

Columbus Consolidated Government

Minutes of a Quarterly Scheduled

Animal Control Advisory Board

June 13, 2023

3:000 pm

Location of Meeting:

Public Works Driver's Training Room

602 – 11th Avenue Bldg. E

Columbus, GA, 31901

Present at Meeting:

Drale Short

Canita Johnson

Courtney Pierce, Chairperson

Raymond Culpepper

Kristi Ludy

Sabine Stull

Julee Fryer

Jayne Dunn

Stephen Waters

Dr. Scott McDermott

Channon Emery

Absent from Meeting:

Dr. Jean Waguespack

The meeting was called to order by Courtney Pierce, chairperson at 3:01 pm. She asked for a motion to approve the minutes from board meetings on March 14, 2023, and April 13, 2023.

Stephen Waters stated he was instructed by the Clerk of Council on how to amend his vote. He would like to amend his vote for the dog classification meeting on April 13, 2023. He wishes for the minutes to reflect his vote for the 'Murray' dog classification of 'Cowboy', a vote of 'yes' vicious classification, changed to 'no' classification. Mr. Waters would like the minutes to reflect also that the public was excused from deliberation and voting on the classification.

*****ACTION TAKEN: VOTING MEMBER STEPHEN WATERS CHANGED HIS VOTE FOR THE APRIL 13, 2023, MEETING FROM A 'YES' VOTE TO A 'NO' VOTE FOR THE 'MURRAY DOG CLASSIFICATION'**

VOTE WILL NOW REFLECT A 6-1 APPROVAL FOR VICIOUS DOG CLASSIFICATION.

Courtney Pierce asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the March 14, 2023 meeting and April 13, 2023 meeting. Raymond Culpepper made a motion to approve and Stephen Waters second.

******ACTION TAKEN: VOTING MEMBERS APPROVED MINUTES FOR MEETINGS ON MARCH 14 AND APRIL 13, 2023 WITH AMENDED VOTE CHANGE IN APRIL 13, 2023 MINUTES AND REFLECT STATEMENT, 'THE PUBLIC WAS EXCUSED FOR BOARD TO DELIBERATE AND VOTE.'***

Canita Johnson made a request of the board members to review the by-laws before voting to pass for incorporation. She asked that a subcommittee be formed to review and amend, if necessary, before a vote by the full body. She advised the Animal Control Advisory Board by-laws had not been approved by the City Attorney's Office. A committee was formed of board members Channon Emery, Raymond Culpepper, and Canita Johnson to review. Jayne Dunn inquired if the minutes had passed previously. Canita Johnson said yes, by the body of the Board but not approved through the City Attorney's office for legal language.

Stephen Waters asked, why the increase in dog intakes this year versus the previous year, 2022. He asked, is there an acceptable number of dogs killed at Animal Control. Drale Short replied, the number of animals being euthanized is based on the number of animals that come in the shelter daily and space for those animals. She stated, Animal Control cannot give a definitive number to anyone because it changes daily. She stated, our rescues have limited space as well. Stephen Waters inquired; can the guillotine divider doors be pulled down temporarily to house dogs for space. Courtney Pierce stated, there are safety issues around closing those doors. Aggressive dogs can push through those doors and get on the other side which could be dangerous. Drale Short stated staffing is an issue when cleaning, if divider doors are down, two people would be needed to clean. One employee holds the dog, and the other employee does the cleaning, Animal Control does not have the staffing.

Channon Emery questions for Animal Control:

1. She inquired if the intake numbers from 2022 are carried over to 2023. She stated there was an increase in intakes by 4%, and what does Animal Control contribute to the increase. Drale Short stated, there are more officers on the street and more owners surrendering their dogs. Drale Short stated, yes to your question, the number of animals are carried over into the next years intake numbers.
2. Channon Emery referred to the euthanization report included in the board member's packet, she asked, why each animal is euthanized and what determines if they are aggressive. Canita Johnson replied, the aggressive label is based on the interaction between the dog with staff and our veterinarian direction. Channon Emery stated she has two dogs that were labeled aggressive by Animal Control, and they are wonderful dogs now that show no aggression. Drale Short stated, we don't have a trainer or behaviorist on staff to assess the dogs.
3. Channon Emery asked what we can do as a community to help get the intake numbers down at Animal Control. She asked if veterinarians could help with spay/neutering animals. Courtney Pierce stated the veterinarians would have to agree with cost and space.
4. Channon Emery asked, could items be added to the Animal Control budget, for example, monthly preventives, milk for neo-nates, and nipples, to have on hand. Drale Short stated Animal Control has a budget for medical necessities, and this is under the direction of Dr Hall on the dispensary of medicals. Ms. Short stated rescuers are notified when neonates come into the Animal Control facility. Stephen Waters suggested a free service was presented by Teresa Elliott, a licensed veterinarian technician to check all cat intakes. Canita Johnson stated she is awaiting a call back from Ms. Elliott to speak about the cats.

5. Channon Emery asked is Animal Control looking to do a Foster Program permanently. Drale Short stated, additional staff was requested for a Foster Program in the yearly budget but was not granted.
6. Channon Emery asked if rescues cannot take neonates that come into Animal Control what will happen to them. Drale Short stated Animal Control will go by the direction of our veterinarian, Dr. Hall.
7. Channon Emery asked if an Animal Control Officer goes out to a call with an animal in distress, what is the protocol. Canita Johnson replied, depending on the situation an Animal Control Officer may impound the dog but if an owner is providing treatment, an Officer will go back to do a welfare check. Channon Emery stated there was an injured dog on Spruce Street that Animal Control left. Canita Johnson stated she is familiar with this case and will speak with her about the dog.
8. Channon Emery inquired about the staff member that was euthanizing animals without certification which was addressed in the internal audit of Animal Control. Drale Short replied, Dr. Hall does this training which is under the supervision of Sara Welsh. Canita Johnson stated that the staff member in question will be certified by the end of the month. Raymond Culpepper asked does Dr. Hall has to be present for euthanizations. Drale Short stated no, not after the staff members have been trained. Sabine Stull asked how the dogs are euthanized, Drale Short answered intravenously. Stephen Waters asked, where are the deceased dogs taken and is there a record. Drale Short answered, the dogs are taken to the landfill, and buried in a hole which is covered, and the deceased dogs are accounted for by their impoundment card.

******Amended minutes request and approved by the Board members at the meeting on 1/18/2024, add discussion in reference to euthanization procedure at Animal Control.***

Sabine Stull asked Animal Control to explain exactly how is euthanization being done? She stated, because social media has different claims that are being made.

Drale Short answered, it is done intravenously, a shot directly in the vein.

Sabine Stull asked, is there a procedure to put a dog, just for sleeping purposes, so he does not feel?

Drale Short stated, the dogs are tranquilized.

Canita Johnson stated, they are tranquilized.

Raymond Culpepper asked ,is that always done?

Canita Johnon answered yes, that is always done.

Raymond Culpepper asked if the staff has any memories of any of those steps being bypassed?

Drale Short answered no, because it has to be signed off by Dr. Hall under his license.

Canita Johnson informed board members to get their wish list of their desires for Animal Control for the fiscal year budget. She advised the board, within the next couple of months, she will be presenting her budget proposal to her director. Stephen Waters stated Animal Control needs software.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07pm. The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, September 14, 2023.

C: Clerk of Council, ACAB Members