COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES – DAVIS COUNTY

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 19, 2023

The Board of Davis County Commissioners met for a Work Session at 9:01 AM on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, in room 306 of the Davis County Administration Building, 61 South Main Street, Farmington, Utah. Required legal notice of this meeting was given.

All documents from this meeting are on file in the Davis County Clerk's Office. The agenda for this meeting is incorporated into the minutes as item headers.

DISCLAIMER

The meeting was an open dialogue. Critical points in the discussion have only been briefly summarized. The reader may refer to the audio recording and the publicly distributed materials for further clarification of the content. Timestamps have been noted in the minutes to aid in locating points of discussion in the audio record. The audio recording for this meeting is available based upon the County's current retention schedule.

ROLL CALL:

Chair Lorene Miner Kamalu (arrived at 9:04 AM)
Vice Chair Bob J Stevenson
Commissioner Randy B. Elliott
County Auditor Curtis Koch (arrived at 9:05 AM)
Chief Deputy Clerk Rebecca Abbott
Chief Deputy Civil Attorney Neal Geddes (arrived at 9:05 AM)
Deputy Clerk Patrick Black
Animal Care Director Ashleigh Young
Human Resources Director Chris Bone
Facilities Management Director Lane Rose
Commission Office Cynda Melville

OPENING

The meeting convened at 9:01 AM.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. # 960/2023**. A Work Session with Animal Care to discuss Pathway Planning** — *presented by Ashleigh Young, Director*

Commissioner Stevenson began the meeting at 9:01 AM. Commissioner Kamalu, County Auditor Curtis Koch, and Chief Deputy Civil Attorney Neal Geddes arrived a few minutes later.

[Minute 00:25]
Animal Care Director Ashleigh Young presented on the subject of Pathway Planning to the Commission. Pathway Planning has been used by Animal Care since October 2022 and every animal participates in this program. Pathway Planning is the guide to decisions which will lead to either an adoption or conversely to euthanasia. There are new developments with Pathway Planning on the subject of animal euthanasia decisions which could impact the Commission, necessitating the informational presentation.

The goal of Pathway Planning is to make sure each animal is treated as an individual and is advocated for fairly. At any given time there are around 200 animals in Animal Care custody. Before Pathway Planning, many fell through the cracks and were overshadowed. With this new standard operating procedure, Animal Care is able to address the needs of each and every animal and advocate for them. This helps build a consistent process and prevents staff from being surprised by an animal being euthanized. This process also helps to prevent mistakes by being as thorough as possible. Pathway Planning also empowers staff, volunteers, and members of the public who want to advocate for animals facing euthanasia.

As of September 19, 2023, Animal Care will allow center volunteers to opt-in on the euthanasia process for animals within their custody. This opt-in process provides volunteers with a weekly email of due out dates which determine when and whether an animal is euthanized. Volunteers had not historically been included in the process. Animal Care will also be releasing the update of Pathway Planning plan to the public in January 2024 for the sake of transparency.

Before Pathway Planning was implemented, the Shelter Services Supervisor was making the decision to euthanize animals without consulting staff or volunteers. This led to compassion fatigue and lower morale. Staff were later given notifications of animals being euthanized. Morale did not improve as the staff did not have any say and could not change the path these animals were on.

For the last year, there has been a weekly meeting for staff to contribute to the euthanasia decisions. This provides an opportunity to submit new ideas and thoughts on how to adopt out each animal and prevent euthanasia for multiple animals. The next step is to include volunteers in this process as well. Case studies were done with five dogs who volunteers found resources which led to adoption which would not have had the chance otherwise.

[Minute 5:45]
Animals are euthanized for multiple reasons. Animals with a history of violence cannot be placed. Animals with complex behavior problems such as severe anxiety, destructive tendencies, and resource guarding can be very difficult to find a home.

Pathway Planning addresses the amount of time each animal is in the shelter environment. Animals are brought to the shelter either as an owner surrender or as an unclaimed stray. The animal is then subjected to the shelter environment which is inherently stressful. With hundreds of animals in one building, the environment is loud and the animals can be aggressive/defensive with one another. When the animals become stressed, they exhibit behaviors such as barking, growling, lunging at other animals, becoming shy, and not eating. These behaviors put off potential owners from adopting the animals and can lead to an animal being euthanized. The longer an animal is in shelter, the more likely it will be euthanized. The question was asked how many animals are put down per month. Typically six animals are euthanized each month. Animal Care currently has approximately a 97% live release rate for dogs and are leaving with a positive outcome. Cat live release rates are almost at 97% currently, having fallen down to 93% during the pandemic. Currently, adoption rates are static and using Pathway Planning may increase those numbers while preventing putting animals down. Each euthanized animal takes its toll emotionally on those in the community.

