

North Utah Valley Animal Services Special Service District
Pending Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
June 27th, 2024
71 East 200 South, Pleasant Grove, Utah 84062

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

American Fork- Stuart Fore
Cedar Hills- Chandler Goodwin
Highland- Scott Smith
Lindon- Orlando Ruiz
Pleasant Grove- Carl Nielson
Utah County- Steve Alder
Vineyard- Don Overson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Alpine-
Eagle Mountain-
Lehi- Chad Ray
Orem- Kris Pease
Saratoga Springs- Owen Jackson
Utah County-
Utah County Sheriff's Office- Yvette Rice

OTHERS PRESENT:

Director- Tug Gettling
Legal Counsel- Laramie Merritt
Minutes- Janeen Olson

OTHERS ABSENT:

OPEN THE MEETING:

1. Welcome and Introductions: Vice-Chair Scott Smith opened the evening meeting of the North Utah Valley Animal Services Special Services District at 6:11p.m., welcoming the members and the public and expressing thanks to Pleasant Grove City for allowing us to use their facilities.
2. Prayer/Thought- Offered by Chandler Goodwin

WORK SESSION ITEMS:

1. No Items.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

1. **Open Public Hearing-** Steve Alder moved to open the Public Hearing, Carl Nielson seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was opened at 6:13 p.m.
2. **Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 NUVASSD Budget-** Tug reviewed the handout outlining the Approved Tentative Budget and the Proposed Final Budget noting a few changes, the total from the approved to the proposed decreased by about \$450 which is outstanding, and the city participation fees went down \$12,150. He advised this was based on an additional two more months of data ensuring better accuracy, while line by line some went up or down, the overall total decreased. Tug stated monies are still being set aside for roof replacement, vehicle replacement and the \$25,000 noted in Expenses- Capital Outlay is to pay back what was taken out earlier than projected for the air handler unit. He also noted after putting money into our Capital Outlay fund for nearly 20 years we have reached the required amount needed and unless we want to add to it for foreseeable expenses in the future, we no longer need to add to that. Tug clarified the \$23 dollars difference from the break down total per cities and the listed amount on the proposed budget sheet has to do with the per animal charge per city, noting if you go below by a cent it goes below the \$728,196 if you go above by one cent it goes above, since we can't divide that we will collect a total of \$23

more from the cities combined. Steve questioned as to why the Expenses- Employee Development dropped? Tug explained that there is a lot more training offered virtually now, and we don't have to have the added expense of travel.

3. **Public comment regarding Fiscal Year 2024-25 NUVASSD Budget-** None.
4. **Motion to Close the Public Hearing** – Chandler Goodwin moved to close the Public Hearing; Don Overson seconded the motion. All were in favor and the Public Hearing was closed at 6:20 p.m.

GENERAL MEETING ITEMS:

1. **Public Comment-** Tom Sinnott advised he is a Strategist, for Shelter Partnership Teams for Best Friends Animal Society, noting we have heard from Justin Stewart in the past. He was there to follow up on an email of an offer of support to end shelter killing in Utah County. He provided statistic and believes if trap and kill worked to eliminate outdoor cats Utah County would be void of cats by now. Tom advised since 2019 Best Friends have made multiple offers to NUVAS and invested hundreds of training hours in attempts to professionalize and modernize NUVAS policies and practices to responsibly and humanly service the public. He provided statistic of Utah County residents surveyed last year in regard to life saving programs to make Utah County no-kill, policies increasing number of pets in the shelters, and practicable solutions for cats. Tom advised while he appreciates the time invested in the research for TNR done in 2019, he advised NUVAS killed 403 animals in 2019, 737 in 2023, 705 (inaudible) simply put what NUVAS is doing is not working. Utah County has a reputation of being a leader of the State, bringing an academic approach to solving problems, he believes Utah County Animal Shelters contradict that reputation and are in need of modernizing. Tug requested a copy of the survey that Tom referred to.

Karen McCoy advised she has been a supporter of Best Friends for a long time back to the early 80's, she has volunteered at their sanctuary as well as for NUVAS. She inquired if her application was still on file, since she has not been called back, Tug explained that we have hundreds of volunteers rotating through 90 days at a time. In reference to the TNR program, she acknowledges cats kill a lot of birds, however Karen cited examples such as cities that have the hunts to kill deer so the flowers are not eaten, large building built that birds are slamming into the glass, stating it is not just cats that kill wildlife it is people also. She advised we are being overrun with people and it will continue to go on and on, and for Utah County to be a leader and to be self-righteous in a lot of ways, her concern is that people that live here are not responsible. Karen requested the board members go back to their supervisors and advise their cities that they need to address the problem and work together with cities doing some type of an education program. She also expressed concerns that our websites needing to be more user friendly and believes if Best Friends is offering to help it is worth looking in to. Scott also advised that she may want to visit some of the city councils to help spread the information.

