

North Utah Valley Animal Services Special Service District
Pending Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
October 31st, 2024
71 East 200 South, Pleasant Grove, Utah 84062

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

American Fork- Stuart Fore
Cedar Hills- Chandler Goodwin
Highland- Scott Smith
Lehi- Chad Ray
Lindon- Orlando Ruiz
Orem- Kris Pease
Pleasant Grove- Carl Nielson
Saratoga Springs- Owen Jackson
Utah County- Steve Alder
Utah County Sheriff's Office- Yvette Rice
Vineyard- Don Overson

OTHERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Alpine
Eagle Mountain
Utah County

OTHERS ABSENT:

OPEN THE MEETING:

1. Welcome and Introductions: Chairwoman Yvette Rice welcomed everyone to the Board of Directors Meeting for the North Utah Valley Animal Shelter. She thanked Carl and Pleasant Grove Police Department for the use of their building and opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m.
2. Prayer/Thought- Offered by Chad Ray

WORK SESSION ITEMS:

1. No Items.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

1. No Items.

Scott Smith entered the room at 10:07 a.m.

GENERAL MEETING ITEMS:

1. **Public Comment**-Amy Motta advised she is a volunteer with the non-profit organization "Bailing Out Benji", she advised it a smaller national group whose commitment is to end puppy mills. Her purpose for speaking today is to introduce herself, provide contact information and answer any questions regarding how to detect puppy mills, how to deter individuals from buying from them, and backyard breeders.

Holly Sizemore wanted to extend thanks to both Chandler and Owen for their time and effort in visiting other shelters regarding the community cat programs and is eager to hear their insights and the board's decisions on Best Friends offer of support. She briefly went over modifications made from the original offer and she is hopeful that today's discussion will bring some clarity to this important issue and allow the board to consider the potential for community cat pilot programs in Utah County. Holly also asks for the board assurance that they would not oppose or lobby against

any Utah County city or town that may wish to pilot a community cat program in partnership with Best Friends Animal Society. Also in attendance were Karen McCoy, Caroline Fox, and Tom Sinnott.

2. **Review and Approve Minutes from September 26th , 2024, North Utah Valley Animal Services Special Service District (NUVASSD) Board of Directors Meetings.** Owen Jackson moved to approve the Minutes from September 26th, 2024; North Utah Valley Animal Services Special Service District Board of Directors Meeting. Don Overson seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion carried.
3. **Financial Report-** Tug reviewed the Financial Statement noting 32.9% of the fiscal year has gone by, looking at the totals they all are where we thought they would be around 30%, with Income totals being 71.6% and Expenses at 25.3% we are looking good. Moving on to the Monthly Check Register he wanted to point out a couple of larger amounts, under Professional & Technical Services paid to IVorQ, one for \$8,558 the other for \$2,638, those are for the dog licensing software system that has now been purchased and implemented. Tug also mentioned the three under Maintenance & Repair to Utah County, the first is our quarterly maintenance bill, the \$2,138.22 and \$6,2243.75 are for repair to the building and supplies, such as a pallet of salt for the water softener, those types of things. Yvette confirmed with Tug that the City Participation Fees for the County were paid, he confirmed and stated we still have one city outstanding that is being taken care of.
4. **Shelter Progress Report-** Tug Gettling
 - Physical Facility- The makeup area air unit one, which is the larger one that was just recently replaced, is having issues with both the exhaust fan and the internet access to control it, going down this week. The County has been there three times trying to get it fixed, they advised the damper door needs to be replaced, that is now past warranty. The cost will be around \$300-\$400, Tug advised its importance of getting it fixed since it takes the air in and out of the building and when it is full of animals the shelter can get very odorous. He also stated the large water softener that was installed just after the shelter was built is no longer working correctly, which can affect several of our systems. Tug was given a repair cost of around \$15,000 and a replacement cost of \$45,000, for now he went with the repair, and we may need to look at replacement in the next budget cycle.
 - We are currently fully staffed, although there are some possibilities of openings in the near future, this is historical for this time of year with the end of the school semester, holidays, other things coming up we tend to lose some staff with turnover this time of year.
 - Tug reviewed several trainings they have had recently, such as an active shooter training a few weeks ago that went well. We also had our veterinarian come in and do a feline upper respiratory training and how to tube feed kittens which provide a lot of nutritional value and is time saving.
 - Statistics, as of yesterday we had 69 dogs in the shelter, and 105 cats, which is almost the same as last year with 62 dogs and 106 cats. Tug did note that last year the 106 cats were about half of when we peaked and our numbers were coming down, this year we are going up from last month with 75 cats, which is also not the norm. Steve inquired if he had any sense on whether the weather cycles could be contributing to that, Tug advised that they could be contributing to it, for example with a cold snap the numbers are reduced with both the animals hiding for warmth and citizens not out noticing them either and the reverse happens in warmer conditions.
 - Chandler inquired if the shelter had received any threats, he stated during his and Owen's visits to other shelters one of them had armed guards present. Tug advised we have received threats monthly, if not weekly, and he explained the procedure for the creditable threats and working with law enforcement. A brief discussion was had and examples given of past occurrences, where the threats have come from and the type of threats. Chandler also clarified that the armed guard was for a specific threat, and they do not have permanent employees for security.
 - Tug gave an update on where the animal licensing software was at, stating it is not completely up and running, they are still working on importing the data, with only 2024 left, he believes by next week it should be up and running.
 - We have received quite a few feral cats recently, two different times from Alpine with around 10-15 each. Tug advised they had started a sort of informal survey, and when they get some in, he had asked if they did the neuter and vaccination for those cats if they would want them back and so far, none have agreed.