[Minute 12:20]
The majority of owner surrenders are due to financial hardship and loss of housing. Owners go to lower cost housing which are not pet friendly and come to Animal Care when they cannot rehome the animal on their own. These individuals are already facing hardships and a very emotionally charged. The strays found in Davis County have all been pets at one point, there are no known packs of wild dogs in Utah. When they are placed in shelter, the owners do not always come to claim them.

A large part of Pathway Planning is advocacy for the animals, beginning the day they reach an Animal Care facility. Within the first seven days, a bio of any information known about the animal is written and shared. Their picture is taken and an assessment is made on their behavior with other animals. They also have their spay/neuter procedure scheduled within those first seven days as well. Staff are asked to write daily behavior notes to keep track of any changes.

From days 7-14, the animals are being posted on social media for the public to see and increase odds of adoption. Facebook is the number one reason animals are adopted out from Animal Care. A foster request is also made during this time frame. Volunteers will foster dogs by taking them into their homes and keep them out of shelter until they are adopted.

From days 15-21, a new picture of the animal is posted online to renew interest from the public. A video will also be posted to social media. Bios are rewritten and updated with any new information about the animal. During this time, Animal Care may swap animals with other shelters to provide new environments to increase odds of adoption and decrease behavior declines.

From days 22-28, Animal Care has a Lonely Hearts Club for the animals which waives the adoption fees for potential owners. These animals are posted on a board in the shelter with a cute little write up. The animals are also posted for a transfer to a shelter in either Montana, Idaho, Oregon, or Washington through a coalition of which transfers animals between shelters in each of these states. Volunteers are notified that these are special needs animals which need additional exercise in order to keep their stress levels down.

From day 35 and beyond, a due out date may be set if the animal is not doing well. If an animal is identified as at-risk, a case manager is assigned, volunteers and staff are given opportunity to help, and a deadline is established and communicated. A deadline can be extended by a case manager if a newly viable option is being pursued.

[Minute 20:35]
Pathway Planning tries to resolve issues such as: long stay animals with no significant issues, pushback from staff and volunteers on putting down "favorites", finding an appropriate role for volunteers and advocates related to at-risk animals, and finding the best practices for euthanasia decisions. A plea for the animal will: list why they are at-risk, make staff and volunteers aware of the animal's deadline, and provide contact information for the point person. The shelter will consider fostering, return-to-owner, adoption, rescue placement, behavior/training foster, and medical resources.

Volunteers can provide foster homes, advocate for certain outcomes, and promote animals. A staff member is assigned to coordinate with volunteers and be a well-informed point of contact. Volunteers must opt-in, attend a Pathway Planning presentation, and meet monthly shelter hour requirements.

[Minute 25:53]
Animal Care had case studies with five different dogs. Each of the dogs had longer stays in shelter and were placed by networking with either staff or volunteers. Out of the five cases, four were fully successful while one was only partially successful as it had unforeseen behavior issues and had to be euthanized after it bit someone.

Animal Care is aware the environment is currently causing behavior issues in the animals housed in shelter. The best practice for dogs are to not house more than six to eight in a single area; any more leads to stressed animals. Cats are best kept in at least 12 square feet of space. The shelter currently only has four square feet per cat which is leading to more sick animals and increases in aggressive behavior. When animals aren't doing well, staff will communicate with volunteers about the animal's decline.

[Minute 40:10]
The discussion turned to people experiencing homelessness in Davis County. Commissioner Lorene Miner Kamalu, County Auditor Curtis Koch, and Chief Deputy Civil Attorney Neal Geddes had all just come from a meeting about homeless services in Davis County and frustration was shared over how little is being done for those individuals in this county. It was pointed out that while Animal Care is continually doing a great work, it is hard not to be discouraged by the difference in funding for the two issues. It was pointed out that while frustrating, homelessness is considered a statewide issue and that it may be possible to either gain additional funding through fundraising or convincing the State to provide the money. It was noted there is some overlap between those experiencing homelessness and animals who end up in shelter; both of which are suffering housing instability.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Meeting was adjourned at 9:46 AM

ATTACHMENT

A. Pathway Planning Presentation

Minutes Prepared by:

Patrick Black
Deputy Clerk

Minutes Approved on:

10/10/2023

Rebecca L Abbott for
Brian McKenzie
Davis County Clerk

Lorene Miner Kamalu
Commission Chair

PATHWAY PLANNING
SUCCESS FROM THE START!

