

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
ANIMAL SERVICES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 15th DAY OF JUNE, 2021

The Caddo Parish Commission met in an Animal Services Committee Meeting, on the above date, at 11:00 a.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. Young, Chairperson, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Burrell, Chavez, and Young (3). ABSENT: Commissioners Johnson and Taliaferro (2).

Mr. Young gave the invocation, and Mr. Chavez led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Carla White came before the Committee and gave the following statement:

Good morning. I'd like to start by saying thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak today to the Commission. I am a lifelong resident of Caddo Parish and currently reside in southern Caddo Parish. There's just a few things that I would like to see implemented at Caddo parish Animal Services. For one, I believe the employees at Caddo parish Animal Services need to have some form of training on ethics, as well as training and communication with the public. I help keep up with the Lost & Found Pets in Keithville and often hear feedback from neighbors who are trying to do the right thing by calling into Animal Services for dogs to be picked up. And when people answer the phone, the animal complaints are called out the people are rude, and they're not very helpful to them. Of course, this in turn makes citizens not want to call into Animal Services. I also hear from my neighbors that when an Animal Control truck does come out—most of the time, they just drive by the address and never actually stop their truck, much less exit the vehicle to look for that animal that they were dispatch for. I also hear from friends in the Shreveport area who say the same thing. I've been told many times that when an Animal Control Officer actually exits their truck, they roughly handle the animal with a catch pole and sling them into their truck. Now I work in animal rescue myself as a volunteer, and I've gone out along many other women in animal rescue in this community. And I've never once had to use any kind of force or catch pole. I've loaded many dogs and cats into our vehicles without using any extreme force. So I'd like to see some improvement on that as well because it is discouraging to our citizens. There's another thing that we do spend our own time and money helping catch these animals. When we have an animal control services that should be doing that. Now I do understand that they work until 5 PM and after hours and on the weekends, it's only in emergency situations. But our public does not understand that. So maybe some type of information being able to describe what these citizens should do in the event that they do catch an animal, there's an injured dog, you know, there's animals pestering the neighbors—we need some type of information to be able to provide to the citizens on what they should do in this situation. And also, it takes five minutes to call and get a vet reference for an adopting applicant. Five minutes versus one to two hours when a dog or cat is being intake into the shelter again when it was just adopted from Animal Services. These animals are found wandering the streets, emaciated, covered in fleas and ticks, now heartworm positive, and possible with injuries being hit by cars or being shot by aggravated neighbors. Owner surrenders that owner surrender their formally adopted Caddo pet, which now sometimes have heart worms or injuries that they just don't want to treat. So maybe some education could go along a long way, as well as this vet reference for an applicant that dogs are not to be left outside on a chain or run and loose in Caddo Parish. I'm not talking about just handing out a pamphlet—just education discussing with the applicant can go a long way. Our animal rescues in this community, we are able to work together. Of course we do disagree, we don't agree 100% on everything, but sometimes we find it difficult when working with Caddo Animal Services employees. So we would just like to see some improvement on communication lines, whether we all need some training to be able to work together. Open up that line of communication. Our rescues run off volunteers, fosters, and donors. We don't get paid.

Cynthia Keith came before the Committee and gave the following statement:

Thank you for letting me speak. I think most of you know he is the dog park lady. Thank you for everything all your help and everything. The dog park is wonderful, but I'm really here today coming to you as a concerned citizen. I am a friend with the animal rescue community. I am also friend with Caddo Parish in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'd like to see all of those work together and get things done the way they're supposed to be done. I recently had an experience where I was coming to work at 8:30 in the morning. There was a pitbull running back and forth across Stoner Avenue. He had the choice of going to Clyde Fant Parkway and getting hit or going to Youree Drive and getting hit. Cars were dodging him. Luckily, opened my door, he jumped in my car. This is a 90 pound pitbull, with a head this big. So now I have a decision to make. Can I take him to the shelter. Go ahead and go to work. No, that's not an option, you can drop off a pet at the shelter until one o'clock. I wish my job could do that and say we're not doing any work, or we're not, we're not taking any customers or whatever, until one o'clock. You know, used to the shelter—yeah, you could take them there and that to me is one of the points of the shelter. I had to go home. Luckily it was me, I had a place to house this dog, I had to make few arrangements to get mine out of the house. I had to take a half a day off work because I wanted to save this dog's life. I have to be at work that one for my half day. I have to drop this dog off at one. all at one. How does that happen. So really, my complaint is more on the animal control end of things, not so much the rescue and that can be done by these ladies over here.

