



# TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2022  
ZOOM MEETING

<b>Meeting Called to Order:</b>	1:10 pm by Donna Grigsby
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<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
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**PRESENT:** Amy Shuklian, BJ Motko, Damaris Menchaca, Donna Grigsby, Laurie Eberle, Michael Cortez, Michelle Hart, Oma Mansfield, Tricia Stever Blattler

**ALTERNATES PRESENT:** Stephanie Blackmon, Rob Stewart

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Bridgette Davis, Donna Sims, Ivy Ruiz, Mary Dieterle, Patrick Hamblin

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:**

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Mary Jungwirth, Cassie Heffington, Ameet Nagra

**AGENDA** /  **DISCUSSION:** **Ratify Chair's Action on March 12, 2022, to Allow for Remote Attendance at this Meeting and Readopt the Related Resolution Originally Adopted on February 10, 2022**

**Discussion:** None

<b>Motion:</b>	<i>Ratify the Chair's Action on March 12, 2022, to Allow for Remote Attendance at this Meeting and Readopt the Related Resolution Originally Adopted on February 10, 2022</i>		
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<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Laurie Eberle	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Unknown
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<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	Unanimous	<b>No:</b>	
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<b>PUBLIC COMMENT</b>
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None

**AGENDA** /  **DISCUSSION:** **Review and Approval of minutes from Meeting on February 10, 2022**

**Discussion:** Michelle saw one minor error on the first part in approving a resolution. It's the first sentence and instead of resolution it says revolution. Mary said she would make the change.

<b>Motion:</b>	<i>Approve the minutes of the Advisory Committee Meeting on February 10, 2022, with the one change listed above</i>		
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<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Amy Shuklian	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Oma Mansfield
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<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	Unanimous	<b>No:</b>	
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**AGENDA** /  **DISCUSSION:** **Creation of a By-Laws Ad-Hoc Committee**

**Discussion:** Donna asked if they are going to table that until Patrick can be here. She is not sure what they are doing with that. Amy asked if anyone had any insight into this one. Michelle mentioned they had talked about wanting to update the by-laws because they now have a veterinarian. Had talked about removing some other vacant positions. Last time they had a subcommittee that went through the by-laws and brought that version back to the whole committee for review. Donna mentioned tabling the discussion for the next meeting.

<b>Motion:</b>	<i>Table the discussion of the Creation of a By-Laws Ad-Hoc Committee until the next meeting</i>		
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<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Laurie Eberle	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Amy Shuklian
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<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	Unanimous	<b>No:</b>	
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**AGENDA** /  **DISCUSSION:** **Comments from Advisory Committee Members**

None

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

## TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Cassie said the last two months have been filled with a lot of surgeries and a lot of medical animals. It has been extremely busy at Animal Services. In the last two months we've taken in over 700 animals and that doesn't count April. That's just February and March. Our average live release rate is 85% which is pretty good, considering that most of what's coming in are large breed dogs that have behavior issues and severe medical. So, our veterinarian is working really hard.

Since January 1<sup>st</sup>, we have done 960 spay and neuter surgeries. So that is almost 1,000 spay and neuter surgeries in less than three and a half months. So that brings our total surgery numbers since the beginning of October, to a little over 1,600 surgeries. 624 of those surgeries were cats, 336 dogs. 168 were large breed dogs. We are doing public surgeries. Have not started advertising yet, because we need to build out our staff. We are a little bit inundated with appointment requests, without even advertising, which we kind of assumed would happen. We're averaging between 20 and 30 surgeries a day, most of which at this point are public surgeries, either scheduled through us or scheduled through one of our partner organizations and brought to us on a transport. So, lots and lots of public surgeries and lots and lots of feral cats.

We plan to hold our first public vaccine clinic here at the shelter using our online appointment system on May 27<sup>th</sup>. So that's coming up. You should see some advertising starting to come out for that in a week or two, but we don't want to put it out too far ahead of time, because we know that our entire day will be booked within five minutes. We want to do it this way the first time, so that we can get our process together and make sure that we have everything that we need when we go on location to some of our rural communities. In the last few months and just February and March, our field services team, which consists of three to five officers depending on the day, have responded to 1,221 calls for service in less than 60 days. It has been very, very busy around here. If you happen to hear people say that Animal Services is running a little behind or a little slow to respond, that's why. We are just absolutely flooded and inundated with calls.

