



# TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022  
ZOOM MEETING

<b>Meeting Called to Order:</b>	1:04 pm by Patrick Hamblin
---------------------------------	----------------------------

ATTENDANCE
------------

<b>PRESENT:</b> Amy Shuklian, BJ Motko, Damaris Menchaca, Donna Grigsby, Donna Sims, Ivy Ruiz, Laurie Eberle, Mary Dieterle, Michael Cortez, Michelle Hart, Oma Mansfield, Patrick Hamblin
--

<b>ALTERNATES PRESENT:</b>
----------------------------

<b>EXCUSED ABSENCE:</b> Bridgette Davis, Tricia Stever Blattler
---

<b>UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:</b>
---------------------------

<b>GUESTS PRESENT:</b> Mary Jungwirth, Cassie Heffington, Ameet Nagra
---

Patrick asked for us to take a brief moment to recognize the loss of our Chairperson, Kim. He believes they will have a memorial service in March for her in Porterville.
---

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Approve a Resolution Allowing Remote Attendance at Future Meetings</b>
--

<p><b>Discussion:</b> Ameet said at the last meeting that they don't have to pass the resolution at every meeting. The committee delegated the authority to allow the Chair or the Vice-Chair to call remote meetings pursuant to AB361. Of course, with everything that happened, that was not able to be done. So, just to allow us to continue this meeting on zoom, she is going to present the resolution again to the committee for its consideration to allow this meeting to continue happening via zoom. Patrick said that with everything else that transpired he was out and just returned a couple of weeks ago. So, they missed the deadline in order to continue on with the resolution that was passed in November. Hopefully now moving forward will be able to stay on track with it.</p>
--

Ameet shared her screen and gave a brief overview of AB 361, to continue meeting via zoom and it will delegate the authority to the Chair or Vice-Chair and the Chairs options to hold a meeting via zoom and we will just update the date to February 10, 2022. Does anyone have any questions?
--

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Approve a resolution Allowing Remote Attendance at Future Meetings</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Laurie Eberle	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Michelle Hart
<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b> Unanimous	<b>No:</b>	

PUBLIC COMMENT
----------------

None
------

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Review and Approval of minutes from Meeting on December 9, 2021</b>
---

<b>Discussion:</b> None
-------------------------

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Approve the minutes of the Advisory Committee Meeting on December 9, 2021</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Laurie Eberle	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Oma Mansfield
<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b> Unanimous	<b>No:</b>	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary</b>
---

<p><b>Discussion:</b> Patrick asked if there were any self-nominations. We could nominate Tricia since she's not here. He was looking around for her name to see if they can slide one by and then they can just email her and let her know that she's now the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee. He would have no problem doing it if no one else is interested in taking on that responsibility. Donna G told Patrick that he's done such a good job and they think he should do it again. Patrick said, so then you're offering up to be the Vice Chair. Patrick has no problem being Chair. Laurie said if she is needed to fill a position she will volunteer herself for any position. Patrick mentioned that she has been Secretary and does she want</p>
--



## TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

to stay with that position? Laurie said she can stay a Secretary but if someone wants to take that, she can take one of the chairs. Based on the offerings, do we have a motion for the Chairperson? Donna G said she wouldn't mind. The Secretary's not taking notes. Doesn't Mary take all of the notes for the meeting? Laurie said yes, Mary takes the notes and then she will email them to you. You make any changes that you know from the meeting and then she just emailed her back or texts her back what the changes were, and she makes those changes. It's not a very time-consuming process. Patrick asked if they have a motion for a Chairperson? Damaris made a motion.

BJ mentioned that Laurie has been very successful in the position of Secretary. Would Donna G like to take the Vice Chair position? That is something we could talk about. Donna G said she would be fine. She thinks Patrick's usually here at all of the meetings so she would just pick up over here in his absence. Is that correct? BJ made a motion that Donna G fills the position of Vice Chair.

Amy said it was ok to vote for yourself. She always does. Donna G wasn't sure if she was supposed to or not. Patrick asked Lori if she was interested in Secretary. BJ nominated Laurie to continue in the position of Secretary.