- Tug reviewed the live outcome stats; Dogs-690 redeemed, 284 adopted, 49 rescued, that totals 1,023, 90% of those we intake. Cats-119 redeemed, 285 adopted, 382 rescued, that totals 786, 59% of live outcome. In comparison 61% dogs, and 9% cats are redeemed, which is where the largest amount of cats coming into the shelter is from, those that are owned and running loose and not redeemed. If we could redeem cats the same as dogs at 61% it would take that number 119 to 479 which would easily get us to the 90% live release rate, we are shooting for and that is the area Tug believes we should be focusing on.
- Community Outreach- We completed "Barktober Event", Spectrum Academy students came and did field trips, Subaru provided some adoption kits, Live Empowered, a facility for adults with special needs has visited a few times. Upcoming events include an employee health fair for Entrada, we are also working with American Fork beyond High School Night, Pet Supplies Plus, Cornbelly's on more events. Tug also wanted to acknowledge that Karen had made a great suggestion of putting these community outreach events up on our website and Tug agreed, he did note that when they went to do that, all the upcoming events were not open for the public, but once they have ones that are that will be posted.
- Volunteer Program is going great, we just rotated again, and the board posted to log the last time the dog or cat was out has been beneficial as well. Tug assigned each of the animal care attendants to either walk or take out 2 dogs or cats a shift, which gives a minimum of 16 out each day from just the staff alone.

5. **Update/discussion regarding Best Friend's proposal-** Yvette advised that Owen and Chandler would give an update on Best Friend's proposal to work with us, she also commented that they both had done a lot of work researching and providing a recommendation to the board. Yvette stated that information was sent out last night to the board, as well as Holly, giving us a lot to discuss, she turned the time over to them.

Owen stated he would just hit the highlights since everyone had a copy and if we want further discussion that can be done. He advised that they had met with Davis and Salt Lake County, reviewed literature that could be used for both for and against stating he doesn't feel like that was a determining factor. In talking with both Counties, they couldn't advise if the TNVR was responsible for reducing the overall cat populations, in part because that is hard to track, its cost prohibitive to track a cat for its full life span. Owen also pointed out there are always nuisances for how the TNVR Program is administrated and so there is difference in both how Davis and Salt Lake County does their own, which most likely would be found throughout the Nation. They did both attribute the TNVR to achieving no kill status by releasing the animals it reduced their statistic. Unfortunately, because we are public, we can't turn animals away and therefore when an animal is sick or injured, we still have to euthanize. They did state that their staff morale did improve by performing less euthanasia; it was better for their staff. Owen noted one common question from the board was the impact from citizen complaints. While both entities did note complaints were not significant, neither of them was there when the program was first implemented. They did advise there is constant education that needs to be done with both the public and the Animal Control Officers (ACO). For them that is a lot easier since both of their functions are under County Shelters, with NUVAS, we are reliant on all of our member cities for ACO. A shelter assessment was a useful tool for Davis County, but it was done by a third party not an advocacy group such as Best Friends. Although it is not in the current proposal, embedding staff was not recommended due to liability, other responsibilities and conflicts that arose. Based on this, Owen doesn't feel like a piece meal approach is the most effective, his recommendations would be to do an assessment, however, to do it with a Request for Proposal (RFP) with a third party, not any one particular advocacy group. While he appreciates the offer of financial support, he feels it is important enough that we as a board should spend the money to do it. Doing the assessment, it should include a way for us to achieve no kill status, with or without a TNVR Program and help us with that. Owen stated, going back to the piece meal approach, our bylaws don't prohibit a city from implementing their own program. If they so choose, they will just have to make sure they are not violating any State laws in regard to holding an animal for five days. He did note there are some exemptions with this that the cities could look into if they want to take on that liability and responsibility to do so at their cost and their expense. Owen's recommendation would be to do an assessment, through an RFP, and direct the staff to draft the RFP and have it out by the end of the year, so the assessment could be started by the first of the year depending on the availability of the selected vendor.