And some good news. Our Animal Services Coordinator started. Her name is Candace Harrington which is lovely fun because my name is Cassie Heffington, and her name is Candace Harrington, and our emails are almost exactly alike. So, this is already started being fun. We have a Candace, a Cassie, and a Casey. Her goals for the next few months are to really work on our adoption program, trying to get these large breed dogs out to adoptive homes. And our foster program. She's going to kind of work a little backwards. He had to jump in with the foster program because it's kitten season and we're getting kittens every day. So, she's working really, really hard to find fosters for kittens. And then we will also be fine tuning our volunteer program and bringing some stuff up to date and getting a more solid foundation so that we can start recruiting volunteers on a regular basis.

Cassie said that right now their biggest need is fosters for neonates, so kittens and puppies, but mostly kittens. If you know of anyone who wants to take home kittens, even as an emergency overnight foster, Candace is working on starting a dog day out program where people can come and take dogs out for just the day and an emergency overnight foster program for neonatal kittens and neonatal puppies. If you know anybody, reach out to your networks of people, and send them her way and she would super appreciate this. Donna G mentioned reaching out to fosters for kittens in other social media. Cassie has a list of about a dozen people and that entire list is filled with kittens now. So, we have a list of about a dozen neonatal kitten fosters and they all have at least one litter already.

Laurie mentioned that Paula had contacted her about a little German shepherd puppy, so she does reach out to other organizations to try and find homes to bottle feed right now. Cassie said that generally when something comes in, it doesn't really matter what it is. There's multiple pathways that are happening at one time. As soon as an animal walks through the door, Paula is working on rescues and Candace is working on foster or adoption at the same time. Whatever live outcome comes first, is where

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the animal goes. So, we have multiple live outcome strategies happening on the animals that are coming in at the same time. The hard part is large breed dogs. We are inundated with shepherds and huskies, mostly German shepherds. Every litter of puppies that comes in seems like they're German Shepard. So, tell all of your friends to please stop breeding German shepherds, not that any of your friends are breeding anything.

Tricia mentioned maybe adults in daycare settings or students that are in some of the county day school programs. Any of those county run schools or rehabilitation programs where people might be able to come out and do relief work, whether that's just a short day at the shelter helping out bottle feeding animals during the day or a 24-hour period. Is there anything like that within the community care coalition of agencies? Cassie thought that was an excellent idea and right now she's trying not to overload Candace. She is not sure how County Counsel feels about that for liability, but that is definitely something that they could look into. They were going to put a blast out to county employees who are now teleworking some of the time for fosters. Even short term and emergency foster people who are working from home and could potentially bottle feed kittens in the meantime. Tricia thought about a program like Able Industries where they have adults with special needs that are doing shredding work and office assistance and activities where they can stuff envelopes for mailers. Obviously you're not going to put them out in the exercise yard to behavior test dogs, but they could bottle feed kittens, scoop litter boxes, file papers and office work. Opportunities for some of the adult population that are already in county services that might be willing to help and who love animals. Cassie thinks that is an excellent idea and she will look into what agencies run those programs and see if that's a possibility.

Tricia mentioned that public schools are back from spring break and maybe connecting with some of the CTE directors at some of the public school districts to discuss job shadowing work experience, volunteer service in every program in high school. Students can take animal science and vet tech classes at COS, but there's not really a pathway to finishing a program that puts you in a position to take the state boards for a registered vet tech. Most of the local vets don't use RVTs. They train a lot of people internally. Their focus was more on large animal medicine then companion animal medicine.

The closest program is SJVC in Fresno. They talked about getting interns, but they haven't reached out to them yet. Cassie does have a veterinary intern that has been coming her a few times to learn some things and shadow with us and do some work. They are through the SPCA, and we borrow them. Oma asked if FFA would be a place to look for fosters. Future Farmers of America is one component of the high school agricultural department's curriculum. All of the ag are pretty plugged into understanding that the shelters are overrun. Small animals might not be as much of a focus for FFA. There was a high school club in Exeter for a while, like an animal compassion club or something like that. Tricia does have a relationship with a majority of the high school ag departments in the county and she's willing to explore that conversation. Amy knows that a lot of schools require community service hours for different projects. Maybe even a 4H club. Tricia said there are quite a few clubs that are really struggling for adult leaders and project leaders and there's still a lot of virtual things they are doing right now. Tricia will put a list together and send it to Cassie.

