

**Animal Shelter Advisory Board Minutes March 5, 2014**

**STATE OF TEXAS           §**  
**COUNTY OF TARRANT   §**  
**CITY OF BEDFORD       §**

The Animal Shelter Advisory Board of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in regular session at 4:30 p.m. in the Training Room of the Bedford Police Department, 2121 L. Don Dodson Drive, on the 5th day of March, 2014, with the following members present:

Eric Griffin	Deputy Police Chief (Staff Liaison)
Mark Bellinghausen	Animal Control Supervisor
Dawn Orr	Vice-Chairman
Sandy Osburn	Board Members
Connie Ziegler-Stout	
Rick Nash	

constituting a quorum.

(The following items were considered in accordance with the official agenda posted on the 28th day of February, 2014.)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairman Dawn Orr called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 1. Consider approval of the following Animal Shelter Advisory Board Minutes:**
  - a) January 8, 2014 regular meeting:**

Vice-Chairman Dawn Orr made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2014, Board meeting as amended.

Board Member Connie Ziegler-Stout seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by consent.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- 2. Discussion on Shelter Statistics.**

The December 2012 & 2013, and January 2013 & 2014, monthly statistic reports were distributed to Board Members for review.

Board Member Ziegler-Stout asked if there were extra copies of the statistic report that could be distributed to the audience. Vice-Chairman Orr advised that, as discussed in a previous meeting,

statistical reports were reserved for the Board, but could be obtained by the public through an Open Records request.

A member of the audience informed the Board that she had received an e-mail from Deputy Chief Les Hawkins that states that the Board was mistaken in their ability to distribute copies of the Animal Control statistical data. Vice-Chairman Orr stated that the Board would look into this information, and if it is correct, copies would be provided at the next meeting.

The Board reviewed the Shelter statistics and there was no further discussion.

### **3. Introduction of new Board Member, Rick Nash.**

Board Member Rick Nash stated that he appreciates the opportunity to serve on the Board. He is a resident of Bedford, along with his wife and three dogs. He stated that he was employed with the City of Bedford for over 38 years and retired from the Fire Department. He has a great interest in the City and recently served on the Building Standards Board.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **4. Discussion and Possible Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.**

The Board agreed to proceed with Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson nominations and elections.

#### Chairperson Nomination:

Dawn Orr (Motioned by Board Member Sandy Osburn, seconded by Board Member Ziegler-Stout)

Election vote: unanimous (4 – 0)

#### Vice-Chairperson Nomination:

Sandy Osburn (Motioned by Chairman Orr, seconded by Board Member Ziegler-Stout)

Election vote: unanimous (4 – 0)

### **5. Discussion on plans for implementation of Goals for 2014.**

Chairman Orr read aloud the “Purpose” of the Advisory Board to ensure that everyone on the Board understood how to set and make goals:

The Animal Shelter Advisory Board reviews shelter activity, special events pertaining to the Shelter, needs and statistics as provided by staff, and offers recommendations. The Board provides input on the drafting and modifying of ordinances, and reviews final ordinance drafts for approval by the Board before drafts are submitted to Council. The Board reviews and approves or rejects applications for permit eligible non-domestic animals, such as exotics. The Board also serves as an appeals Board for contesting denials of multi-pet permits. The Animal Shelter Advisory Board is State mandated and members have a responsibility to make sure all rules, regulations, and ordinances are met.

The current ordinance requires the Board to meet six times a year; however, with Pet Fairs, other functions and goals set forth, the Board has the option to request additional meetings to help the Board, Shelter and City move forward.

Vice-Chairman Sandy Osburn stated that she felt the Board was not being allowed to perform all of the functions stated in the Purpose.

Chairman Orr advised that the Board would get clarification from Council Liaison Michael Boyter.

Chairman Orr presented the following overall goals for the Board for 2014:

- To help further the Volunteer Program - Develop a schedule for Animal Control Staff, Shelter Volunteers, and fosters to attend behavior assessment and rehabilitation courses. The training will instruct the participants on how to properly handle animals, which may result in the animal getting adopted quicker.
- To help increase adoptions - Reach out to other City committees in order for adoptable animals to be present at City sponsored events, such as parks and recreation activities. Even if pets are not able to be present at these events, an information booth could be on-site with items to include: City registrations and pictures of pets available for adoption.

Board Member Ziegler-Stout inquired if the program for volunteers to help with these events had been started.

