



# TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2021  
ZOOM MEETING**

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| <b>Meeting Called to Order:</b> | 1:05 pm by Patrick Hamblin no quorum, at 1:13 pm a quorum was reached |
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| <b>ATTENDANCE</b>  |
| <b>PRESENT:</b> Amy Shuklian, Damaris Menchaca, Donna Grigsby, Donna Sims, Laurie Eberle, Mary Dieterle, Michelle Hart, Michael Cortez, Oma Mansfield, Patrick Hamblin |
| <b>ALTERNATES PRESENT:</b>   |
| <b>EXCUSED ABSENCE:</b> BJ Motko, Bridgette Davis, Ivy Ruiz, Kim Gisler, Tricia Stever Blattler  |
| <b>UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:</b> Bonnie Hesley  |
| <b>GUESTS PRESENT:</b> Mary Jungwirth, Cassie Heffington, Eric Scott   |

Before the meeting started, Patrick mentioned that several people would be out today. They have 8 individuals and need 1 more in order to have a quorum. We'll wait a couple of minutes to see if we make the quorum.

Called to order and asked who the phone number without a name was. There was no reply. Do not have a quorum. No action they could take on any of the items on the agenda and would they like to adjourn until our next scheduled meeting. They can entertain a motion. Amy asked if they could have presentations. Patrick asked if they could have the Animal Services update. The answer was yes.

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Approve the minutes for June 10, 2021</b> |   |                        |               |
| <b>Discussion:</b> None   |   |                        |               |
| <b>Motion:</b>  | <b>Approve the minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting of June 10, 2021</b> |                        |               |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>  | Laurie Eberle   | <b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b> | Donna Grigsby |
| <b>Vote</b>   | <b>Yes:</b> Unanimous   | <b>No:</b>             |               |

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Comments from Advisory Committee Members</b>   |
| <p>Donna G. asked what's the projected date of opening the clinic. Cassie said it is highly dependent on what the veterinarian decides. She's leaving a lot of things up to the doctor, because it will be her license on the line. So, when she feels comfortable starting public surgeries will depend on how quickly we get the flow and staffing down. We will start doing surgeries in the building the week after she comes back from training, which will be the week of the 27<sup>th</sup>. That might not include public for a few weeks, as we get everything together. With public surgeries comes increased liability, so we want to make sure that we have everything running smoothly. It will probably begin with cats and then work our way up through small dogs and large dogs public wise, because the surgeries for cats are much easier and quicker. She starts the week of September 13<sup>th</sup>. She'll spend that week and the following September 20<sup>th</sup> in other clinics doing training and then we'll start surgeries on the 27<sup>th</sup>. They will probably just be certain shelter surgeries at that point. We may be reaching out to some of our organizational partners that want to partner with us for surgeries, to add on some of those as well and that's in the coming weeks. Then we will add on the public surgeries. When you're adding on public surgeries, you're adding on the addition of more staff to check in and check out animals which is a completely different process. So, we want to get all of our surgical processes down and smooth and then work on the check in and check out process as we start to add public. By the beginning of next year, we should be fully operational, but we will start doing surgeries in September.</p> |

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| <b>PUBLIC COMMENT</b> |
| None                  |

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AGENDA /  DISCUSSION: Update from Animal Services on Activities of Tulare County Animal Services

Cassie said the clinic building is here. It's moving forward slowly. Most of the medical supplies and equipment are up and running. Just waiting on the oxygen company to delivery oxygen and on the surgery lights and then the office furniture. Our veterinarian is hired, and her start date is Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>. She will spend that week and the following week going to some other high-volume clinics to get an idea of what their functionality and flow looks like. Drug protocols and things. She has been doing surgery for another clinic. By trade she is a large animal vet who has been doing relief work, spay/neuter surgery. She is an excellent surgeon but has not run her own clinic before so we're getting her up to speed on some of that.

The thought would be to start with internal surgeries. So, we'll start with shelter surgeries to try and get the flow and our staffing together. Then we will add in small animals. Feral cats probably first and then some volume partners and then open it up to the public, probably in the middle of October. At some point we'll do a grand opening as well but we're trying to make sure we have all of our equipment and some of the dates are a little fuzzy.