<b>Motion 1:</b>	<b>Election of Chairperson – Patrick Hamblin</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Damaris Menchaca	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Donna Grigsby
<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b> 1 Abstain	<b>No:</b>	
<b>Motion 2:</b>	<b>Election of Vice-Chairperson – Donna Grigsby</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	BJ Motko	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Oma Mansfield
<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b> 1 Abstain	<b>No:</b>	
<b>Motion 3:</b>	<b>Election of Secretary – Laurie Eberle</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	BJ Motko	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Donna Grigsby

**AGENDA** /  **DISCUSSION: Comments from Advisory Committee Members**

Donna G is anxious to take a tour of the new clinic. Patrick had a question for Ameet about the by-laws. Looking at the committee makeup when it was initially created. There was a total of 19 members. As you know, the Resource Management Agency representative and also the City representative and the Veterinary partner representative have always been difficult to fill. We may be able to look at any changes to structures from our city shelters and management or we can reengage them, but he would like to add to the agency to review our by-laws because we could potentially decrease the committee overall by two members by deleting out of the by-laws the RMA representative and the Veterinarian representative. Now that Tulare County has a veterinarian on staff, if there is at any given point in time, a need to have a vet present for any discussions that we may have come in before the committee, he's sure that they can pull her in to answer any questions from that standpoint. But again, these positions have sat vacant or were held for a short period of time. He thinks it now would be a good time to go ahead and review the by-laws. So, we could add that as a new category for a future meeting. Last time we had a committee that assisted with reviewing between the committee and County Counsel, making the recommendations and then we distributed out to the Advisory Committee members discussion at a meeting. Ameet said we can include the creation of the Committee on the agenda for the next meeting.

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

Cassie has a pretty short update. They've had a bit of a rough couple of months here at Animal Services with a lot of people being out on some leave. So, at one point they were down to 9 employees out of 14 so it has been a fun couple of months here. In better news, the clinic is going well and people if you would like to come by, she's happy to give you a tour. They do surgery Tuesday through Friday, so probably would be better on a Monday, when there's not animals all over the place and surgery happening. Just email her or text her or call her and let her know and she'll gladly give you a

## TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

walkthrough. She has no idea due to COVID when they're going to have an open house or something like that. It seemed to kind of keep getting pushed back so don't wait for that. Just call her and she'll give you a tour of the shelter and the clinic. They have a lot that's changed during the last couple of years at the shelter. She would love for anybody to come down and take a look at the clinic.

Since October 1<sup>st</sup>, so in about four and one half months, they have done 978 surgeries. So next week, they should hit 1000 surgeries in less than five months. She's really, really excited about that. Dr. Myhal was a great hire, and we are doing a ton of surgeries. We're averaging about 250 plus surgeries a month right now and we only plan to do more than that. We also have done so many other shelter med things that we never would have been able to do before. We've done three or four leg amputations, tail amputation, more wound repairs, eye removals, lots of splinting and triage care that they wouldn't have been able to do before. So, it's been amazing. The last couple of months we have been inundated with sick and injured animals, just one right after the other. So, in addition to doing surgeries for spay and neuter, Dr. Myhal is also doing triage care and our techs have been amazing with that. We are utilizing shelter staff to staff the clinic. The last couple of months things have gotten a little hairy staffing wise but we've been able to keep up with what we're doing. That's pretty much all of the major updates that she has. The shelter has done a few adoption specials which raised our adoptions of large breed dogs. Every rescue is full. Every shelter is full. It's across the country, the same story. So, we've done some \$20 large breed dog adoptions. That was really successful. We've joined up with KJUG and she's on KJUG every Tuesday morning with a pet of the week. We're hoping to continue to do some \$25 large breed adoptions, as long as funding continues to hold steady. We've got some donations that have come into Friends of Tulare County that we're using for that.

Oma has a question on intake. Cassie thinks that a lot of people want to blame it on people who have adopted pets during COVID returning animals. She doesn't think that's it. She thinks that that's a small piece of it. There is also the issue of people who have been staying home for the last few years and now they're leaving. Which means that their dogs that are used to them being there the entire time are now roaming the streets and making more dogs. There was also a shortage in veterinary services during that time during COVID which means that nothing got spayed and neutered. So, we are seeing puppies everywhere, every single day. They are trying to combat that with the spay-neuter clinic, but she thinks that it's a combination of a whole bunch of things. In our rural communities there is an ingrained method of we leave our gates open, and our dogs get loose and make more dogs and then come back in the evening. So, it's going to take decades of diligent work to be able to start to turn it around. We saw a little bit of it during COVID because everybody was at home and keeping their dogs inside and not reporting stray dogs. Now we're seeing it pick back up to where it was before.