Animal Control Supervisor Mark Bellinghausen stated that the Shelter does participate in several City events, such as Splash and the Reading to Rover program. He added that the Volunteer Program has been implemented and the Volunteer Coordinator had been working on setting the standards for how much training volunteers will be required in order (for volunteers) to work off-site events. Mr. Bellinghausen advised the Board that the Volunteer Coordinator had recently resigned.

Chairman Orr suggested that Board Members help to petition for the Volunteer Coordinator position. She added that the Board cannot follow through with a lot of the goals without the Volunteer Coordinator being in place.

Vice-Chairman Osburn suggested posting the Volunteer Coordinator position on the City website. She also suggested having a table or booth at the Pet Fair to recruit volunteers.

- Off-site Adoption Events – Chairman Orr asked if the Shelter was restricted in attending off-site adoption events due to City restrictions, staffing issues, or waiting to get volunteers trained.

Mr. Bellinghausen advised that in the past, it was a staffing issue. Mr. Bellinghausen added that the City Attorney will not allow volunteers to transport animals without a certain level of training. The guidelines have not been established for how much training will be required.

Chairman Orr stated that the Board needs to make sure that volunteer training is getting completed correctly and in a timely manner. She further stated that the Board needs to find out what restrictions the City Attorney placed on volunteers transporting animals.

Chairman Orr asked if there would be any legal issues should a store or facility in another town call regarding an adoption event (to have the Shelter participate in) that was taking place that day.

Mr. Bellinghausen advised that most stores offer legal liability waivers that have to be approved by the City Attorney, which would present a timing issue to participate in a same day event.

Board Member Ziegler-Stout advised that Petsmart welcomes Shelters to host adoption events. Once the required forms are completed, an event can be held at any Petsmart location. She stated that she had visited the new Pet Superstore that just opened and was advised that they (Pet Superstore) had contacted the Shelter regarding adoption events, but had not heard back from them. She stated that the more the animals are marketed, the more adoption numbers will improve.

Chairman Orr suggested that in order to help the Shelter implement more off-site adoptions, Board Members could visit different locations or stores that express interest and pick up waivers/forms that need to be filled out in advance.

Vice-Chairman Osburn asked if there were restrictions on the number of animals that can be taken to an event.

Mr. Bellinghausen advised that there weren't any restrictions other than what you can safely assess, transport and house at the event.

Vice-Chairman Osburn suggested that when the Shelter is going to attend an event and can only take 2-3 animals due to staffing, the Volunteer Coordinator could contact Board Members or volunteers to help so more animals could have the exposure.

Deputy Chief Eric Griffin stated that volunteers are the key. Getting volunteers to the required training is the issue. Chief Griffin advised that this is where the Shelter really needs help.

- Pet Tip of the Month – Contact the City to implement a Pet Tip of the Month in the monthly City billings, as well as the City website.

Additional suggestions included:

- Calling new adopters after 48-hours to see how they are doing or if they have questions in order to help reduce the number of animals being returned.
- Better marketing by having more exposure in the Bedford Connection, to include volunteer information and Shelter location.
- Better signage for the Shelter from the freeway and at the Shelter entrance.

Chairman Orr stated that the Shelter definitely needs more marketing. She added that she would like to see Board Members come up with some marketing ideas in the next couple of weeks. Board Members should e-mail their ideas to the other Board Members, and come up with a plan of action to present at the next Board meeting.

Board Member Ziegler-Stout stated that it would be very helpful to the Team Bedford Facebook Volunteers if Shelter staff could provide adoption information and status updates to them on a regular basis. It is her understanding that Shelter staff called and provided information in the past, but are now not allowed to provide information unless contacted by the Facebook Volunteers. She stated that she also feels it would be helpful to get more animals out of the Shelter if the animals are listed as "Urgent" and the urgent status was shared with the Facebook page. The urgent status helps to alert rescue groups when an animal needs to be pulled.

Mr. Bellinghausen advised that Shelter staff is allowed to share information with the Facebook Volunteers. He explained that due to changes and the implementation of new procedures, Shelter staff are tasked with more duties and responsibilities than in the past.

Chairman Orr stated that Shelter staff does not have time to call on a daily basis to inform the Facebook Volunteers of changes. She added that the Board and Shelter staff could work together to create a ranking system for the animals. Further, Board Members could come up with a plan of action on what the Board can do to help the Shelter communicate with the Facebook Volunteers.

- Develop, with the help of Shelter staff and approval of the City Council and City Attorney, a program to offer puppy preschool, basic dog behavior classes, and obedience classes at a discounted rate for residents who are registered with the City of Bedford. The money would go back into helping dogs and special events by providing more exposure of the

animals. Private classes could be arranged with specialist for animals needing more serious help.

