



TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

THURSDAY, APR 8, 2021
ZOOM MEETING

Meeting Called to Order:	1:05 pm by Kim Gisler
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ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: BJ Motko, Damaris Menchaca, Donna Grigsby, Donna Sims, Ivy Ruiz, Kim Gisler, Laurie Eberle, Mary Dieterle, Michael Cortez, Michelle Hart, Oma Mansfield, Patrick Hamblin, Tricia Stever Blattler
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ALTERNATES PRESENT:

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Amy Shuklian, Bridgette Davis

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: Bonnie Heasley
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GUESTS PRESENT: Mary Jungwirth, Cassie Heffington, Jennifer Shiffert

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGENDA / <input type="checkbox"/> DISCUSSION: Approve the minutes for February 11, 2021
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Discussion: None. Voting by raising a hand.
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Motion:	Approve the minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting of February 11, 2021
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1st:	Patrick Hamblin	2nd:	Donna Grigsby
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Vote	Yes:	Unanimous	No:	
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PUBLIC COMMENT

None

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGENDA / <input type="checkbox"/> DISCUSSION ITEM: New Business
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None

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGENDA / <input type="checkbox"/> DISCUSSION ITEM: Education and Outreach
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None

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGENDA / <input type="checkbox"/> DISCUSSION ITEM: Deceased Animals
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Patrick mentioned that the topic was brought up by Damaris and this was something Tricia had discussed at the Farm Bureau. It is just not dogs and cats that are issues. It is horses and cattle that people don't want to pay the money to dispose of them, so they dump them on the sides of the roads or just off the side in a field. They want to work together with members of our advisory committee with their advisory committee and one other organization. Cassie mentioned it was their advisory committee meeting where Tricia had brought it up and there are quite a few agencies that were going to be looped in on an agencywide meeting regarding deceased animals and what we can do to provide outlets for. Work with people and hopefully slow down some of the dumping that we've been seeing. This time of the year it's not quite as big of an issue. It happens most in the middle of the winter, some in the spring and in the middle of the summer when it's very, very hot.

Kim mentioned cremation at the shelter. Cassie said people can bring in their own disposals. The road department when they pick up deceased animals, they bring them here so that we can scan them for microchips and then we run them through our incinerator. That's most of what goes in our incinerator at this point is animals who have been picked up on the side of the road. We cannot run anything over 800 pounds per load and we can't run anything with wool. That burns too hot. Cassie said it's a \$20 disposal charge but if somebody were to come and talk to her about it and they say they can't afford to have their animal disposed of, we will work with them. If it's just a matter of them getting them here that's the problem. Our officers separate deceased animals and live animals for disease protocols and for the stress of the animals.

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Kim mentioned that it's pretty convenient in some ways because it's basically free and if somebody's going to dump their dog or animal on the side of the road they're probably not too concerned like animal lovers would be.

Damaris mentioned that summer will be coming up and that's when she sees it. There's nowhere to dispose of animals. Dinuba Animal Control charge around \$50 and that's pretty expensive. She is interested in knowing what type of other options are there, so she can get this information out to her area and hopefully prevent a lot of dumping. Transportation is an issue for her area. Some people are challenged in that area of transportation and she just wants to know what are the options. What are some of the things that they can do? Education? To go out to the community so that maybe they can see there's another option besides dumping your deceased animal on the side of the road.

Kim mentioned that this committee will work with the Tulare County Farm Bureau. Cassie looked through her emails. She said it was brought up at the County Ag Advisory meeting by Supervisor Valero. They're getting together, quite a few people so probably during the next meeting will be happy to report on it again. She doesn't think there will be domestic animals included, will be primarily geared toward larger animals. They were having issues with goats and horses and cattle, especially calves people were buying from the stock yard and then dumping them when they didn't survive. She thinks that it was the Ag Commission and it's a problem, but we would also include domestic animals in that as well, so hopefully we can come up with some kind of a way to present to the landfills to accept deceased animals or something of that nature. She doesn't know what the laws are surrounding that, so she thinks that's why they want to meet. She would be happy to provide a progress report. Damaris said she did call their local disposal company which is Pena's and they said that they would not accept any animals.