Like all of the shelter right now, we're experiencing a huge increase in intake. That happens pretty much every July but didn't last July because of COVID. Our intake has more than doubled this last month and nobody's taking animals. So, our intake doubled and almost all of those were large dogs. We are still not getting a ton of small dogs. We're getting a lot of sick kittens, sick and injured cats, and all of our foster homes for kittens are full. We're doing adoptions through PetSmart and our adoptions are going pretty well, but we can't get them fixed fast enough to get them to PetSmart. So as a result, our live release rate suffered a little bit last month. Percentages for June, we had a 90.6%. 87% for July. As far as previous years, we're talking about the difference between we euthanized 50 animals in July as opposed to in previous July. From 2016 to 2019 we were averaging 422-450. Euthanasia is still down by 87+%. This is something that is happening to shelters everywhere around the nation. All of the rescues, all of the shelters are full to the brim. Has to do with a whole bunch of things that have come together to cause a funnel effect in the system. Rescues are full because no one's adopting because they're getting a little bit more freedom. COVID caused a back log of veterinary appointments. Everyone in the shelter world is crazy busy and crazy full and just trying to figure out what this new world looks like. The clinic will be a huge lifesaver with all that.

We will be able to get animals out quicker. We will be able to get animals fixed. Will be able to assist the public. We will be able to get more adoptions because right now, most of our adoptions go to foster-to-adopt and we don't want to do too many of those and get behind.

We have some staff who are out on leave, so we've been a bit short staffed. We're looking to recruit a couple of extra help people. At least one for kennel work and we have a recruitment up right now for an animal control officer position. If you know anyone who is interested in applying, it is currently up on our website. We are also looking to potentially recruit for the animal services coordinator, which would allow us to increase lifesaving, because right now our staff is overwhelmed with attempting to network out animals and get people in for adoptions, so everything in the future is looking great. Right now, was a little hairy but we also knew this was going to happen when things started shifting, so we're going with the flow and it's all going to work out in the end. It's all going to be fantastic by this time next year. That is the goal. So, anybody have any questions?

Laurie said they are full and are back into Petco and they do the cubes there, but it is still back and forth, and you don't know what tomorrow is going to bring. They were so close getting a handle on the ferals and now with Covid it's all over starting over and people need to understand it's back to square one.

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Cassie said kitten season exploded this year because there was very little spay and neuter that happened last year during COVID. So, it's been a rough kitten season all around for everybody.

Patrick mentioned that now they have a quorum so they will go ahead and jump into our agenda items. The first item is the review and approval of minutes from the June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, meeting.

**AGENDA** /  **DISCUSSION: Create a Volunteer Ad Hoc Committee pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Committee's Bylaws to assist with recruiting new volunteers for Animal Services**

**Discussion:** Create volunteer ad hoc committee. Made a motion to create the committee and voted. Now we will have the wonderful part of getting members onto the committee and we can look either at doing that today, or if people want to give it some thought, and then submit their names to Mary. And then she could create a committee list and email it out to everybody. It's whatever everyone feels comfortable doing. Donna G. asked about recruiting volunteers now or later when the clinic opens, and things are moving. Are we talking about the first of the year or start trying to find volunteers now to help? Patrick said he thinks volunteers for supporting Animal Services. Figured by the time we identify the members of the committee, get the names to Mary to get the list distributed and then they schedule their initial meeting whether it's zoom or phone. There's going to be coordination that has to take place with Animal Services. The volunteers will be referred over there. There are very specific documents and handbooks that have to be included with any volunteer that will work at a county facility. By the time we get through everything, it will be Octoberish before people really start hitting the ground. The one caveat, that everyone still needs to be aware of through all this, is that we are still trying to manage COVID throughout our county and throughout the state and everything. So, we are looking forward to moving forward with getting volunteers, but we will still have to be mindful of social distancing and ensuring the health and safety of not only the staff but of the volunteers as they come on site. So, it's not going to be a quick process to get volunteers to get out there and they're still have to be scheduling and orientation and the application process. Oma asked where the volunteers would be. Patrick said at the shelter and at the clinic. What do they do? Walking dogs, taking them to the dog park, playing with them, helping clean the shelter, getting dogs ready for offsite adoption events. Will be redoing what the volunteers do based on the addition of a spay neuter clinic and additional needs at the shelter. That's where the committee would be working with Cassie and the Animal Services team to ensure that it gets done.

