



TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

**THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 2021
ZOOM MEETING**

Meeting Called to Order:	1:06 pm by Kim Gisler
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ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Amy Shuklian, BJ Motko, Bonnie Hesley, Donna Sims, Ivy Ruiz, Kim Gisler, Laurie Eberle, Mary Dieterle, Michael Cortez, Patrick Hamblin, Tricia Stever Blattler
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ALTERNATES PRESENT:

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Bridgette Davis, Damaris Menchaca, Donna Grigsby, Michelle Hart, Oma Mansfield
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UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:

GUESTS PRESENT: Mary Jungwirth, Cassie Heffington, Ameet Nagra

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGENDA / <input type="checkbox"/> DISCUSSION: Approve the minutes for April 8, 2021
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Discussion: None

Motion:	Approve the minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting of April 8, 2021
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1st:	Patrick Hamblin	2nd:	BJ Motko
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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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Patrick wanted to take a couple of minutes in a hurry. Cassie is going to be giving updates for Animal Services which he thinks will be the key. Anyone who wants to assist with education or outreach after you hear her updates. We might want to take a second look at that for the next meeting because we're going to have a lot of exciting things taking place in the next two months. Tricia had a quick clarification about when you ask if a member of the committee has any new business to bring to the agenda. She is unfamiliar with what that would entail because we're not allowed to discuss things that are not properly agendized in a notice to the public in advance. Is that correct?

Patrick let everyone know the attorney here is new and there's been some transitions that have taken place. So, Ameet has taken the place and is proving guidance to the Advisory Committee and being able to ensure compliance with the Brown Act and those types of things. They haven't had a chance to truly get together and discuss many things during the transition period. We may be taking a look at our overall Animal Services Advisory Committee agenda and seeing if it needs to be reorganized, or if things make more sense to put them in a different category or structure. So, it may have a different feel for the next meeting because new business is usually aligned with suggestions for future agenda items. So, we'll take a look at it with county counsel.

Tricia would like to make an update at the appropriate interval with the chair's permission about an Agricultural Advisory Committee subcommittee that is dealing with carcass disposal in the county so whenever appropriate she will enter those comments. Kim mentioned there's actually the deceased animals that's next.

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AGENDA / **DISCUSSION ITEM: Deceased Animals**

Tricia mentioned it is an ongoing year-round problem. Both large commercial animal carcass disposal as well as the year-round dumping problems that they encounter in rural parts of the county. As well as dealing with some of the regulatory burden that is problematic when they have heat episodes and extreme heat emergencies. The County Agricultural Advisory Committee has allowed a subcommittee ad hoc to explore some of those topics. And to put together some recommendations that will go back through the County Ag Advisory and then back to the Board of Supervisors. She has been made Chair of that subcommittee and she's invited Cassie and other members of her team to engage on that subject because Animal Services gets sucked into this when people dump dead horses and ponies and goats and sheep on the side of the road. But it is an agricultural issue as well and it's got a number of issues related to air quality, water quality, dumping, landfill, permitting and all kinds of issues.

They're bringing in the solid waste folks, the environmental health folks, animal services, landfill people, veterinarians, livestock, commercial cattle people; we've got all those folks at the table under that other subcommittee. She doesn't want there to be a need for us to continue keeping it on this agenda. If anyone wants more information they can give her a call at the Farm Bureau outside of this meeting.

Kim said this Advisory Committee is more focused on the animals that are alive. She knows there's such an issue with dumping and so. Tricia mentioned that Cassie's team knows the capacity for their incinerator. How do they get messaging out to the rural and low-income communities that may not know there's resources available to them and how do they create some local solutions that don't get stuck in the crux of what they're not going to change such as state laws around air quality and water quality in an efficient enough manner to solve this crisis summer after summer. It comes up when mortality rates grow on the dairies. Large dairies have solutions. They have contracts for rendering but it's people that you know who have 14 goats in their backyard and all of a sudden they're dumped on the edge of the current canal because they don't have a solution and then it becomes Cassie's problem because her ACOs have to go out and try to deal with them on top of the other more important live animal calls she's dealing with. Tricia cares about it in the sense that she wants to make sure this committee is in a position to support conversations that are helpful to Tulare County as having adequate staffing, budgeting, and equipment to respond to that if it's in fact their job, and if it's not their job, then we need to figure out what other part of the county needs to handle some of those issues. One of their conversations around their recent meeting was whether they might encourage the county at some point to consider putting out an RFP to specifically look at bringing in a contracted hauling service for those animals that can't go to render and are getting dumped. Or are maybe too big to go into an incinerator.