Animal Care Davis County

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A1

PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

Pathway Planning Timeline & Roadmap:

1. Process in place since October 2022
2. Opt-in for volunteers starts today (September 20, 2023)
1. Post publicly January 2024

1 Historic Processes & Goals → 2 Euthanasia Statistics → 3 What is Pathway Planning? → 4 Case Studies

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A2

PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

Historic at-risk flow processes at Animal Care:

1. Euthanize with no notification
2. Euthanize with notification
3. Give staff a chance to weigh in before deadlines
4. Give our helpers an opportunity to achieve live outcomes for at-risk animals

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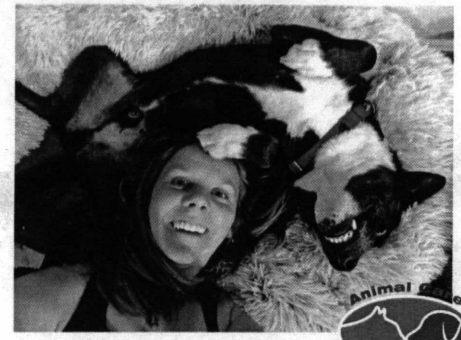
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A3

PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

Process Change Goals:

- Treat every animal as an individual
- Build trust in a consistent process
- Eliminate mistakes
- Ensure each animal has a fair chance at a live outcome
- Promote employee and volunteer mental wellness
- Empower our helpers



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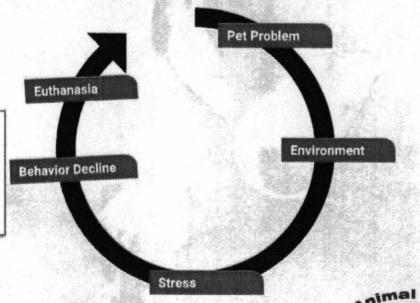
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A4

PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

Why are animals at risk at Animal Care?

- Reported history prior to intake
- Length of time in care
  - Stress and behavioral decline
  - Reactivity at kennel front
  - Incidents while in shelter



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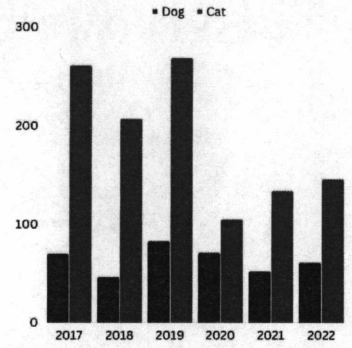
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A5

PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

Shelter euth stats

- By year



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PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

Live Release Rate

- By year

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan-Jun)
Overall	94.5%	96.3%	97.4%	97%	94.7%	95.1%	96.2%
Dogs	96.8%	97.8%	98.6%	97%	96.6%	96.6%	96.3%
Cats	93.2%	96.1%	95.7%	97%	93.2%	94%	96.6%

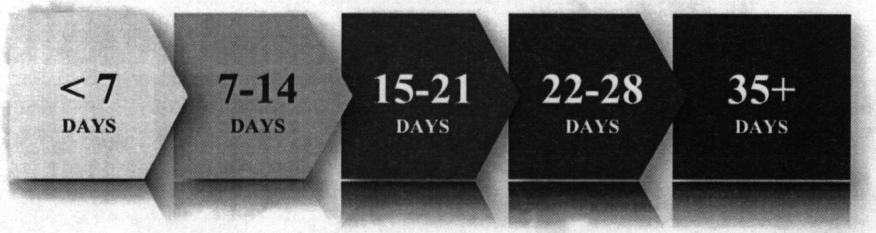
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A7

PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

Current at-risk flow processes at Animal Care:



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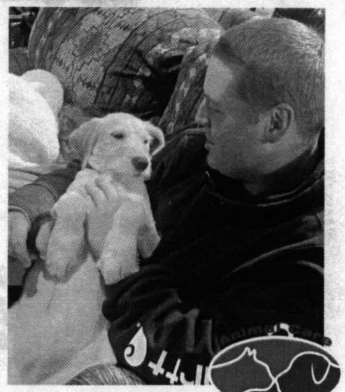
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A8

PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

How it works:

1. Dogs identified as at-risk
2. A case manager is assigned
3. Select volunteers and staff members are given the opportunity to help
4. Deadline established and communicated
5. Deadline can be extended by case manager if a newly viable option is being pursued



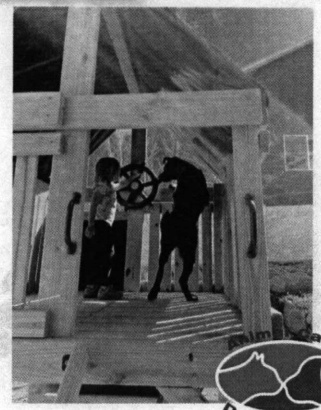
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PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

What problems are we trying to solve?