I want to make sure animal control is doing all they can—the ACO end of animal control. I want to make sure they can go pick up a dog that needs to be picked up in a timely fashion. I want to make sure you know if I call—its going to be taken care of. I want to make sure we have enough staff. I'm hearing we just don't have enough staff. And I ask Travis, are you doing everything you can and being totally transparent on everything your doing. And he said, I'm doing everything I can with what I have. I'm short on Animal Control Officers. I want to know what it is we can do to get enough animal control officers. If one is out with a disability and getting Workman's Comp, can we get another one to take his place instead of waiting a year or two. So I say again, I'm just more worried about the animal control and the things—if I call in a complaint, I want to know an Animal Control Officers is going to get out there and either leave a note or speak with the owners, and that'll take care of a whole lot of things. So really, that was my thing I would like to see addressed, and I appreciate your time.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- The Chair welcomed everyone to the Committee and moved to the first New Business item, *Discuss the TNR Program*.

Mr. Kelvin Samuel, Animal Services Assistant Director, talked about the TNR (Trap Neuter Release) or TNVR (Trap Neuter Vaccinate Release) program. He said that it is estimated that at least 30% of cats who enter the shelters, do not make it out alive. Approximately five out of ten cats brought into the shelter are unknown stray feral cats, many of who are not suitable for adoption into homes. Communities across the country are basically turning to programs that are aimed at keeping cats and kittens out of the shelters. The TNR or TNVR programs are a cost-effective way for controlling stray cat populations by preventing additional births, instead of trying to house, feed, and euthanizing more cats. It works. He gave an example of three cats on his street—Carl, Mikko, and Blacky, who are apart of the TNR program. Mr. Samuel said that there has not been a new cat on his street. They have responsible community cat caregivers, who take care of the cats. He also explained that if a cat is removed, another one will move into its place. So the best thing to do is not let the colony get out of control. He also explained that a stray cat isn't considered at-large. He believes that more education and not letting a colony get out of hand is the answer.

Mr. Young wanted to know if there were specific areas where TNR is being performed. Mr. Samuel said that they do TNR wherever there's a large cat population. He said that Highland is overrun by cats. Attorney Frazier explained that the Parish has not passed an ordinance for the unincorporated areas of the Parish. She also said that if it is going to be more widespread, there's going to need to be a change in the ordinance.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know the number of ACOs. Mr. Samuel said that there are six ACOs. He then wanted to know the hours of the shifts that they work. Mr. Samuel explained that they work day shift, and then they have one on-call officer.

Mr. Chavez then asked about dropping a dog off at the shelter prior to 1:00 PM. Mr. Samuel explained that during the quarantine, they responded to dangerous animals and bites. They are transitioning back, but what was controlling intakes at the front desk was owner surrender appointments. Typically, if you have a sit down and talk with the citizens about why they're getting rid of the animal, you'll find out what the problem really is. He also said that people can turn in strays, and they immediately take it. Mr. Samuel said that the citizens can turn in strays during normal business hours.

Mr. Chavez suggested that cages be placed outside of the shelter to turn in strays 24/7. Dr. Wilson said that there is no way a 24-hour day operation is practical or doable. He said that this does work in other communities, but there are issues here in Caddo Parish making it problematic. Dr. Wilson also mentioned that there are over 300 animals in the shelter, some from Bossier Parish and Desoto Parish because they closed intakes. Caddo Parish does not have the option to close intakes.

Mr. Chavez also suggested that a portal be put on the Caddo Parish website with a ticket generating system where a citizen can make a complaint and be provided a ticket number as a reference to check the status of the ticket. He suggested that these tickets be sent to Travis Clark, Animal Services, and copies the Animal Services Committee Chair.