AGENDA / DISCUSSION ITEM: **Update from Animal Services**

Cassie said she did not have a ton of information. Statistics for the month of March. They took in somewhere around 250 animals and their save rate or live release rate was 93%. It was 95% for January and February and 93% still remains above the no kill threshold, so that is wonderful. We received a lot of sick and injured animals this last month. We are seeing it's parvo and distemper season. We do have a distemper epidemic in our communities. We have not had any cases of distemper in our shelter animals, however nor any cases of parvo. We were able to catch any cases of parvo that we have seen at the intake level. Our intake for this month is going to probably be a lot higher. We've taken in over 100 animals and that's just the first eight days of April.

So as far as the spay neuter clinic. She met with company that is building the modular building this morning to discuss the final building plans. She'll be meeting with Patrick regarding those and will send to our contractor to look at the install process, so all is on track and target. We had a little bit of a setback with the electric requirements because we need hospital grade electric rather than regular electricity, so we had to switch from a refurbished building to a new building. That has actually been a blessing in disguise because a new building will allow us to do it exactly the way that we want to do it from the beginning.

The anticipated date for the install of that building is the beginning to the middle of June. Could move back, but the beginning to the middle of June is what it's looking like. We already have a lot of the equipment here. Some of the equipment that was going to take us a lot longer to order. Came in pretty quickly so we have the equipment here on site.

Working on clinic SOP, procedures, drug law procedures and things. We have some potential leads on some veterinarians but nothing she can mention for sure at this point. We did pet of the week this week with the Board of Supervisors which was amazing. That dog got adopted the same day that we went to the Board of Supervisors meeting, so it all worked out great.

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And in final news she has something to share with you which she doesn't even know if it'll fit on the screen. Look at this. Shows the giant grant check from Petco Love for \$75,000 that we had received. Cassie said that when they had to make the move from the refurbished building to the new building, they were concerned about whether or not they would put a stop to the project because it was going to increase the cost quite a bit. Strangely and weirdly unrelated, we got an email from the Petco Foundation regarding a grant application that we put in in June or sometime last summer about the clinic. They called us and after a whole bunch of conversation, ended it with well you requested \$60,000 but how about we give you \$75,000. So that was amazing and that will be \$50,000 for this year and \$25,000 for next year. And that will go toward any lifesaving expenses but what it's really going to go toward is the clinic and if we have leftover money, towards subsidizing public spay and neuter surgeries.

What she will need your help with as a committee is that the Petco Foundation is now called Petco Love. They want us to run a matching campaign. It is not contingent on whether or not we get the money, but it is something that we agreed to in order to process the grant. We would attempt to run a matching campaign. We don't have to make all of the money in order to get the money. So once that starts rolling, we will definitely need you guys to disseminate that information and help us with that matching campaign. I don't know what that looks like quite yet. We have to work with Friends of Tulare County on it.

Patrick said that they will just direct individuals to spay/neuter fund account. And they will separate out to have an accurate balance at the time, based on the accountants review of our records and our balances and then we'll be able to kind of indicate from this point forward. We going to dedicate this account for these activities and do some type of media push and social media push so that we can show what activity we have had during this process. Kim asked if matching funds would be done through a fundraiser or gofundme or just putting it out there. Cassie mentioned that they already have accounts with Friends of Tulare County that are already established and that's where the current donation money lies for the building. She would assume it would be more of a PR push to donate. Wouldn't be a separate gofundme or separate campaign. It would just be added to our already existing accounts. Tricia asked if county employees have the ability to automatically donate to Friends of Tulare County through payroll deduction. Yes. Patrick said they're able to designate which FOTC account and we do have some employees who have \$1 amount taken out and deposited into one of our specific accounts. That's actually right now, what is going to help offset the expenses for the Spay/Neuter Fund or the spay/neuter building and equipment and the cost of having to move from the refurbished building to the new building. The Petco grant is going to help but it is structured in a way to where we're getting a portion in one installment and then we get another portion so we're using FOTC to kind of fill in the gap.