Caroline Fox was also in attendance.

2. **Review and Approve Minutes from the May 30th, 2024, North Utah Valley Animal Services Special Service District (NUVASSD) Board of Directors Meetings-** Steve Alder moved to approve the Minutes from the May 30, 2024, NUVASSD Meeting. Stuart Fore seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.
3. **Financial Report-** Tug noted a shorter Check Register and called attention to the larger amount to Mechanical Products Intermountain, stating that was for the air handler unit which was not unexpected and what we were told it was going to be, he advised it is installed and working well. In reference to the Monthly Financial Statement that shows at 97.3%, Tug had them do that a week earlier than normal in order to prepare the budget, noting we closed out the year much how we expected it to go. A few line items under Income we could have done better at were; Animal Licenses at 90.5%, Animal Sales & Adoptions at 93.8%, Animal Impound Fees at 84.5%, Animal Boarding Fees at 85.5%, a lot of this is due to lower numbers of owners redeeming their pets and Tug stressed the importance of trying to get owners to redeem their own pets, adoptions should be second to that. He noted in 2023 only 64% of dogs and 8% of cats were

redeemed. Tug reviewed numbers that were higher such as Rabies Fees Vouchers at 227% , Interest on our PTIF Accounts at 259.1% which is good. Looking at the Expenses, Salary & Wages- Temporary at 90.6% and Fringe Benefits at 77.2% both lower due to working short-handed, a few others Uniforms & Equipment at 74.0% and 63.2% respectively also saved us a little. Overall, as a total for Income we are at 94.2% and Expenses at 85% and although income could be higher the lower expenses help offset that. Scott expressed his appreciation to Tug for keeping the revenues in line.

4. Shelter Progress Report- Tug Gettling

- Physical Facilities- Our phone system Century Link is requiring us to move from copper wiring, Tug was advised It would be no cost and would take just a few minutes, due to issues with the firewall it ended up being an all-day project involving Orem City IT and still didn't work. The issue ended involving a direct access line, Orem City advised that was doable, with a reoccurring cost of \$75 a month.
- Personnel- Just hired two part-time Animal Care Assistants, still have one position left and Tug is interviewing for that tomorrow.
- Currently we have about 70 dogs and 80 cats, that is roughly where it has been, which to have that few of cats is good we normally have about double that.
- Tug reviewed the livestock issues previously mentioned, relating to a law that requires livestock to go to the South Shelter (SUVAS), part of which is due to needing brand inspectors and animals being auctioned off not adopted out. Laramie looked up how livestock is used in Utah State law as opposed to Utah County Ordinance, as well as if the definition includes poultry. Currently we have been taking those smaller types such as; chickens, peacocks, ducks in and trying to get those back to their owners, rescued, or adopted out. However, to be compliant with the laws we should be sending those to the SUVAS. In order to start doing this, several items need to be addressed such as; SUVAS would then have to bill the city of origin which is outside of their district. This would be a lot like the hoarding case where we assisted SUVAS and Provo City; some type of Memorandum of Understanding would need to be drafted. Animal Control Officers would need to transport the animals to SUVAS and customers coming in to locate their animals would have to be directed to Spanish Fork instead. One possibility may be if we could keep them for the initial five-day hold, which would be more customer friendly for the public. Tug also reviewed how the billing is currently, as opposed to how it would have to change, and advised some of these issues need to be worked out. He just wanted the Board to be aware that they are looking into what is best for the public as well as staying in compliance with the law. Laramie also pointed out another issue that we should consider is that the County uses the broad term livestock, where the State has a category of livestock that is branded. If the County were to update their definition to say branded livestock goes to the SUVAS and all others are held locally it may resolve that issue. Laramie advised that would be one option for addressing the problem, he believes the real intent was for branded livestock and Tug agrees. He will be meeting with the south shelter to address this concern.
- Tug referred to a handout provided with a sample QR code and how to obtain animal licenses, the one he provided does not contain a working QR code. Once they have the finalized copy, he will distribute that out to the group and ideally, they could be posted in veterinarian offices, city offices, parks, or sent out through city utilities billings. They are working on other ways to help promote animal licenses, Tug also reminded the Board we have the potential to collect over \$750,000 in fees, opposed to the \$70,000 we currently collect, and the shelter could become self sufficient without city participation fees. A short discussion was had on how to verify spay and neuter status and how we handle the validation for rabies vaccine.
- Tug also stated they are currently beta testing a new software that collects dog licensing fees, while SUVAS is doing the same and they will be meeting to compare notes in the next few weeks, so far it looks encouraging.
- They have been reviewing all of our interlocal agreements, most of which are outdated and were written in 2006 and have policies and fees no longer applicable. Tug advised he will be drafting new agreements and have Laramie review them and bring them to the board for approval before approaching the cities for signatures. One item that he knows needs to be updated is the wording and timing for when the cities are billed yearly.

