

**Heber Valley Animal Services
301 S Main, Heber City, UT
Animal Services Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, February 5, 2026
6:00 P.M.**

DRAFT MINUTES

- Board Members Present:** Sheriff Jared Rigby (Wasatch County)
Chief Parker Sever (Heber City)
Mayor Heidi Franco (Heber City)
Council Member JC Simonsen (Midway)
- Board Members Absent:** City Clerk Bart Smith (Interlaken)
Assistant County Manager Heber Lefgren (Wasatch County)
- Staff Members Present:** Supervisor Justin Hatch (Animal Services)
Shelter Technician Holly Argueta (Animal Services)
- Public Present:** Amy Mers (Paws for Life Utah)
Zoe Mers (Paws for Life Utah)

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Presiding: Mayor Franco

Agenda Item #1: Consent Agenda

- The Board reviewed:
 - Minutes from the October 2025 meeting.
 - 2026 Budget Update:
 - The budget was at 52% and running under budget (should have been at 66.67%).
 - The recently approved and installed ventilation system was not yet reflected in the 52%, but the department was still tracking under budget.
 - Proposed 2026 Advisory Board Meeting Schedule:
 - May 7, 2026 @ 6:00 PM

- August 6, 2026 @ 6:00 PM
- November 5, 2026 @ 6:00 PM

Motion: Chief Parker Sever made a motion to approve all Consent Agenda items. **Seconded** by Sheriff Jared Rigby.

- **Votes:**
 - **Yes:** Council Member JC Simonsen, Chief Parker Sever, Sheriff Jared Rigby, Mayor Heidi Franco.
 - **No:** None
- **Motion Passed:** 4–0.

Agenda Item #2: Chief Sever/Justin Hatch Updates

-Animal Services Staffing / Shelter Operations

- It was announced that the department would transition to a Spring/Summer schedule beginning in April, with officers working later hours due to longer daylight.

-Owner Surrender SOP Update

- It was stated that after the three-week waiting period, staff would attempt to contact owners three separate times.
- If no contact was made, the animal would be removed from Courtesy Posting services and the owner's information removed from the Owner Surrender file.
- If owners contacted the shelter after the three attempts, they would be required to restart the surrender process.

-Stray Animal Intake Policy Update

- Scheduled intakes for feral cats were implemented.
- Feral cats would only be accepted on Wednesdays and Fridays.
- This schedule aligned with Nuzzles' clinic hours (Mondays and Thursdays) to expedite spay/neuter services and reduce shelter stay.
- Holly Argueta stated that the new schedule would be publicly announced.
- Chief Sever requested the item be added to the next meeting agenda to evaluate effectiveness.

-Standardized Fee Schedule & Code Updates

- Justin Hatch and Chief Sever agreed that the standardized fee schedule had been working well.

-Other Discussion or Action Items

- **Midway Dog Bite Update**

- Council Member Simonsen requested an update regarding a dog bite in Midway.
- Justin Hatch stated that the dog had not yet been located.
- Chief Sever stated that the area was being patrolled.
- It was reported that Midway City had been contacted regarding a licensed French Bulldog, but no records were found.

- **Heber Light & Power Inquiry**

- Heber Light & Power contacted Chief Sever regarding use of the shelter's power right-of-way.
- Chief Sever expressed opposition due to potential interference with shelter expansion.
- He stated that any compensation should be directed back to the shelter.
- Mayor Franco agreed and referenced impact fees.

- **Ventilation System**

- The new ventilation system installation was completed.
- Air quality in the shelter improved significantly.
- Chief Sever reiterated that the department was tracking under budget at 52%, noting the ventilation costs were not yet reflected but would minimally impact the total.