Tricia asked if one of their outreach efforts would be to do a targeted push towards improving the amount of contributions. With the county employee base, she thinks if they made a plea about getting this grant and how we need to come up with a contingency of matching dollars, there might be some additional interest to support it. She picked up a hamburger today in a drive thru at Burger King in north Visalia and they rounded her order up to support the Valley Oak SPCA. So, we've got fast food chains even helping local charities like that so maybe there's some kind of round your donation up another buck every pay cycle to support Cassie and the Petco grant process. Kim said she gets hit with that rounding up quite open and she usually does it just because it's convenient and it's you know a few cents, but it sure adds up.

Damaris asked if the clinic was for both cats and dogs and what the cost would be. Cassie said, yes the spay and neuter clinic is for both cats and dogs. It will probably be a little slow to start, so it might be difficult to get appointments to begin with. Whatever doctor comes in, we're going to have to acclimate and figure out what their threshold is regarding surgery numbers. And things like the costs are all in our

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fees schedule which is online. We had the fees approved. Our fees are lower than any of the other clinics locally.

Oma asked if Cassie had any news on the Porterville spay and neuter clinic. Cassie said they are doing a ton of surgeries; you can't even get through the phone because there's so much demand, so they are scheduling huge amounts of surgeries. Last she heard they did a couple hundred surgeries in the matter of a week or so, mostly cats. It's been hugely successful but there's so much demand and they can't meet the need. Kim was at the vet a couple of weeks ago and they recommended this place, but they did say it's very hard to get through, so you almost need to go in on the days that they are open and talk to them. She was on the website today and it's definitely cheaper because she just paid \$145 to get a cat spayed and it's like \$40 or \$50 there and she doesn't think they charge for feral cats.

Cassie said the clinic is our contingency plan for how we're going to work with feral cats from here forward. As far as she's aware, they are not going back to open ended taking feral cats because it's just not the best practice. What we will do is scheduling them for spay and neuter. So, we will intake feral cats again, but it will be for a specific purpose for a very specific set of time. And then once we get established we can start applying for grants to subsidize those surgeries so that it can be lower than the posted fees. But we would have to have grants to cover that cost.

Donna G said Shannon posts of the spay and neuter site that she's on and on March 19th they had their one-year celebration of moving into the old animal hospital. They did 6622 animals spayed and neutered in the past 12 months. They're busy and people say they can't get through and she knows that Shannon calls people back. It's so cheap, all cats are \$40 and like Kim said if you have a feral one, you can bring him in, and they don't even charge most of the time. You have to bring it in a trap. They're just super busy. The prices are a lot cheaper than most so it's going to be nice if we can match those prices. I don't know what they charge. Cassie do you have any idea of what the rates are going to be? Cassie said they're all approved fees and listed under the Tulare County fee schedule. The fees are already set, and they are lower than Porterville spay neuter clinic as well. Wow that's good said Donna G.

Tricia asked if there were any restrictions or open to anyone. Cassie said it will not be restricted. There may be some restrictions regarding grants, so if we have subsidized programs that we wrote grants for targeted areas, those funds may be restricted, but the general appointments would not be restricted. What we're working on right now is the ability to do an online scheduling system like the Valley Oak SPCA has where people wouldn't have to try to get through a phone line. They can schedule their appointments online. Then, at the same time, in conjunction with the spay and neuter, we will also be running low-cost vaccine clinics for rabies vaccinations, distemper parvo vaccinations and microchips. It will also help with our licensing compliance because people can come to one place and get their animal spayed and neutered, rabies vaccination and get their license at the same time.

Kim asked about starting doing mobile vaccination clinics. Cassie mentioned that those did not happen this year due to COVID. So yes, once we get through this pandemic and she doesn't know what that looks like or the timing of when we will start doing them again, but that is it.

