

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ANIMAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 21ST DAY OF MARCH, 2022

The Caddo Parish Animal Services Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 12:30 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers Conference Room, with Mr. Young Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Jones, Taliaferro, and Young (4). ABSENT: None (0).

Mr. Jones gave the invocation, and Mr. Taliaferro led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discuss Ordinance No. 6220 of 2022, regarding additional funds related to vicious dogs*

Mr. Travis Clark, Animal Services Director, provided a copy of the dart system that was recommended by Mr. Scott from Best Friends. Mr. Young wanted to know if it was a humane system. Mr. Clark said that it was. Mr. Young then wanted to know how many of these systems are needed at Animal Services. Mr. Clark said that they would need one of them.

Mr. Clark also mentioned that a chemical capture policy would need to be in place to utilize this system, as well as training. He also pointed out that there are two post-certified officers at Animal Services. These officers have to complete twenty hours of training per year, which includes eight hours of target practice.

Mr. Taliaferro wanted to know if there was a device for close-quarter contact with dogs. He explained that sometimes it is not feasible to have a rifle, which can create more of a challenge than its worth. Mr. Young suggested purchasing a handheld device and a rifle.

Mr. Atkins said that he sensed some reservations from Mr. Clark regarding dart guns. He does not want this Committee to pressure Mr. Clark into purchasing something that he does not feel is appropriate. Mr. Clark said that he wanted the Commissioners to be aware of the liabilities that come with tranquilizing animals.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if Legal had any questions about liabilities. Attorney Frazier wanted to know if this provides gas. Mr. Clark explained that instead of it deploying a .22 blank to propel the dart, it uses a CO2 cartridge. She understood and said that one of the issues that were brought up was that sometimes the darts fall out of the dog. Mr. Clark explained that they have spent up to two hours looking for darts, and there were two incidents that they were unable to find it because the dog broke containment. Because of that, they had to do an incident report for the DEA.

Attorney Frazier also explained that they are waiting on information as to whether or not they will have to add a law enforcement binder on their insurance to cover in case of liability.

Mr. Young wanted to know how this would related to officers being post-certified. Mr. Taliaferro said that it would be an entirely different process because the projectile will be traveling quite a bit slower than a normal bullet. He said that the dart could be affected more by wind. Mr. Taliaferro said that there might be specialized training. Attorney Frazier said that it would be worth looking at its success rate in the past versus the potential costs covered by insurance to see if the benefits outweigh the risks.

Mr. Atkins reminded the Committee that the Commissioners have a role, and their role is not to engage in helping Animal Services with vicious dogs. He understands that the Commissioners want to be helpful, but should not engage in vicious and should leave that to the professionals. Mr. Young agreed and stated that he is proud "that he did not cross the line between courage and utter foolishness by trying to grab the dog with his hands".

Mr. Burrell wanted to know the size of the dart. Mr. Clark said that they come in a variety of vibrant colors to help locate them after being used, but they are the size of a pen. Mr. Burrell suggested utilizing a metal detector to find the projectiles.

Mr. Burrell also mentioned that a dog who has been shot by a dart can still be mobile. Mr. Clark agreed and said that the medicine can take up to fifteen minutes to immobilize the animal. Within that fifteen minutes, that animal could bolt and find somewhere else to go. He further explained that there are several variables, such as diet, water, weight, etc., that determines how quickly that animal metabolizes the medicine.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if a vet premixes the darts. Mr. Clark said that the vet will mix the medicine and provide it to the officer.

Mr. Taliaferro wanted to know if it would be possible to have a vendor conduct a demonstration with a Q&A. He also asked if the ACOs receive the same training that Wildlife & Fisheries Agents receive. Mr. Clark said that the ACOs would receive different training, but this company does provide apparatuses to Wildlife & Fisheries.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if these tranquilizers have enough medicine in them to possibly kill an animal. Mr. Clark said that there is a risk of severe injury when tranquilizing an animal. Attorney Frazier also said that a person would still have the right to sue if their animal was killed by the tranquilizer, and the court would have to decide as to whether the proper amount of force was used or if there was too much force.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if there was a taser type system that could be utilized rather than having a free projectile. Mr. Clark explained that there are, but those probes come out at different angles and could also come out of the animal. Mr. Clark also mentioned that there are net guns that project 8x8 nets with weights. Mr. Atkins said that all options should be explored and weigh the benefits versus the risks against to find the best optimal outcome.

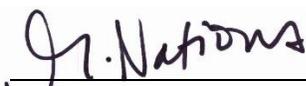
Mr. Young said that he received several call about dogs from his constituents regarding loose dogs. He wanted to know if there are any liabilities to the Parish of a known vicious dog that is not apprehended in a timely manner. He also pointed out that anyone has the right to sue for any reason. Attorney Frazier said that the court would look at what steps were used to apprehend the vicious animal. If all the reasonable and necessary steps were taken to apprehend the animal, then that would look more favorably. Mr. Young is concerned that the traps have a limited efficacy in certain contexts due to other animals triggering them or they just might be in the wrong place.

Attorney Frazier asked about the dog traps. Mr. Clark explained that dog traps are set every day and is like a really big cat trap.

Mr. Young also mentioned the incident in his district with five loose dogs. Mr. Clark said that they were all eventually caught. Mr. Young said that the dogs wrecked quite a bit of damage and killed a few pets and approached some citizens in a menacing manner.

Mr. Young would like to have this in the toolkit and it be used in the most responsible manner.

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Committee, so the meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.


Assistant Commission Clerk