Agenda Item #3: Paws for Life Utah Updates

- Amy Mers stated that Kari and Lori left in October 2025.
- Paws for Life partnered with Ruff Life Training & Resort in Midway to assist with larger dogs, helping relieve pressure at the shelter.
- Amy stated that Paws for Life would like to reinstate the medical assistance protocol for animals arriving in need of medical care.
 - **Daniel Jurisdiction Incident**

- Chief Sever discussed an injured animal picked up in Daniel (a non-participating jurisdiction).
- Daniel declined to cover veterinary costs and stated they would not assist in future similar cases.
- Chief Sever stated that euthanasia might be considered for high-cost cases, while lower-cost treatment could involve collaboration with Paws for Life and Heber City.
- Justin Hatch asked whether an MOU should be created between Animal Services and Paws for Life regarding injured animal protocols.
- Chief Sever stated the matter would be discussed further at a later date.
- Paws for Life partnered with Operation Pawpulation in Millcreek, UT to assist with spay/neuter services.

-Building Design Feedback

- Mayor Franco reviewed the Needs Assessment and anticipated costs prepared by Heber Lefgren.
- Amy Mers expressed interest in exploring donor contributions to assist with expansion funding.
- Mayor Franco mentioned potential naming rights opportunities.

Agenda Item #4: Facility Expansion Discussion

-Design

- Chief Sever reported progress on developing an RFP.
- Mike Johnson's engineering firm agreed to digitize existing plans.
- Chief Sever planned to add shelter photos and design concepts before submitting the RFP to the Board for feedback.
- The RFP would then be reviewed by the city attorney.

-FY 2027 Budget for Design

- It was reported that revenue bonds were believed to be the best funding option.
- Impact fees were discussed but determined to be complicated due to multi-jurisdictional structure and long accumulation time.

- Amy Mers inquired whether Paws for Life could continue assisting other shelters outside of Wasatch County if they partnered in expansion funding.
- Mayor Franco confirmed that Paws for Life would remain independent and could continue assisting outside the county.
- Mayor Franco requested photos of other shelter facilities for design ideas.
- Amy agreed to gather photos during visits to the Uintah shelter.
- Justin Hatch stated he would contact the Uintah shelter for photos.
- Mayor Franco requested completion of the RFP before the May 7, 2026 meeting.
- The design cost was estimated at 20% of the total project cost, approximately \$800,000.
- Mayor Franco requested:
 - Council Member Simonsen speak with Midway, while Chief Sever contact Interlaken and Hideout, to brainstorm funding ideas.
 - Budget breakdowns for each jurisdiction be prepared for funding verification.
- Council Member Simonsen recommended exploring grant funding opportunities.
- Chief Sever stated he would contact Nancy O’Toole regarding possible grants.
- Justin Hatch requested Holly check with Maddie’s Fund for grant opportunities.
- Midway’s estimated portion of the design cost was approximately \$96,000.
- Mayor Franco emphasized prioritizing necessary additions and possibly postponing non-essential items.
- Amy suggested reaching out to the local high school for potential student involvement in construction.

Agenda Item #5: Participating Jurisdiction Updates

- Hideout – No report.
- Interlaken – No report.
- Midway – No additional report.
- Heber City – No additional report.
- County – No additional report.

Agenda Item #6: Miscellaneous Items – call for next meeting agenda items

- Chief Sever would develop and distribute the RFP before the May 7, 2026 meeting.
- An interlocal meeting would be held prior to the next board meeting.
- Chief Sever would attend a vendor meeting once the RFP was submitted to obtain ballpark project figures.
- Chief Sever would speak with Nancy regarding grants and discuss funding with Heber.
- Council Member Simonsen recommended placing a cap on the design budget within the RFP.
- Chief Sever stated the Board could cap the design budget and issue a design-build RFP.
- Asset allocation was discussed.

Agenda Item #7: Adjournment

Motion: Chief Parker Sever made a motion to adjourn. **Seconded** by Council Member JC Simonsen.

Passed: 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

I, Holly Argueta, Animal Services Coordinator of Heber City, hereby certify that the foregoing minutes represent an accurate and complete record of the meeting held on February 5, 2026. This document constitutes the official minutes of the Animal Services Board meeting.

Holly Argueta

February 25, 2026

Holly Argueta, Animal Services Coordinator