Tricia apologized for her tardiness. Today was her board meeting date so juggling this meeting with getting ready for a board of 30 farmers to be here in another two hours. Actually, they're still on zoom, which is even more fun with farmers, the county Agricultural Advisory Committee which she sat in the audience as a citizen. As a citizen observer for the last 12-years and then was appointed last year to serve as the Farm Bureau representative. They normally always placed a farmer in that role. And finally, she's had too many farmers say they don't have time for another county committee meeting, so now she gets to sit on the committee. And they have struggled with this conversation about the disposal of animal carcasses for decades. Largely on the commercial scale level of the conversations that have to



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take place every summer about the emergency declarations that are required before they can do emergency disposal when mortality rates jump up, especially in the livestock industry on dairy cattle in particular. There really are not any options for disposing of a lot of animals when it's hot and our rendering facilities are very limited and don't take sheep and goats and don't take horses and so we've talked about briefly on this committee.

And more so the Ag Advisory for a long, long, long time we need local solutions. She knows the state places a lot of boundaries in their way, particularly because they cannot compost mammalian tissue in California due to air and water quality regulations. So, this is not just an ag issue, but as this committee knows, it affects us people that are just backyard hobbyists. Unfortunately, we see a lot of goats and sheep and other small critters that get dumped and horses occasionally which Cassie's ACOs cannot pick a horse up and put in the back of their truck very easily when they find it on the side of the road. She guessed Supervisor Valero, after hearing the County Ag Advisory discuss this again and again and again and again and getting nowhere on it, suggested that they formulate a subcommittee this year to discuss it more pragmatically. There is a concurrent discussion on this, starting with the potential of an ad hoc committee and the Animal Services Advisory Committee. Let's make sure that we're not having two different conversations happening so I asked him that when the County Ag Advisory Committee on this meet, which she thinks is going to happen in the next two or three weeks, that they would invite at a minimum Cassie or Patrick or both. To be there as staff for the county on this topic and have a robust discussion with our County Ag Commissioner, the Farm Bureau, and the Environmental Health Department and whoever else needs to be at the table to talk about what happens year after year with this issue.

We know the ag side of it largely related to mortality levels going up in the hot months when we have heat related mortality issues, but we know it's a year-round problem for other animals. She doesn't know if, before she got on the call, we actually took any action today about formulating this ad hoc committee further, but she did want to invite Cassie and Patrick to be part of the Ag Advisory Committee conversation related to this subject so that as those conversations move forward, they are including Tulare County Animal Services in that conversation. So that's kind of where they are, and she knows their community secretary Nancy who is a paralegal in the RMA office was trying to get the four of them from the Ag Advisory Committee to set a date. She believes that date was going to likely occur before April is over so as soon as she has the date figured out she will make sure that either Nancy or herself gets it to Cassie and Patrick, and if there's other you want included that's fine. They want to try and wrap their arms around the piece of this that's commercial ag and what needs to happen on the dairy side as well as what needs to happen on the horse, sheep, goat, and small animal side.

AGENDA / **DISCUSSION ITEM AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Update from Ad-Hoc Committees**

Membership: Patrick said the open positions are the veterinarian, city representative and RMA. They have talked about possibly changing or making some minor edits to the bylaws and one conversation that he has to have internally is to see if they are going to recommend removing the RMA position and opening it up to possibly an at-Large position because RMA has not provided any appointee to that role for at least the last two and a half years. That's something they will have to talk through because it's a county department or agency position. Due to code enforcement and our ordinances overlapping at times with theirs, we just thought it would be good to have somebody on here. So, at this time that position will remain vacant but the city and the veterinarian one we could do another push to see if we can't fill that in some capacity.

New Committees: None

AGENDA / **DISCUSSION ITEM AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Approval of Committee Alternates**

Discussion: Some approved at the last meeting. Any other alternates you want to put forward? None.