Amy had a question regarding the spay and neuters. That's fantastic on how many outside agencies that we do. Those aren't all just Tulare County shelter animals right? Cassie replied that they are doing some public surgeries. People who call, we are fitting them in. We haven't opened the online stuff yet. She doesn't want to overload and then have to cancel a whole bunch of people's appointments when they very first open. As people call in, especially with cat problems, we've been scheduling them. If people call in and say, hey I've got five feral cats at my house and they're going to start making kittens in a month, we've been scheduling them two or three at a time. So, there's some public appointments. We've been doing feral cats for Fresno Humane, Kings County and we did some for the Feral Cat Coalition. We also do spay and neuters for rescue partners for the City of Tulare, Friends of Tulare City, Pawsitive Connections which is in Kingsburg, and Cats by the Tracks. There's a few others that we done a few for them and we've been doing a lot of our adoptions because of our adoption specials. So, a lot of our large breed dog spots have been taken up by our adoption special dogs. We do a lot of feral cats.

Donna G asked if the prices are comparable to Porterville, the Non-Profit Spay and Neuter Clinic where they're doing cats for \$40, and their fees are quite a bit lower than the local vets and you know that's all

## TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

they do is spay and neuter at the clinic. Cassie said their fee schedule is posted online, but general speaking for a feral cat it is \$25 for a male, \$35 for a female with mandatory \$10 rabies vaccination so it comes out to \$35 or \$45. And then for regular cats, it is \$35 for a male, \$45 for a female with a mandatory \$10 rabies vaccine unless they're already up to date with the rabies. So, our prices are fairly comparable, but as far as public surgeries right now for feral cats, we do have a grant from Best Friends, so we are not charging people for spay and neuter for constituents of our unincorporated areas of Tulare County who have feral cats they bring in for surgery.

Laurie said that the prices we have online are almost the same as what they are being charged by their vet. None of the vets here in Visalia are even close. Patrick said that they've done an amazing job. He asked Cassie if they would be adding any additional services through the clinic in the coming fiscal year. Cassie replied that they will be potentially adding some case-by-case services for their rescue and shelter partners. Not yet for the public. She knows that some of the other shelters are unable to get care for the animals that come into their care. So, they could potentially help with that eventually. They may do public wellness and they definitely will be doing public vaccines. But the liability that comes with doing public wellness and the possibility of overshadowing. We don't want to overshadow our private vets and do services that they could potentially do, so we would want to make sure that it is targeted at people who would not go to a regular vet. So that's still sort of in the works, but we are going to be looking at adding some fee schedules for some of those things so that we are able to provide them. We've run into some situations where people have brought in a cat that they want spayed but the cat really needs their eye removed. That happened last week so we went ahead and did it because Doc felt it was ethically the right thing to do. So, we will be potentially requesting some additional fees, so that we can provide those services.

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

**Discussion:** Michelle thinks she brought it up. Patrick asked if she's going to be the committee chair of any education related items. She's a REP for south county and she wants to help us. She's here and she wants to help. She's just not really sure what to do but she knows education. She could help with that and she's on Facebook all of the time. She might help with some of the social media stuff. Cassie mentioned that they just potentially offered to hire an outreach coordinator. They have offered the position, but she has not heard back from HR yet. Once that person starts, no matter who they are, which should be in the next few months, she can have them contact Michelle. They can work on some of the media campaign and Facebook education for those materials. Patrick mentioned they are limited on any social media postings that they do. They are limited to their agency Facebook social media and that is coordinated with the county's platforms. So, it's going to be really key to train together a structure that will allow those posts to be shared so that people get the educational materials, especially with the Fourth of July, and New Year's Eve postings. Those type of things that we try to do and once our clinic goes to a full-service public operation versus a limited structure, he thinks that it will be very beneficial to have that coordinated effort between the shelter and what we're able to post onto our platforms and then to move it out into a larger distribution. That would be a good opportunity there. So, we'll go ahead and keep that on the agenda right now until verification.

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

Tricia is not here. Not held any meetings that Cassie is aware of. There may be some things that are happening behind the scenes. She knows that Tricia was working with some of the other agencies that are more closely affected by that. She's guessing it will probably come up again, as they get into the heat of summer, and it starts to become a problem again.



# TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

AGENDA /  DISCUSSION: Update from Ad-Hoc Committees

**Membership:** Patrick thinks the membership committee was usually led by the Chairperson. Mary mentioned that Patrick and Donna G are members. So, there would be no update at this this time. We currently have a District 2 vacancy and the Supervisor for that district is Supervisor Pete Vander Poel. There's a map on the county's website which shows the district, and we need to fill that position. And then we have an At-Large Member vacancy which could be a representative from any area of Tulare County. So, if people have someone in mind or want to get the word out that we are recruiting, they would need to complete an application which can be found on our website and will notify the Board of Supervisors to make an application available through there. Amy mentioned they are doing renovations and moved temporarily to the Human Resources offices. Mary will notify the Board to have applications available. The Clerk of the Board has applications. Patrick will make sure to have information distributed to the committee which will also include the application. So yes if anyone knows anyone in those areas please encourage them to apply. Damaris asked about the Representative At Large, what is the specifications for that position. Patrick said they just have to be a resident of Tulare County. It could be from any district, there are no set areas, just that the person has to live within Tulare County. And of course, have a passion for animals said Amy.

**Volunteer:** Holding off until we know when we are going to open up to the public, to be able to start doing a lot of volunteer coordination.

**New Committees:** None

AGENDA /  DISCUSSION: Suggestions of Committee Alternates

**Discussion:** None

AGENDA /  DISCUSSION: Suggestions for Future Agenda Items

**Discussion:** None for future agenda items. Members had some other questions.

Donna G asked Mary if there's some people that had applied for previous positions. Are those applications still valid or do they have to reapply again? She doesn't know how long the applications are good for. Patrick said that we do have them on hand but it's a new calendar year, it would be for different positions and what we had originally recruited for. So, we would have to go through them and see if they met the criteria for District 2. More like we would have a broader ability to take a look at them for the At-Large position, but it's always good to encourage them to reapply if they're able to. Mary holds those so we'll have to coordinate with her on seeing what we have on hand. Any other questions?

BJ said it feels like what we do is advise and look at things that would be beneficial to the function of Animal Services. And she means this is a whole different agency then it was a few years ago with all of the additional talent and skills and networking and all the improvements you and your team have made and she's just wondering. Is the number one issue in most agencies the lack of staffing? And this has been a massive problem.

Amy said the first thing she can think of is finding the people right now. Sure, there's allocated positions that are open. You just can't find staff for people to work right now. They're shortages in a lot of our departments. BJ understands and she's not sure that, even if we filled all of the positions that we would even have what we need. So, she doesn't know that's something this committee could take a look at in terms of looking at other agencies, and you know numbers of staff for demographics. She doesn't know anything that might encourage getting some money moved over to this department.

Patrick mentioned that they just went through the midyear budget process throughout the county and that will go to the Board sometime probably in March. We realize the clinic will be a revenue generating operation and we are doing our best to try and show on some level what the operational expenses are

## TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

versus the venue that function is bringing in, but with that said, the way the budgets are structured is that Animal Services is one budget line. And that is what it is and how everything flows. We hope that once we open up to the public, that then we are able to ask for additional allocation of staffing. That would be designed for clinic operations. We weren't sure when we would open and what the flow would be and with all of the uncertainties that we've experience with COVID and staff shortages we didn't ask for any additional positions outside of the veterinarian. But once we do open up the clinic full to the public and are able to show that revenue generation is offsetting then that's when we hope at the new year budget time. We're getting ready to kick off our new year budget process internally, which will officially kick off at the end of March, beginning of April. Our goal is to ask for additional staff allocations, that would be assigned specifically to the clinic so we don't have staff going back and forth trying to cover and we could actually operate at full capacity and meet the needs of our community. During that time period, he thinks, is when as an Advisory Committee, you guys, have the right to ask us about Animal Services fiscal and budget records. You can make recommendations that are then sent to our supervisors. That is the function of an advisory committee and it's to make recommendations to the Board.

Amy heard back from the Clerk about the application process. You do have to reapply if you're still interested. And as an advisor you are welcome to bring anything up. She wasn't here when this committee was started, but she thinks it's more of staff bringing items to the committee and insights. Like we did with the ordinances and the kennel permits. You're always welcome to bring anything up absolutely.

Patrick said they will have an opportunity probably in April to give an update on where we are with the clinic through Cassie and also as his role within the Agency. He could speak a little further to the budget process, where we are and what some of our deadlines are and that's where, if the committee wants to come together and provide a letter in support or a recommendation from the Advisory Committee, we can coordinate those efforts at that time.