Mr. Chavez also said that he's heard too many times about the lack of customer service at the shelter. He mentioned that he worked at a call center, and the manager had an option to dial in and listen to the conversation and record it. Mr. Chavez wanted to know if that capability is offered with the current phone system in place. Dr. Wilson said that they do not have that capability. Mr. Chavez suggested that this needs to be implemented. Mr. Samuel said that he will take care of Animal Services customer service.

Mr. Chavez then talked about the mental health of the employees who are euthanizing animals. He asked if there was some type of counseling to check on their mental health. Mr. Samuel said that the term he is speaking of is called Compassion Fatigue. They do have a continuous education course regarding Compassion Fatigue. He said that no one wants to put an animal down. He said that Dr. Bishop is good at talking with the CE Techs about it.

Mr. Young wanted to know if Animal Services ever caught the alligator that was loose. Mr. Samuel said that they did not. He also mentioned that during this season when snakes and alligators are out moving around to just let it be, if it is in its natural habitat. If it is messing with pets and children, they will act and call Wildlife & Fisheries to assist.

Dr. Wilson also pointed out that TNR is only offered in District 4, so to be able to enforce it in other areas, the ordinance needs to be changed. Mr. Young asked that Legal draft an ordinance regarding this.

- The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *Discuss Mobile Microchipping/Rabies Vaccination Program*.

Mr. Clark wanted to know where the funds would come from. Mr. Young said that it does not matter to him as long as a pilot program is implemented.

Mr. Clark also mentioned that Animal Services does offer a rabies vaccination clinic at least once a year. Mr. Young wanted to know if microchipping is offered at the same time. Mr. Clark said that they offer it at-cost (\$7). Mr. Young wanted to know if more people would be encouraged to microchip their pets if it was offered at no cost. Mr. Clark believes that it would.

Mr. Young wanted to know what information is provided on the microchip. Mr. Clark said that it tells who owns the animal, two phone numbers, email addresses, physical address, and the date that the chip was registered to them.

Mr. Young then wanted to know how do they advertise the free rabies clinic and the mobile vaccination events. Mr. Clark said that they do a social media blast, flyers, etc.

Mr. Young also wanted to know if Animal Services already has a vehicle that is used for vaccinations. Mr. Clark said that they use the adoption vans. Mr. Young wanted to know if that vehicle would be used for microchipping as well. Mr. Clark said that it could.

Mr. Young wanted to know if an ordinance would need to be drafted to allocate monies for microchipping and advertising the events. Dr. Wilson said that they will look at the operational budget to see if there are funds to cover these events. Mr. Young would like the events to be held once a quarter.

Mr. Burrell asked for more information about microchipping. Mr. Clark explained that it is a permanent identifier that cannot come out. He said that if an animal gets out, they can scan the pet to see who it belongs to and return it to their owner without that animal every coming into the shelter.

Mr. Burrell then wanted to know how serious is the rabies problem in Caddo Parish. Mr. Clark said that there have been two positive rabies cases in the past three years.

Mr. Chavez suggested that they do a dog fashion show, one in the fall and one in the spring, to help get animals out to get vaccinated and microchipped. Dr. Wilson said that this has been done in the past where they partnered with rescues. Mr. Chavez also suggested that they could do a parade at the shelter.

- The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *Discussion of Mandatory Spay-Neuter Ordinance*.

Mr. Young said that he's seen several examples of these types of ordinances that use various levels of enforcement to spay/neuter animals. Some of them work through having a license for the dog. For example, the cost of a license for an unfixed dog is twice the price of a fixed dog. He suggested that if a licensing method was implemented, that the license would be free if the animal is fixed. Mr. Clark pointed out that the SNIP program is available for people who cannot afford to get their animals fixed. Mr. Young suggested that another mechanism be put in place that would require someone to fix their animal, or if they would need to pay fee if they do not want to get their animal fixed. Mr. Clark said that the question will be raised about people not being able to afford \$100 annual license fee for not getting their animal fixed. Mr. Clark said that he would like to get the mandatory microchipping in place first before the mandatory spay/neuter.

Mr. Young wanted to know if Animal Services fixes a dog before it leaves the shelter. Mr. Clark said that if it is getting adopted, then yes. If a rescue tags the animal, then they fix it. If it is going back to its owner, then after the second impound, altering it is mandatory.