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AGENDA / DISCUSSION ITEM: **Announcements and Correspondence**

Discussion: None

AGENDA / DISCUSSION ITEM: **Additional Member Comments**

Discussion: BJ mentioned it is now puppy season and kitten season. Starting to get calls about taking them. People who gave away six of them and they're now five weeks old and can you take the rest? She knows that ordinances talk about breeding. Talks about keeping them until they're eight weeks old and not placing them without vaccines. Do we have a forum or dissemination of that kind of information to the general public. The answer is that they're underage. They're supposed to surrender to a shelter or rescue. She didn't know if there's anything or if that's something we can talk about at some point. Some sort of talking points or something to educate the puppy owners.

Patrick said that's one of those things animal control could work with our community outreach and our public information officer on doing some reminders and then also animal services could look at updating their website. Part of it is these things have usually been on a regular cycle to where we have certain media pushes at certain times of the year. Our PIO and our community outreach time and pretty much everyone is so focused on vaccines for the communities and COVID that a lot of the messaging that we used to have on a regular schedule has kind of gone to the side, since all of our social media posts are driving people to the vaccine sites and that type of stuff. So that's something that animal services could definitely work with our team on. BJ is happy to help if there's something they can do from their end to get things moving.

AGENDA / DISCUSSION ITEM: **Suggestions for Future Agenda Items**

Discussion: Kim asked if we are keeping zoom for these meetings. Patrick said yes because there's no plans at this time of moving back to in person meetings. We are now in the orange tier within Tulare County. Even with moving through tiers, we are having to keep in mind the social distancing and in order to accommodate that, we'd be looking at having to rent like one of the large ballrooms or something of that nature at the Convention Center in order to adhere to social distancing. So, we will continue moving forward with zoom and we provide updates as we move through the next few months. I'm sure everyone sees the news and all of that stuff, but from a community perspective we still have to be mindful of monitoring our case numbers and everything else so we're continuing business as we have been over the last year.

Tricia is perfectly fine with zoom. It's actually a lot more expedient and efficient for me on a board meeting day so I'm not complaining. Zoom is fine, but the County Ag Advisory is now meeting at the Board of Supervisors and we're like the same size committee. I don't know if at some point that's an issue to address but I know Ag Advisory moved from RMA to the BOS because they want to go to digital recording minutes and that's now the only building apparently that has all that technology to record all of our meeting minutes without there having to be the secretary there writing the minutes up like Mary's doing. It's normally 12-15 people and we're going to be sitting in Part B of the conference space right inside the Board chambers, but I am great with zoom so zoom works for me.

Patrick said as a preference, even for him, that this is something that we could put out to this group when the time comes. He prefers zoom, especially with the meetings he has. Usually, they're going back-to-back, and he is usually eating lunch during zoom. With everyone being in different areas of the county and like today would be a prime example. Some of you would have driven 45 minutes for a meeting that took 35 to 40 minutes. So is the preference that we remain on a zoom structure, even if we start transitioning into the ability to have the in-person meetings. So that's something that everyone can think about and we could also take it up. I got one thumbs up on here again. It's I prefer zoom. It has saved me a lot of time. I am seeing a lot more people hit the thumbs up so I think we can continue

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under this structure. Just to let everyone know at one of the meetings I did talk about that we were possibly going to be moving to Microsoft teams. I found out that the structure and for security purposes, which I also have to take into consideration, we will continue to use zoom for external meetings. Because if we wanted to use Microsoft teams, then we would have to go through and get everyone's personal email addresses, set up profiles for everyone in order to make it work and so we're going to stick with zoom for these types of meetings, especially with the recording feature and so far zoom has been a lot more stable video wise and for flow then Microsoft teams has been in our test runs. I just want to give that quick update as well. Kim said for those of us who are new to zoom, that's fine. Tricia said that zoom has been a lot more consistent and reasonable to implement with citizen groups. She sits on a couple team meetings every week and there's more challenges with people's logins and profiles and account settings and not being part of a Microsoft teams program or not having a Microsoft 365 licensing setup right, so she thinks zoom is the better platform.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGENDA / <input type="checkbox"/> DISCUSSION ITEM: Adjourn meeting @ 1:50 pm			
Motion:	None taken		
1st:		2nd:	
Vote	Yes:	No:	