeping the animal alive present significant health or safety risks to other animals or people? Can these risks be minimized or avoided to give the animal a reasonable quality of life?
4. Given the fiscal and practical limitations faced by RCACP, does keeping the animal alive reduce the ability to care humanely for the other animals in need?
5. Are options available for transfer to our partner/rescue agencies?

It is critical for staff and volunteers who do not make euthanasia decisions to understand the pain, emotion, and distress associated with this role. The decision-makers face a difficult task, and their selections must be respected, even if they are different from those who are not making the difficult decision, including other staff, volunteers and citizens.

Determining whether an animal should be euthanized for behavioral reasons is a complex process. Evaluation of an animal's behavior begins the minute the animal arrives in the center and continues throughout the stay, as opposed to being solely dependent on a "pass/fail" temperament test. A history of the animal and daily behavioral observations along with objective, formal assessments are utilized in the decision-making process.

Asilomar Accords is a set of guidelines widely used by animal welfare leaders focusing on significantly reducing the euthanasia of healthy and treatable companion animals in the United States. One component of these guidelines provides a set of standardized definitions to classify the health and behavioral status of shelter animals at intake and exit. These classifications are used for statistical tracking to help individual shelters and the overall animal welfare community achieve a better understanding of lifesaving progress nationwide. RCACP operates under these guidelines.

RCACP is committed to saving the life of every animal classified as healthy and those animals classified as rehabilitatable and/or manageable within the resources of RCACP and/or the new owner.

Canine Behavioral Assessment (CBA) is also a tool utilized by staff at RCACP. Through a training grant provided by PetSmart Charities, a number of staff have been CBA certified to facilitate the assessment of animals that enter the center on intake.

ASPCA SAFER® Aggression Assessment is a predictive, consistent method for evaluating the probability of canine aggression in individual dogs. A number of staff are currently undergoing the certificate process in order to receive this designation to aid in the assessment of animals.

RCACP accepts the responsibility of managing the thousands of homeless animals that enter the center each year. Making euthanasia decisions is difficult and emotional for those who must choose.

Determinations regarding some animals are more clear than others. RCACP in an open intake center, unlike some other shelters, and exposed to a number of types of animals:

1. Stray Animals,
2. Owner-Requested Euthanasia,
3. Animal with Life-Threatening Injuries or Illnesses,
4. Unadoptable Animals,
5. Adoptable Animals, and
6. Aggressive Animals

This wide variety of animals does not allow one solution or method to fit all.

Summary

Euthanasia is an emotional and heart-wrenching process for those involved. It is a decision no one wants to make or carry out. There is not another option unless the animals are housed indefinitely in a cage or kennel off-premises. Quality-of-life is a guiding principle. RCACP cannot warehouse animals for the sake of saving their lives **on a long-term basis.**

The Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee's research revealed most shelters do not have any procedure for their euthanasia selection process in writing. RCACP staff are working from direction provided by Code of Virginia, Title 3.2 Agriculture, Animal Care and Food, Chapter 65., Comprehensive Animal Care Act, Section §3.2-6546 County or city public animal shelters; confinement and disposition of animals; affiliation with foster care providers; penalties; injunctive relief and a set of guidelines outlined in the following documents:

- *Euthanasia Policy and Procedures, 12/2011*
- *RCACP – Kennel Supervisory Duties*
- *Preparation of Rescue Review list*
- *Euthanasia Protocol, 07/2013*
- *Standard Operating Procedures*

The guidelines incorporate the assessments for each animal in question and provide a structure for the euthanasia decision-making process. The Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee find the practices to be in order and according to guidelines as established by a number of credentialed sources.

Recommendations

Continue and Enhance Training

Behavioral Assessment Training should remain a key accountability for RCACP employees tasked with animal assessment. While the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee did not find any shortcomings in this area with four RCACP staff members having completed PetSmart Charities Canine Behavior Assessment (CBA) Certification and two staff members currently undergoing the course work for an ASPCA SAFER® Aggression Assessment designation, this training is necessary to maintaining a current, technical, physical and physiological awareness of animal behaviors.