Chandler advised that Owen did a great job in summarizing their visits, and building on what Owen said he feels it is important to do the assessment. He stated it is always nice to have an outside group come and look at your policies and procedures, how you are handling animals, what you are doing and making sure you are up to industry standards. He also likes the idea of a neutral third-party vendor and the fact the shelter is financially interested in the outcome, so they pay for it themselves. Chandler also agrees with the timeline Owen pointed out and mentioned with the cost the shelter would need to dip into some reserves to pay for it and feels that is important. He agrees it is a worthy goal to aim for ways for us to become a no kill shelter. Chandler also stated he has spoke with his Mayor and City Council about the TNVR Program and advised frankly there is not a lot of interest from them on the TNVR Program itself, while they like the idea of the shelter aiming towards the no kill status, specifically it is more the "R" part of the program that rubbed them wrong, like what Tug had shared, anecdotally the people Chandler has spoken to seem to be opposed to the return to field portion of that. He does feel like there are things the shelter can do in terms of reaching the goal, like Tug hinted at such as licensing cats. Chandler advised in looking into his city they already require licensing cats, and yet he doesn't believe any cats are licensed, he also stated Pleasant Grove also requires it and asked the other members how many of their cities have the same requirements, however it is not promoted or enforced. He feels like that would help the redemption rates and feels like there are things the board can promote that would push the shelter to becoming a no kill shelter. Chandler stated like Owen said he has no objection of individual cities taking on a TNVR Program within themselves.

Owen added, as Holly had requested, as a board we should take the information we have been given and we can present that and let them educate themselves, however we should remain a neutral stance and not say whether we are for or against and have that attitude, just because we are providing information, we are not advocating one way or another. Owen stated that we really don't have anything we need to vote on, with no contract or ordinance, this is just direction to staff to get the RFP going, after that is done, we can vote for the budget change and contract. Chandler and Yvette asked if any of the board members had other comments, Stuart was also in agreement having a third-party assessment and advised his talks with his city are about the same with not a lot of interest. Yvette also agreed that an assessment is a very useful tool to make sure we are practicing best industry standards, and ensuring we are doing everything we can to treat the animals and our staff in the best way possible. She noted it is responsible and there are always ways we can do things better and an outside perspective can always provide insight. Owen noted that Davis County had 71 suggestions after their assessment, although not all of them are feasible, Yvette advised that those can also be cost prohibitive, but we can always prioritize things. Chandler also commented that it could assist with some of Tugs needs such as staffing and suggestions on volunteer programs. Scott wanted to express his thanks for all the work that has been done, he also went over his concerns with the increased costs with cities already experiencing rising fees, while he agrees with trying to reach the no kill status, he would also like in the RFP to point out long term costs. Yvette would also like to thank Holly and Best Friends for bringing this issue forward and extending their offer, she also stated she would be willing to go back to the County and work with the Commission and County Attorney Office's on the possibility of creating a county wide requirement for cat licensure if the board wants that. She also talked about the importance of education to the public and low-cost options for spay and neutering. Tug also reviewed an initiative they are working on called "Cats Alive", focusing on three things; increase the number of cats in the district that are unable to reproduce, microchipping and licensing, and increasing cat ownership responsibilities, once he has it finalized, he will present it to the board. Laramie confirmed once the RFP is completed, the board will need to take action and vote on that, and any funds being transferred. Yvette wanted to again thank Owen, Chandler and Tug for the time and research put into this and appreciates how serious minded the board is when working on issues like this.

6. **Other business-** Next month's meeting is early due to the holiday.
7. **Adjourned-** Meeting was adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

CLOSED DOOR SESSION:

1. No items

Next Meeting: November 21st, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.