Laurie had a question. People are still thinking that the shelters are still a kill shelter situation here and every county. She tried to put it out there that no we're not. Rated 90%. That's one thing that maybe we really need to address in the future, but the other part is that now we have the spay and neuter clinic. With this clinic no price increase can happen unless it's Board approved. The public needs to know that all the shelters are doing what they can to stay around 90%.

Patrick talked about the fees. There's a huge formula behind them and it's not simply, oh I like this dollar amount. Everything is driving based on covering operating expenses. And that's what they're allowed to cover so he thinks that would be good. That we could start putting that kind of information out there that the fees are not going to be raised every three months. One time a year we are allowed to go before the Board as a county and ask for any fee adjustments. And those don't usually take effect until July 1 because it's all driven on a fiscal cycle and once those are adopted and put into place, they will not change again until the following July 1 and it's all driven by Board approval.

Discussion on the words kill versus no kill. That as a municipal agency, we don't have a decision as to what comes into the shelter, so while we will probably never be no kill. Cassie can tell you that the euthanasia that is happening here is purposeful. Because of severe medical that our vet can not fix. Severe illness. Behavior issue dogs that are not considered adoptable and dogs that absolutely no one wants, those who lose their mind in the shelter. So that is what you can tell people. She cannot ever offer a guarantee that an animal will have a positive outcome, but what she can guarantee, is that if there is a euthanasia, there was a purpose behind it and there is a reason. But we do need the public's help with that. We need the public to not just drop them off here because they think that this is a safe place. We need them to look for the owner and to try and make an effort to assist us. What shelters



## TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

start to see when they are doing is good job is the opposite effect. People decide that they take everything to the shelter because we know that they're not going to kill it. And then the shelter has to euthanize because now they're full, because everybody started taking everything from other jurisdictions that they think they're going to be euthanized to a shelter and lying. We get that a lot. She just wants to make sure that people are aware that there is still euthanasia happening at the shelter, but the euthanasia is purposeful and does have a reason. Right now, we're generally operating between 85 and 90% depending on what months have horrific parvo and what months have everybody being hit by a car or lots and lots of very angry dogs. We're not going to adopt out an angry dog just to make a number. And all of our euthanasia is talked about with staff and made for a reason for sure.

Laurie said that is what she has been telling people. Our county is getting better with dealing with the animals. Our release rates are going up. And I say, of course, they're still going to be euthanizing because of what you said. And I know 15 years ago when I would walk in I would see posted the numbers of what was euthanized, and it was scary. It was just you know it really tore on the heart, but she knows now it's nothing like that, but people still have that old mentality. Cassie really appreciates her spreading the work. Thank you. Amy told Cassie thank you for the clarification. She put it beautifully on you know what we do. We can't be a no kill shelter but we're not a kill shelter either.

Donna G thinks what's important is that perception that people have, especially on social media. Someone will find a dog and the comments will be, need to find the owner, rescue, or someone to take it because they don't want to send it to the shelter. It's getting better but it comes with the education. She thinks it's the perception of what people think that needs to be changed because they don't know what all is going on and the numbers. Cassie said it's going to take some time. It's going to take years to change people's minds. This is going to be an amazing educational opportunity.

Patrick said it goes back to we've gone a while without an outreach coordinator and if everything falls into place and the shelter is able to bring the individual on, it's going to be a perfect time, especially as we're transitioning through a lot of the hype of COVID and everything we've gone through and then now as we're trying to transition into a norm. He thinks we've got some good opportunities ahead of us to really put information out there because people are looking for something different. They're looking for something other than COVID.

Oma is on the Homeowners Association Board. They have someone who took in a feral cat who then had kittens and those kittens are now pregnant. They've tried to get the person to take the cats to get them spayed and her smarty pants answer was, well how do you expect me to do that? Is there something on your website Cassie or some place that would tell people how they do that. How do you get cats into a cage when you can't touch them? Cassie said that Mary was working on this for the website because we had a few people have questions about feral cats this week. For cats who are not tame, people can actually borrow traps from us. We have some that we can lend out and we will set them up an appointment for spay/neuter and we can show them how to set the traps in a way that is effective.

Patrick mentioned that we might need to move a couple of things around or add our last category at the bottom for these type of topics that people think of after we've gone through the agenda.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>AGENDA</b> / <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISCUSSION: Adjourn meeting @ 2:03 pm</b>			
<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Adjourn Meeting @ 2:03 pm by Patrick Hamblin</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Laurie Eberle	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Donna Grigsby
<b>Vote</b>	<b>Yes:</b> No vote	<b>No:</b>	