- Offer a free behavior or obedience session for anyone who adopts a dog from the City of Bedford within 60 days from the date of adoption. The free session information could be included in the adoption packet.
- Offer free bi-monthly walks and refresher classes to residents to help with calm leash walking as well as socialization skills.
- Develop a short 3 to 5 minute video for residents on pet behavior that could be posted on the City website. The video could cover information such as: proper nutrition, tips on how to set their pet up for success when they bring it home, or how to introduce the new pet to another pet already in the home.

Board Member Ziegler-Stout stated that she feels most people who surrender animals think the animal will automatically be adopted out. She inquired if there is a place, or if there could be a place, on the Surrender Agreement that would give Shelter staff permission to contact the owner if they feel the animal is not adoptable. This would give the Shelter staff the opportunity to see if the owner would be willing to take the animal back. She also suggested adding a place on the Surrender Agreement that would inquire as to whether or not the person had adopted the animal from a rescue group in order to allow for the rescue group to be contacted.

Deputy Chief Griffin advised the best plan of action would be for the Board to review the forms and make any suggested changes. He would then present those changes to the City Attorney.

Chairman Orr advised that the Board needs to add "form review" to their discussion in the next few weeks and have the suggestions ready to present at the next meeting.

Board Member Ziegler-Stout stated that she has mentioned it before, and still thinks it is a good idea, to find out what other animal shelters are doing successfully and bring the best ideas back to our Shelter.

Deputy Chief Griffin stated that he is very new to the animal control environment, especially in the area of marketing. Any information he could get would be beneficial.

Chairman Orr advised that in order to get this implemented, Board Members could each pick a few shelters and talk to them. The information would be submitted to Deputy Chief Griffin by e-mail. If additional information or explanation is needed, Deputy Chief Griffin or Shelter staff could follow up.

Chairman Orr reminded the Board that when talking about goals, Board Members should not just ask questions or make suggestions, but instead, they need to make sure that they have an idea on how to implement it.

Board Member Zeigler-Stout stated that in talking about goals, it is very important to work together with the Shelter as a team. She asked Staff how to best work together as a team to get these ideas implemented.

Deputy Chief Griffin advised that time is critical for Staff members. He stated that Animal Control is one of six divisions that he is over and he does not have a lot of free time. He added that Animal Control staff is very busy. The Shelter needs help with volunteers. Anything that could be done on the volunteer side, such as the Volunteer Coordinator in place and the volunteer base built up, would be the biggest benefit to the Shelter.

Chairman Orr stated that the Board's priority at this time is to help get a Volunteer Coordinator in place, which will get more volunteers into the Shelter and ultimately help accomplish the Board's goals.

Chairman Orr advised the Board that she would like to set a three week timeline to discuss the goals and come up with a compilation to submit to Staff. Any questions or items that need further discussion can be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

#### **6. Discussion of the Vacant Veterinarian Position on the Board**

There was discussion regarding the resignation of Dr. Becky Purchase from the Animal Shelter Advisory Board. Chairman Orr, Vice-Chairman Osburn and Board Member Ziegler-Stout each expressed their desire for Dr. Purchase to be asked if she would consider returning to serve on the Board. Over the years, Dr. Purchase has volunteered a lot of her free time, fostered animals, and given medical advice. Her expertise and passion for the animals is a great loss for the City, for the Shelter, and for the Shelter animals.

Deputy Chief Griffin advised that the last time there was a vacancy for this position, Animal Control staff took applications to all the Veterinarians within the City. Anyone interested in the position would need to fill out an application and submit it to City Council. The position is determined by City Council and staff does not have any input on the decision.

It was discussed that in light of the situation that led to the resignation of Dr. Purchase, Board Members did not feel that she would complete and return an application on her own. The Board requested for someone from City Council, or their representative, to talk to Dr. Purchase and offer her an apology.

Deputy Chief Griffin stated that he could pass on the Board's recommendation to City Council.

Board Member Nash recommended to the Board that they could also e-mail Council Liaison Michael Boyter with their concerns and recommendations.

Mr. Bellinghausen advised that this item was added to the agenda to advise the Board of the vacant position. Mr. Bellinghausen stated that if Board Members knew of a Veterinarian who might be willing to serve on the Board, they could provide them an application, or advise them of a link to the application on-line.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Orr motioned to adjourn the meeting and Board Member Nash seconded the motion. There was no opposition and the meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.