Ensure Proper Documentation/Recordkeeping

Documentation/recordkeeping is vital to compliance and adherence to: Code of Virginia, Title 3.2 Agriculture, Animal Care and Food, Chapter 65., Comprehensive Animal Care Act, Section§3.2-6546 County of city public animal shelters; confinement and disposition of animals; affiliation with foster care providers; penalties; injunctive relief. These codifications provide guidance/structure to centers like RCACP. While the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee did not find any shortcomings in this area, reporting and recordkeeping are critical. Utilizing Animal “Shelter.Net” (the technology package utilized by RCACP to manage operations and track the life cycle of animals) to its fullest capacity will ensure appropriate recordkeeping for transparency and compliance tracking.

Construct Animal Play Area

Unanimous feedback and research reveals animal behavior is directly impacted in a negative way by the duration of the time spent at centers like RCACP. The preliminary research conducted by the Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee indicates “championing” the “Play Yard/Area” concept, providing animals an opportunity to release kennel stress, will facilitate the center’s ability to improve behavioral issues that may otherwise make animals unadoptable.

Improve Volunteer Program

The Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee’s research revealed additional information related to staffing, volunteers, the volunteer program, and the overall perception of those involved with the regional center. During the preparation of this report, it became apparent that the current volunteer program is not working in the best interest of the animals or the staff of RCACP or volunteers

It is our recommendation at this time that the Executives allow this committee an opportunity to work with the RCACP Executive Director, staff, rescue agencies and volunteers to revamp the volunteer program to provide for the most advantageous outcome for the animals housed at the center.

Appendix
Ancillary documents

Appendix

**Executive Committee
Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection
Roll Call Vote**

Roll Call	Executive Member	Title	Locality
	Deputy Chief Jones, (Tim)	Interim Chief of Police	City of Roanoke
	Mr. Larowe, (Gary)	County Administrator	County of Botetourt
	Mr. Morrill, (Chris)	\$City Manager	City of Roanoke
	Mr. O'Donnell, (Dan)	Asst. County Administrator	County of Roanoke
	Mr. Thompson, (Barry)	~Town Manager	Town of Vinton

\$ Chairman
~Chairman Elect

**Executive Committee
Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection
Executive Committee for the Roanoke Valley Regional Pound**

Date of Meeting: **August 26, 2016**
Nature of Meeting: Regular, Special or Work Session

Motion for Closed Meeting

I MOVE that this meeting of the Executive Committee for the Roanoke Valley Regional Pound be recessed and that the Executive Committee immediately reconvene in closed meeting for the following purpose:

(Circle the appropriate purpose.)

A. Discussion, consideration or interview of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, salaries, disciplining of specific public employees or appointees as permitted by Subsection (A) (1) of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended.

B. Discussion or consideration concerning the acquisition or disposal of real property for a public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely impact the bargaining position of the Executive Committee as permitted by Subsection (A) (3) of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended.

C. Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation and/or consultation with legal counsel employed by the Executive Committee regarding specific legal matters requiring legal advice and the discussion of strategy of negotiation of a potential agreement involving the Executive Committee as permitted by Subsection (A) (7) and/or (13) of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended.

Note: This Motion must be duly made and seconded in an open meeting of the Executive Committee.

Motion Made By:

Seconded By:

Roll Call	Executive Member	Title	Locality
	Deputy Chief Jones, (Tim)	Interim Chief of Police	City of Roanoke
	Mr. Larrowe, (Gary)	County Administrator	County of Botetourt
	Mr. Morrill, (Chris)	\$City Manager	City of Roanoke
	Mr. O'Donnell, (Dan)	Asst. County Administrator	County of Roanoke
	Mr. Thompson,(Barry)	~Town Manager	Town of Vinton

**Executive Committee
Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection**

Certification for Closed Meeting

I MOVE AND CERTIFY that, to the best of each Executive Committee members' knowledge, only such public business matters properly identified in the motion convening the closed meeting and lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were heard, discussed or considered by the Executive Committee in the closed meeting.