- Tug provided an update on the number of patrons that visit the Shelter after 5 p.m., which is .54 person a day, so one person every other day, for now they will continue to remain open.
- Another item that needs to be reviewed is the fee schedule, this hasn't been done in 4 or 5 years, they will be looking at that to see if there needs to be fee increases, with the consumer price index rising we need to fairly adjust so those that are using the shelter are helping absorb the cost and not all of it going to the cities. Tug will present those to the board for approval, this will occur sometime in the next few months.
- Tug presented some tri-fold pamphlets that highlight spay and neutering, animal licenses, and microchips, and provides contact information for the public. Although handouts are somewhat archaic it provides a way to distribute them out at events, adoptions and provides requested information easily. As a staff they are meeting with a focus to increase adoptions, networking with other entities, social media, pet of the week, cross posting with other rehoming places such as "Petfinder" "Home to Home", as well as doing more adoption events, providing QR codes. He advised they also now have a binder in the lobby with pictures of all the dogs or cats for adoption, so customers don't have to walk through all of them if they choose.
- Volunteer programs are working well, a couple of groups are coming next week to do some landscaping and they continue to get plenty of individuals volunteering to assist. He noted we still rotate through every 90 days, 10 new volunteers.
- Currently we have 66 rescue groups on our approval list.

5. **Review/Discuss Best Friends Offer of Support-** Tug advised, and as Tom outlined, Best Friends had sent a proposal for offer of support that was sent to board members and city council members in an open email. Tug wanted to go through the offer and advise of some corrections that need to be made. One of the first items stated is we have the highest life saving gap in 2023 with 31.3% of the animals in the shelter did not make it out alive, that is not accurate the total was 21%. In that same time period, they reported 740 cats, and 737 dogs were killed, according to our figures it was 150 dogs and 595 cats, making it 745 not 1,477 so when we get a proposal with such grossly inaccurate figures it makes him start looking at the rest of the proposal pretty closely. In 2022 figures we had a total of 88 dogs and 424 cats for a total of 512, and in 2021 it was 80 dogs and 298 cats for a total of 378 which totals a fourth of 1,477. Other items of concern were the Orem Best Friends Animal Clinic, historically that has not worked with them being able to handle the volume of the citizens as well as the shelters they are supporting. Tug explained the return to field, or TNR or TNVR, which amounts to taking feral cats, treating them, vaccinating them, sterilizing them and putting them back. Best Friends advised they would provide these staff for eighteen months; the concern would be then after eighteen months the cost would be absorbed by the district. They also offered a veterinarian, which by contract NUVAS already has and we work closely with the veterinary clinic who also provides us discounts. It wasn't clear exactly what they were offering which is the case for a lot of the proposal. Although the email gave a 30-day period to accept it, the proposal has no memorandum of understanding language or contractual agreement or dates like that making it possible to accept it anyway. He reviewed their information on a Community Cat Program and a Coordinator that would be provided for 12 months for a value up to \$75,000, and provide training to better mitigate complaint calls, Tug noted the fact that we need to be trained in complaint mitigation supports the idea that citizens do not support feral cats returned. They also discussed deterrents that could be provided to those individuals making the complaints, therefore putting the responsibilities back on the citizens that wanted the feral cats gone in the first place. It goes further into building out volunteers' programs, which we are looking at already as well as fostering programs. He pointed out some discrepancies on the offer of \$3,000 to pay for two employees to go to a conference in a couple of weeks, with the airfare and lodging as NUVAS responsibility, Tug checked with the conference with the cost only being \$790 for two. They offered euthanasia training and we currently already have that in accordance with Utah State law. The same with drafting euthanasia protocol and procedures which again we already have. Best Friends offers to help purchase the sedative recommended by them, NUVAS already gives every animal the veterinarian recommended industries best practice sedative prior to euthanasia. They also offer training to officers; this does not apply to our shelter, we don't employee ACO that would have to be offered to the cities. Tug relayed requirements if we accepted that had to be fulfilled in the first 30 days such as entering our data into their proprietary software program, agreement of check in calls monthly