Cassie said volunteers would be matched with tasks, based on their skill set and their comfort level with various types of jobs. It will be highly dependent on the individual volunteer as to what that would be assigned to do. For example, if they wanted to come and volunteer at the clinic and they have some medical background, we may assign them to assist with surgical prep or recovery or something that's a little bit more technical. Whereas if we have someone come that has no animal handling experience but really wants to help, we may have them do laundry or something like that. Somebody that has more of an interest in behavior, we have them helping with playgroups. It would just depend on the individual volunteer and what they wanted to do.

Patrick mentioned nobody is jumping up to bring their name out there. Laurie talked about doing as Patrick suggested with taking the time between now and our next meeting to put names out there to form the committee. She thinks it would be great that they're going to be working with Cassie. Maybe an email from her to all of us to get the ball rolling. Patrick said if everyone is agreeable to that, then they could just move forward with an email submission process to finalize the members of the committee via email and plan for a target of the next Advisory Committee meeting which will be every other month so that'll be in October. Laurie mentioned they can have a zoom meeting beforehand. Patrick asked Mary to send out an email to all on the number of slots available on the committee. Respond individually to Mary and not reply all to trigger any of the Brown Act. Patrick said they already created the committee so now we just need the members. Member names submission via email to

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| Mary. Michael asked about volunteer options outside of the shelter such as a friend of fundraising event. Patrick said to keep it broad, what is needed to support the Animal Services Advisory Committee. |  |                        |               |
| <b>Motion:</b>   | <b>Create a Volunteer Ad Hoc Committee</b> |                        |               |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>   | Laurie Eberle                              | <b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b> | Donna Grigsby |
| <b>Vote</b>  | <b>Yes:</b>                                | Unanimous              | <b>No:</b>    |

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Update from Ag Advisory Committee on Deceased Animals</b>  |
| Tricia was unable to attend this meeting. Cassie was not able to make the last meeting. They were discussing several options, but it looked like they were going to end up recommending that the county look into putting out an RFP for a vendor. That was the last she had heard. She has heard of a least one person is now starting to pick up deceased large animals. Thinks it is a business. We have not had an increase in calls for deceased animal pick up large or small. |

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Update from Ad-Hoc Committees</b>   |
| <b>Membership:</b> None<br><b>New Committees:</b> None  |
| Patrick mentioned they are looking at veterinarian spot, possibly doing some modifications to the bylaws based on a couple of positions that are hard to fill and maybe changing the classifications. Michelle is interested in some kind of education component on educating the public. Either updating them on what's going on at the shelter or just what to do. She's on the social media sites quite a bit. She sees lots of bad information spread around. Looking for a way to educate people. Maybe just some blurbs to share with people. Patrick said this might be a question for Eric. Could this be encompassed with volunteers? Volunteers to education piece, looking at it broader. Eric said that should be fine.                                       |
| Trying to manage changes with COVID. Look at finding a couple of volunteers who want to work on education. Cassie could work with Michelle. Happy to answer any questions, just doesn't have the capacity to do an entire project right at this moment, but this is something that is very important. Damaris is also interested in the education part. She lives out further. Info to her area. Can convey what the shelter is doing and give out information to people to know what is available. Michelle is in the south county area and Damaris is in the north county area. Will go over at the next meeting. Will know more where we are then with the clinic and the recruitment of the animal services coordinator. Cassie posted her email address in the chat. |

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Suggestions of Committee Alternates</b> |
| <b>Discussion:</b> None   |

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Suggestions for Future Agenda Items</b>  |
| <b>Discussion:</b> Patrick asked to add a discussion on education. Amy asked if our vet will be joining our meetings or at least to the next one and introduce her. Patrick said that will probably be done by Animal Services. Patrick talked about what to do with the veterinarian position. Has not been filled since Dr. Lee-Dutra left. One of the items he wants to discuss with county counsel. We don't want to take her away from surgeries. |

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Adjourn meeting @ 1:40 pm</b> |   |                        |              |
| <b>Motion:</b>  | <b>Adjourn Meeting @ 1:40 pm by Patrick Hamblin</b> |                        |              |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>  | Laurie Eberle                                       | <b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b> | Amy Shuklian |
| <b>Vote</b>   | <b>Yes:</b>   | No vote                | <b>No:</b>   |