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

Cassie attended the 1st meeting for the subcommittee, and she felt like it was a very productive conversation, and she is looking forward to future meetings and discussions with that team of people.

April 93% save rate, May 92.5%. She did take out the roosters from several cock fighting cases because there was nothing else that they could do other than euthanize them. Unfortunately, if they put them up for adoption, people who will fight them will come get them. We do have some resources that will take seven. We were able to get some out alive, but the vast majority, we were having to euthanize. Partly because when they come in, they're either injured or full of drugs and it's a sad situation.

They ran 919 calls during April and May with 3-4 officers. So, our officers are busy. We're averaging about 350 animals a month. The first 10 days of June we've taken in 170 animals, which includes 46 animals on Monday alone, so intake is increasing tremendously so we are going back to projecting around 500 animals a month that we used to get.



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The other exciting news is the clinic update. The building is coming tomorrow as long as the winds allow from Phoenix, and we will set up on Monday and Tuesday. That is really exciting and then we'll start to put all of our equipment in and at some point we will schedule a ribbon cutting event to do an open house but's that's not quite scheduled yet because she wants to make sure the building actually gets here and is in our parking lot first. Cassie asked Patrick if she is allowed to tell everyone that they interviewed a veterinarian. She doesn't know the status on that yet and Patrick will have to give an update on the status of that.

As far as messaging goes, they're working with COT on community messaging for the clinic and also for some community messaging round spay and neuter and some other topics that we have discussed previously in these meetings.

Reopening: so next week the gate will be open. Our operation will stay fairly the same as we've been doing. Pretty much full operation most of the time during COVID so the biggest thing will be that the gate will actually physically be open, and we will continue to do appointment-based services for some things like adoptions. Allows us to do better customer service. For our customers, it allows us to spend more quality time with people and to arrange things in a way that is more productive and organized and it is working well for us. We are also working on digital options for a lot of our services. We have had online licensing for a while but we're also going into doing online stray reporting forms. We do online lost and found reports. So, a lot of our services will be able to do online. We just opened up the ability to do online owner surrender requests. So, the goal for that is to be able to have people put in a request to surrender their pet online. It will give them a ton of resources and then we will have a staff member contact them and attempt to work with individuals to either hook them up with other options, such as rehoming sites, rescues, trainers, pet friendly housing, pet food pantry, depending on what the reason is for surrender. To try and stop animals from coming into the shelter and to provide people with what they need. And then we can schedule our owner surrenders so that we don't get full and so overwhelmed that animals die for space. That is the goal. It's sort of a pilot project that she and Mary have been working on. The form just went live on our website, we've done it a few times and we've actually been able to reduce the number of animals coming into the shelter. We had a few requests and only one has had to come to the shelter so we're very excited about this.

Kim mentioned the lost and found animals report. When she did it on the website she started getting stuff from other cities. Cassie mentioned that is a Petharbor feature. There's probably a small box to uncheck or you can just hit unsubscribe to those emails and they should stop sending you things.

Tricia saw the new form on the lab they took in Fresno. They helped a woman who was taking in pets from a sister who moved out of state. The owner surrender form was very informative and helpful to them and helped in their meeting the dog and the intake process with their rescue. She's also been following the work with the pet pantry here locally. Moose's meals is doing a fantastic job. Cassie works with Sara. Patrick wanted to let everyone know that yes they did interview for the veterinarian position and are in the process of completing all of the paperwork so they can reach out to the candidate.