- What to do about long-stay dogs without significant issues
- Pushback from euth decisions for volunteer or staff "favorites"
- Finding an appropriate role for volunteers and advocates related to at-risk dogs
- Best practices for euthanasia decisions



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PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

What does a plea look like?

1. Why the dog is at risk
2. The deadline for placement
3. Contact information for the point person
4. What options the shelter will consider:
   - Foster
   - Return to owner
   - Adoption
   - Rescue placement
   - Behavior/training foster
   - Medical resources

Ashleigh Young
August 24 at 2:28 PM

▲▲Thor needs a miracle - can you help? ▲▲
Thor has been with us since June 27th with no adoption interest, he is struggling big time in the kennels with his mental wellbeing. Thor HAS A DUE OUT DATE meaning if we cannot find a foster or rescue for him, he may be facing euthanasia. Are you able to help Thor or know someone that can? He is one year old Lab X and 80lbs. He is good with most other dogs, loves to play with toys - including fetch! He know some basic cues like sit and waits nicely for his food bowl to be set down. We have been seeking rescue placement for him since 07/26 with no interest.
Please let us know if you have the ability to help this youngster get out of the shelter - that is what he deeply needs!

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PATHWAY PLANNING *SUCCESS FROM THE START!*

The role of volunteers:

- Helper volunteers are empowered and supported within boundaries
- Volunteers can:
  - **Provide foster homes**
  - **Advocate for outcomes**
  - **Market animals**
- A staff member is assigned to coordinate with our helpers and be a well informed point of contact

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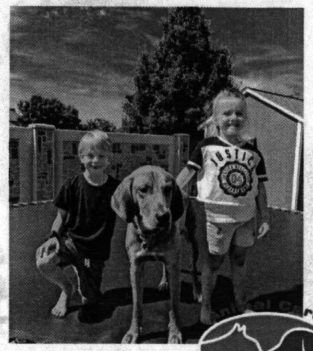
PATHWAY PLANNING

SUCCESS FROM THE START!

Choosing our volunteers:

- Opted in
- Attended this presentation
- Monthly shelter volunteer hour requirements





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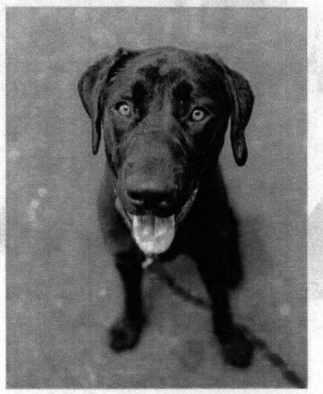
A13

PATHWAY PLANNING

SUCCESS FROM THE START!

Case Studies:

- Dinozzo
  - Stray 10 month old black lab
- Rocky Mountain Lab Rescue
  - Denver, Colorado
- Adopted in less than a week



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A14

PATHWAY PLANNING

SUCCESS FROM THE START!

Case Studies:

- Thor
  - Owner Surrender
  - 73 days in shelter
- Foster, then…
- Adopted!





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A15

PATHWAY PLANNING

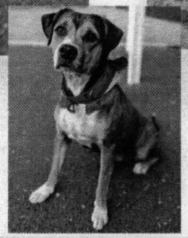
SUCCESS FROM THE START!

Case Studies:

- Mico
  - Stray
  - 79 days in shelter
- Adopted ~ 2 weeks
- PTS due to behavior







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A16

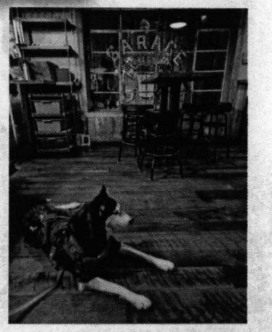
PATHWAY PLANNING

SUCCESS FROM THE START!

Case Studies:

- Yara
  - Stray
  - 37 days in shelter
- Foster, then…
- Adopted!





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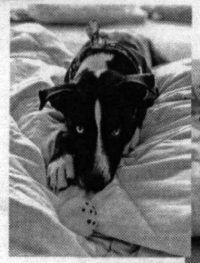
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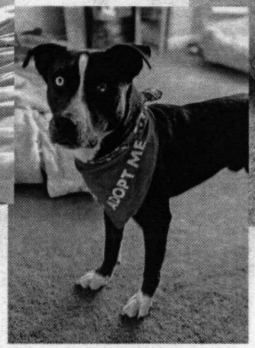
PATHWAY PLANNING

SUCCESS FROM THE START!

Case Studies:

- Johnny
  - Stray
  - 173 days in shelter
- Foster, then…
- Adopted!







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