to review trainings, giving Best Friends oversight over what we are doing. Best Friends also advises we would need to stop behavioral assessments and make the suggested changes to our current euthanasia process. Tug reviewed what behavioral assessments are, he also stated doing this would mean making animals available for adoption with no regard for public health or safety, placing the citizens of our communities at risk, stating that animal shelters have a legal responsibility and moral obligation to assure the animals they release are not dangerous to the community as well as inviting lawsuits for legal liability and unduly exposes the citizenry of the district to risks and dangers that can be prevented by conducting behavior assessments on all animals before making them available for adoption. He also pointed out another reference in the proposal that talks about working with a veterinarian provided by HSNEGA to have them become the shelter vet of record and acquire a DEA license. Tug researched and found that HSNEGA is the Human Society of Northeastern Georgia, we already have a vet of record and a DEA license so he doesn't know why we would want to do that. Although this is most likely a typo, in researching further Tug discovered this exact proposal was given to an animal shelter in Georgia and they refused it as well for the same concerns we had, according to a media release. Tug relayed incidents of other shelters who followed Best Friends protocol of not doing behavioral assessments that have had incidents with a volunteer and one with a small child being severely injured. Tug stated anyone that would consider releasing an animal without a behavioral assessment is absolutely not concerned with the welfare of the people they serve, and he would never do that. They also discussed imbedding staff into the shelter, if employed with Best Friends they would not be subject to our Human Resource Policies, Procedures and Protocols, as well as other insurance, workman comp, legal and staffing issues would occur. Another concern in the proposal is that a Community Cat Program Coordinator will be hired and the existing Trap Neuter Vaccinate and Release (TNVR) Program will transition to a Shelter Neuter Release (SNR) Program operated by NUVAS, essentially saying if there is someone out there already doing that in the community, NUVAS will now do all of that. It also refers to shelter medical teams that will begin doing surgeries, after eighteen months, who would absorb those costs. Another proposal that NUVAS would work with Best Friends to update the current ordinance from five business days to 72 hours, which would mean disregarding or ignoring a state law, Tug referred to UCA 11-46-103. Tom questioned that; Tug advised they could have legal counsel review it; Tug also believes that we need to give owners a reasonable time to retrieve a lost pet. Other suggestions such as longer hours of service and making sure dogs get daily exercise which we currently already exceed in that area. Tug is willing to discuss any of the proposals, his biggest concern was with getting rid of behavioral assessments and believes we have done the research on TNR, and he has already started looking into it again and finding more evidence that it doesn't work. He doesn't believe that should close the door on discussion and read an article on a new approach and how we should look at things differently. Tug advised he can provide any of his information to the members to help discuss the issue with their city councils. Scott relayed an incident that he was also aware of regarding a vicious attack and believes we need to use caution. Tug's final recommendation is we would not accept the proposal by Best Friends. Chandler thanked Tug for his review of the offer and advised if any offer came to his city similar to this, he would be uncomfortable imbedding another organization so entrenched as this proposes into his city that you lose autonomy of what you are doing. He feels like it changes the whole mission of the animal shelter and would never consider something like this. Tug also paraphrased a comment he heard from Orem City stating they don't know why we would do this program when we already have done the research on TNR and that hasn't changed.

6. **Board Discussion Regarding Fiscal Year 2024-25 NUVASSD Budget-** Stuart inquired on a difference on his figures for his cities and what is listed, Tug will look into that.
7. **Vote to Approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 NUVASSD Budget-** Chandler Goodwin moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 NUVASSD Budget, Orlando Ruiz seconded the motion. Roll Call: American Fork, Stuart Fore- Yes, Cedar Hills, Chandler Goodwin-Yes, Highland, Scott Smith-Yes, Pleasant Grove, Carl Nielson-Yes, Utah County, Steve Alder-Yes, Vineyard, Don Overson-Yes, Lindon, Orlando Ruiz-Yes. The vote passed unanimously and the 2024-25 NUVAS Budget was approved.
8. **Other business-** None

9. **Adjourned-** Don Overson moved to adjourn, Steve Alder seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

CLOSED DOOR SESSION:

1. No items

Next Meeting: July 25th, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.

PENDING MINUTES (subject to change until approved)