**AGENDA** /  **DISCUSSION: Education**

**Discussion:** Michelle had contacted Cassie and they have been emailing back and forth and they were kind of waiting for Candace to get on board and get her feet wet. Cassie mentioned that it is kitten season, and everything is really crazy. She would like to get through the spring and then work over the summer on some education programs for the fall going into the next school year.

Donna G asked what else they can do for education to get people educated about spay and neuter so that our county doesn't end up with so many unwanted pups and kittens. Michelle did speak with the superintendent and with the principal. She's just waiting for Candace to see about a flyer or something

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like that to take them to the schools. They are very open to having materials dropped off and then the district distributes them to the students. They were also really interested in having someone come out to the school and speak. She lives in Terra Bella and that's why she reached out to the schools there. She's sure that the schools in Richgrove and Earlimart would be interested in having people come to campus as either a guest speaker at some kind of an event or just to drop off materials. Donna G asked if anyone has ever gone to the schools and given programs. Cassie had started about 6 months prior to COVID hitting so she's not sure what happened before that. Most of her tenure here has been during the pandemic but she knows they did at Kings County, go to schools a few times and gave presentations. That is something that is on the radar for the future but on a very long list of things that they need to address at this time, so it is on the list along with a flyer to send home with students. Donna G said the rural areas have a lot of issues, especially in the north county. They have a problem with overpopulation.

Tricia mentioned there was talk about developing a Bureau of Speakers on a lot of different topics. She registered to speak on agricultural related matters and some other talks years ago. She doesn't know if the speaker's bureau is still in place, but it might be valuable for this advisory body and perhaps that committee to think about registering a couple of individuals. It always seems like every spring and fall she gets called to go out to a Rotary club and do a presentation and then the next thing she knows is that she has eight more to do. Every other Lion's Club and Kiwana's club got her name from someone else and needs a lunch speaker. She could easily do a rescue presentation on behalf of the group she represents. She would be more than willing to train under Cassie's direction to give a Tulare County Animal Services message and go out and do some public outreach to some of those places.

Cassie mentioned that they do a small spot on KJUG every Tuesday morning. Most of it is Pet of the Week, but she likes to throw in a little educational piece. One time she talked about flea and tick control. She's talked about overpopulation a little bit, along with heat and cold. It's like a 30 second spot that she plays throughout the week in the morning. Donna G mentioned Hopper in the Morning. Laurie did a career development for the schools a couple of years ago at the continuation high school.

AGENDA /  DISCUSSION: Update from Ag Advisory Committee on Deceased Animals

Tricia did not have anything new to report. Cassie did make it to the last Ag Advisory Committee meeting and spoke briefly under the public comment. Cassie thinks the plan was to put them on the next regular agenda for the advisory committee meeting. She is not sure where everyone is heading as far as a formalized process. She knows that when they get calls for dumped large animals, they are working on a process for that with two new vendors because it generally falls to them or the road department except for dogs, but nothing else right now. Their officers are inundated with calls for other things. They do have two vendors that are willing to pick up livestock. Baker's Commodities will pick up cows. But if they get calls for dead horses and things, at least now they have a vendor that they can turn to to provide that service.

AGENDA /  DISCUSSION: Update from Ad-Hoc Committees

**Membership:** Donna asked if they had any applications. Mary said she had one which she forwarded to Patrick. Donna asked if other than putting it out there through the site, how are they getting the word out that they have openings for At Large position out to people.

**Volunteer:** Mary said there is no one currently on it. Cassie said that last time they discussed the committee waiting to be formed and to not do anything until after Candace started and formed a volunteer program.

**New Committees:** None



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<input type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Additional Comments</b>
<b>Discussion:</b> Donna asked if hey had any suggestions for the next agenda.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Adjourn meeting @ 1:54 pm</b>			
<b>Motion:</b>	<b><i>Adjourn Meeting @ 1:54 pm by Donna Grigsby</i></b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Laurie Eberle	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Oma Mansfield
<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b> No vote	<b>No:</b>	