AGENDA / **DISCUSSION ITEM AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Update from Ad-Hoc Committees**
Membership: None
New Committees: None

AGENDA / **DISCUSSION ITEM AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Approval of Committee Alternates**
Discussion: None

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

Discussion: BJ was wondering since the clinic is getting ready to open and the shelter is opening the gates if it's time to revisit doing an ad hoc committee for volunteer recruitment and training. She has a feeling that Cassie is going to need some assistance on the volunteer side of things and clinic volunteers. Patrick said this is a good idea. The only thing that they will need to take a look at, even though we have things opening up and even though we have certain waivers being lifted by the state, we still have Cal Osha who has mandates that are going to be more stringent than the California department of Public Health or the CDC. We just need to work through some of the details, with our Human Resources and then with County Council as well on if we can start bringing volunteers back to the facilities. BJ said Cal Osha is meeting on June 17th, to make some decisions about the whole reopening and how it impacts people so that's coming up next week.

Ameet said yes they are meeting next Thursday so they probably won't have an update until next Thursday on what extent we can bring people back to the workplace. They are hoping to get more guidance next Thursday. BJ said we need to hold off establishing the volunteer committee. Patrick thinks they could go ahead and establish it because it is something they are going to need. They just need to get through some of the additional guidance that's going to be coming to determine when they're going to hit the ground running, trying to recruit volunteers, and trying to get an orientation in place.

Tricia said she would love to get a tour at the new clinic and see how operations are running out there. Excited to hear that we've hopefully retained a veterinarian. We've got junior colleges in the area that have some vet tech preparatory coursework and that maybe could tie into being another place where we have access to some students and volunteers. Folks that want to come do clinic work and volunteer and learn more about shelter management and shelter veterinary medicine. Cassie would love to host anyone who would like to come and see what they do or have a tour, based on county polices as to public access.

Tricia asked about the anticipation of being back together in person for this meeting. Parick said right now they're going to continue with zoom because of how long these meetings last, like 33 minutes and some people would take almost an hour to get to the facility. They hope to have a hybrid model that they could blend both in person and people calling in zoom. They still have not opened up their conference rooms there which have the technology to maintain or to host meetings of that nature. One is still being used as a recording studio for all of their COVID messages. They hope to be able to take that down soon.

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

Discussion: None

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

Discussion: Tricia asked if they have items they want to place on a future agenda but not right today and say in two weeks something comes to her mind and she wants to add it to an agenda. What is the proper channel for bringing that information forward, so it makes the cutoff date for noticing purposes. Patrick said to email Mary and she will add the item to the agenda. Post the Friday before the meeting. Can create a volunteer ad hoc committee. Ameet said to add to the next meeting – Create volunteer ad hoc committee. Will give people an opportunity to take a look and see who wants to participate in that committee. Since it's an ad hoc, it'll be short term.

Tricia had a question about the formation of these subcommittees. Is the intent that the small body of this large Animal Services Advisory body is going to have a short term commitment to helping recruit

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and train volunteers? Or what does that committee do? Patrick said one of the biggest issues they have is the actual recruitment piece. They have people who drop off. They are in an odd time because schools have been at distance learning. We used to get quite a few students who could come and volunteer through a school program. We hope to be able to reimplement that in the coming school year. He sees the committee assisting and trying to do outreach and recruitment for volunteers. They will still have to go through our county volunteer process of the application and then an orientation program. We have an application and then the county has an established process for volunteer applications. If someone wants to volunteer they would go through Cassie. This group will try and get the applications out there and try to get people to volunteer. Amy said recruitment for volunteers and if someone wants to volunteer they go through Animal Services.

Amy had a quick question for Cassie. When does she want to come back for pet of the week? Cassie said anytime. Would you want to do just a small dog? Group trying to get apps out there. Recruitment. Pet of the week. When? Maybe small dog. Have tons of kittens. Right now, we have a ton of kittens so she could bring a kitten.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGENDA / <input type="checkbox"/> DISCUSSION ITEM: Adjourn meeting @ 1:39 pm			
Motion:	Adjourn Meeting @ 1:39 pm by Kim Gisler		
1st:	Tricia Stever-Blattler	2nd:	Patrick Hamblin
Vote	Yes:	No:	