Motion Made By:

Seconded By:

Roll Call	Executive Member	Title	Locality
	Deputy Chief Jones, (Tim)	Interim Chief of Police	City of Roanoke
	Mr. Larrowe, (Gary)	County Administrator	County of Botetourt
	Mr. Morrill, (Chris)	\$City Manager	City of Roanoke
	Mr. O'Donnell, (Dan)	Asst. County Administrator	County of Roanoke
	Mr. Thompson, (Barry)	~Town Manager	Town of Vinton

Research Sources

Code of Virginia, Title 3.2 Agriculture, Animal Care and Food, Chapter 65., Comprehensive Animal Care Act, Section§3.2-6546 County or city public animal shelters; confinement and disposition of animals; affiliation with foster care providers; penalties; injunctive relief.

A Guide to the Asilomar Accords Definitions: “Healthy,” “Treatable,” “Unhealthy & Untreatable,” **Maddie’s Fund**® 2223 Santa Clara Avenue, Suite B, Alameda, CA 94501 p:510.337.8989 f:510.337.8988 info@maddiesfund.org www.maddiesfund.org

ASPCA Policy and Position Statement Asilomar Accords, <http://www.asPCA.org/about-us/asPCA-policy-and-position-statements/asilomar-accords>

ASPCA SAFER® Aggression Assessment (SAFER™)(Safety Assessment for Evaluating Rehoming), a canine aggression assessment tool)

Behavior Assessment Programs, Operational Guide, American Humane, ©2010 American Humane Association

Canine Behavioral Assessment & Research (CBA)

Cornell University Policy and Protocol: Identifying and Handling Aggressive Dogs, <http://www.sheltermedicine.vet.cornell.edu/Resources/documents/PolicyAggressiveDogs.pdf>

Dogs Playing for Life.org

Humane Society of the United States, *Euthanasia Reference Manual*, Copyright © 2013 by The Humane Society of the United States.

Humane Society International, *Creating Animal Shelter Guidelines: Selecting Animals for Euthanasia*, Prepared by the Companion Animals Staff of The Humane Society of the United States. © 1999 The Humane Society of the United States

The Canine Behavior Assessment, for the PetSmart Charities, Inc.®, Rescue Waggin’® Program

Regional Center for Animal Control and Protection

- Euthanasia Policy and Procedures, 12/2011
- RCACP – Kennel Supervisory Duties
- Preparation of Rescue Review list
- Euthanasia Protocol, 07/2013
- Standard Operating Procedures

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Animal and Food Industry Services, State Veterinarian - Division Administrative Director of Animal Care and Health

- Policy Number: 79-1, Date: November 29, 1979, Revision Date: Effective Date: May 20, 2013, July 1, 2013
- Methods prescribed or approved for for Animal Euthanasia and Competency Certification Requirements and Purpose - This Directive sets forth methods that are currently prescribed or approved by the State Veterinarian for the euthanasia of animals by all persons acting under the provisions of the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Care laws (Title 3.2, Chapter 65).

Euthanasia selection processes:

- Kellie Snider-Animal Behavior Programs Manager at the SPCA of Texas (developed and trained staff in the Canine Behavior Assessment program for PetSmart Charities),
- Rob Leinberger, President National Animal Control Association and AC Supervisor at Richmond Animal Care and Control,
- Paula Hurn, Director of Administration, HR & Facilities, cKamey Animal Center in Chattanooga, TN,
- Sharon Adams, Chair Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters (VAAS),
- Anne Anderson, Executive Director Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA,
- Mary Steinbeiser, Executive Director Teller County Regional Animal Shelter-Divide, CO

Euthanasia selection process discussion:

- Josh Fisher-Shelter, Manager Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department,

Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs):

- Society of Animal Welfare Administrators website

Websites:

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/behavioral-assessment-in-animal-shelters.htm>

<http://www.sawanetwork.org/>

<http://www.americanhumane.org/>



**The Regional Center for Animal Control & Protection
1510 Baldwin Avenue NE
Roanoke VA 24012**

Located approximately 2 miles east of the Roanoke Civic Center, turn south onto 13th Street from Rt. 460/Orange Avenue.