Mr. Young suggested utilizing vouchers to get their animals fixed. Mr. Clark said that they utilized vouchers in the past, but they don't work because people won't take their animals to be spayed/neutered.

Mr. Clark also pointed out that there is a clause in the Louisiana Revised Statutes stating, animals that come from shelters or humane societies need to be fixed. He said that the clause is there, but

it is not an enforcement clause. Dr. Wilson said that in the past, the Citizen Advisory Board of the Animal Services Committee recommended that every animal that came through the shelter be spayed/neutered. He said that they've been enforcing this policy, but it is problematic to go to a private citizen's home and say that they have to spay/neuter their animals.

Attorney Frazier said that there is an issue with the licensing of an animal because it is not something that Animal Services could go and enforce; it would only be enforced if an animal is caught running the streets. She suggested that they should look at how a mandatory spay/neuter law would be enforced and what the cost would be. She also pointed out that these types of programs are typically not seen with responsible pet owners. Attorney Frazier also said that the biggest issue would be the people's mentality about what the animal is and how it should be treated is so different from region to region. She suggested phasing it in a pilot area and spread out to other areas.

Mr. Clark gave an example of how it could be enforced. He said that if a person calls in with a complaint, they can automatically look it up to see if it is licensed. If not, then he could contact the owner of the animal to see if it licensed at a different address. If so, then they would need to update its information. He also said that if an animal is running loose and not microchipped, then it wouldn't be licensed. So it would need to be microchipped to be licensed.

Dr. Wilson also said that the Commission appropriates money to Robinson's Rescue to help fix animals and control the unwanted litters populations.

Mr. Chavez said that the ACOs write citations, but they get thrown out of court because they are so backlogged. He wanted to know if they do mandatory microchipping, what kind of teeth would they have in the court systems. Attorney Frazier said that the Commission does not mandate the judiciary or the DA's Office because they are exclusively for the City Prosecutor's Office and in charge of whether or not to actually bring the charges as prosecuting charges. All the ACOs can do is write the tickets. Mr. Clark pointed out that currently, their citation system is a misdemeanor, not an infraction, unless it is dogfighting, blood sports, etc. He said that Commissioner Jackson is trying to get the citations in Environmental Court.

Mr. Clark said that San Antonio has an Animal Court. Mr. Chavez suggested that they take a trip to San Antonio to see how Animal Court is ran and possibly do a pilot in Caddo Parish. Mr. Young asked Attorney Frazier if this can be accomplished in Caddo. Attorney Frazier said that if it is going to be termed "court", then it would need to be approved through the Louisiana Supreme Court.

- The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *Update on Mosquito Trap Field Trial by CPAS*.

Mr. Williams, Quality Assurance Specialist at Animal Services/Mosquito Control, said that they were tasked with testing a prototype mosquito trap over the past eight weeks called Utracks. It was developed by the LA New Product Development Team, and they wanted to see if it would be a viable mosquito control option to provide to the citizens. They were provided twenty traps that would be set at five various locations with a high volume of mosquitos. They used four different attractants in each of the traps. Currently, Mosquito Control uses two different traps, a light trap and a gravity trap to collect the various species of mosquitos. He said that the Utracks only collected three mosquitos, which were two different species.

Mr. Young wanted to know if there was a physical problem with the trap that keeps the mosquitos from going into the Utracks. Mr. Williams said that the traps that Mosquito Control is currently using works, the Utracks do not. Mr. Williams also said that he does not believe that the Utracks will work because the mosquitos that are coming in them are necessarily interested in getting into the trap; they're more interested in finding a meal.

Mr. Burrell asked about the effects of the chemicals on animals, such as hummingbirds. Mr. Williams said that the testing is done prior to them using the chemicals. He also pointed out that he is not an official Mosquito Controller as of yet, he is only helping the Mosquito Supervisor with the day to day task. He said that he will research this further and provide the information as he gets it. Mr. Williams also explained that they do have carpenter bees around the compound that they are spraying, and they are fine. He also pointed out that if they are aware of someone who is cultivating bees, they do not spray those areas at all.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned.

  
Assistant Commission Clerk