



Municipality of Anchorage  
**Animal Control Advisory Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 5, 2024**



1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Pamela Schamber.

**Members Present:**

Cathy Foerster, Pamela Schamber, Raylene Griffith, Matthew Hall, Sandy Potter, and Timothy Ebben.

**Members Absent:**

Jessie Janowski

**Staff Present:**

Tamiah Liebersbach, Debbie Burks – AHD

Melissa Summerfield, Bernard Chastain, Joel Jorgensen, Eric Jonsen, Logan Robinson — ALPS.

2. **Minutes from October 24, 2024:**

Minutes were reviewed and approved with minor corrections.

3. **Requested Presentations:**

None.

4. **Persons to be Heard:**

None.

5. **Standing Reports:**

**Anchorage Animal Care Control (AACC) Monthly Report and Public Outreach**

**Melissa Summerfield Reported:**

**Animal Intake:**

- Seasonal increase in animals during the holiday season noted; current situation remains manageable.

- **Adoptions:**

- Slowed in November but expected to rise towards the end of the year, aligning with holiday and new year trends.

## Enforcement Activity Overview:

- **Seasonal Concerns:**

- Increased reports of animals left in vehicles during cold weather.
- Staff reminded to use updated check sheets and tools implemented this year.

## Case Updates

### 1. Two Dogs Cruelty Case:

- Case dissolved in November; no charges filed.
- Owners could not pay claim fees; dogs became MOA property.

### 2. Horse Case:

- Ongoing; recent court date occurred, awaiting updates.
- Checked the horses at the beginning of winter and they are showing significant improvement, with their weight increasing, thrush healed, and mites under control, while thriving on a family farm with ample space to roam and regular positive human interaction supporting their well-being.

### 3. Vehicle Fire Incident:

- Details:
  - 11 adult dogs and a litter of puppies involved.
  - Five dogs deceased; remaining animals taken to animal control.
- Investigation:
  - Cause of fire under investigation.
  - Findings submitted to APD for potential neglect or cruelty charges.

## Case History

- **Background:**

- Individual relocated to Anchorage in May 2024 after having 50 German Shepherds seized in Matsu with no charges filed.
- Eight reports filed since May, including five welfare concerns.

- **Key Interactions with Animal Control:**

- **May:**
  - Educated on sanitation and welfare, no immediate concerns.
- **July:**
  - Claimed a stray dog; vehicle inspected.
  - Issued notice to comply with special purpose licensing.
- **August:**
  - Limited enforcement jurisdiction due to Matsu residency.
- **September–October:**
  - Two welfare cases reported; individual could not be located before the fire incident.

- **Key Takeaways**

- Enforcement actions were appropriate given legal limitations.
- Some areas for process improvement identified but unlikely to have changed outcomes.

**Joel Jorgensen Reported:  
Public Outreach:**

- **Adoptions:**
  - Slowed in November but expected to surge in December due to increased online interest.
- **Community Support:**
  - Strong community involvement, even during negative publicity, demonstrates ongoing support.
  - Alaska Mill & Feed donated a pallet of dog food for the pet food pantry.
  - Public engagement increased after the bunny overpopulation issue at Aquarian Charter School, with residents reaching out about humane trapping and care.
- **Donations:**
  - Petco donated toys, Fred Meyer donated 1,000+ pounds of food, and individuals brought in supplies for shelter animals.
  - Donations have been particularly helpful during the holiday season and periods of lower adoptions.
- **Programs:**
  - SOT Program: Seward Correctional Facility program approved; first dog transfer underway.
  - Focuses on training and care for long-stay shelter animals, reducing kennel time and improving adoption readiness.
- **Volunteers:**
  - Volunteers are highly supportive, spreading positive messages about the shelter's efforts.
- **Public Sentiment:**
  - Despite occasional negative cases in the media, the community overwhelmingly supports shelter initiatives and recognizes staff dedication to animal care.

**6. Committee Reports:**

**Title 17: Sgt. Matthew Hall Reported:**

- No updates for Title 17.

**7. AHD Staff Reports:**

**Tamiah Liebersbach - Reported:**

**Board Vacancies**

- Several positions remain open; applicants are awaiting review by the mayor's office.
- Board members with expired terms continue to serve under code while reappointments are processed.

## **Horse Case Civil Suit**

- A lawsuit was filed to recover \$127,000 in care costs as of November.
- The defendant's counsel requested two deadline extensions but has not responded.
- A request for a default judgment in favor of the municipality has been filed.

## **City Budget Process**

- Savings from staff vacancies will allow re-appropriation of \$100,000 to a capital account.
- Funds will be used to develop building blueprints, a key step for facility enhancements.

## **Resolution and Initial Plan Summary**

- **Starting Point:**
  - The resolution provides an opportunity to address facility and operational improvements.
- **Subject Matter Expert Assessment:**
  - Hire an external expert organization to assess facility needs, staffing capacity, and gaps based on community size, geography, and pet population.
  - Include a staffing study as part of the assessment.
  - Use organizations with expertise in animal shelters to ensure credibility and best practices.
- **Facility Needs Assessment:**
  - Evaluate whether the current facility can be expanded or requires replacement.
  - Maintenance and Operations recommend replacing the facility due to infrastructure challenges, including plumbing issues.
  - Findings will inform a capital project plan for facility upgrades.
- **No-Kill Shelter Clarification:**
  - Shelter follows best practices by the Association of Shelter Veterinary Medicine, not a "no-kill" model.
  - The term "no-kill" lacks a uniform definition and is being phased out in the field.
  - Data shows live release rates have improved over time, reflecting enhanced care capacity.
- **Animal Cruelty Code Review:**
  - Form a team with APD, legal representatives, and prosecutors to review Title 8.55.
  - Address gaps in enforcement, training, and prosecution.
  - Identify challenges, including limited resources and the prioritization of animal cruelty cases.
- **Incident Review:**
  - Commission a third-party review of the incident involving Mr. Braden.
  - Use findings to inform the 120-day report and process improvements.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:**
  - Explore partnerships with corporate donors or foundations to supplement

taxpayer funding for facility upgrades.

- **Quality Improvement Focus:**
  - Commit to continuous improvement based on guidelines from the Association of Shelter Veterinary Medicine.
  - Identify areas for enhancement within the constraints of available resources.
- **120-Day Plan:**
  - Develop a detailed plan within 120 days, addressing facility needs, funding strategies, and operational improvements.
  - The plan will outline steps and priorities for implementation.

#### **Facility Assessment:**

- **Enhancement vs. New Construction:**
  - Two options are under consideration:
    - A comprehensive enhancement of the existing facility.
    - Designing and constructing a new, purpose-built facility that meets current standards.
  - The Maintenance and Operations Department suggests that if significant funds are to be invested, building a new facility may be more cost-effective and better suited to meet modern requirements.
- **Starting Point:**
  - The resolution provides an opportunity to address facility and operational improvements.

#### **Facility Considerations:**

- **Municipal Budget Constraints:**
  - Given the municipality's limited budget and multiple funding priorities, securing approval for a new facility may be challenging.
  - The Maintenance and Operations Department suggests that if significant funds are to be invested, building a new facility may be more cost-effective and better suited to meet modern requirements.
- **Public Support and Funding:**
  - Proposing a capital bond for a new facility would require voter approval.
  - Public support may be attainable, especially considering the aging state of the current facility and the substantial funds needed to upgrade it to meet present-day standards.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Ongoing studies and assessments will provide critical data to inform the decision-making process regarding whether to enhance the existing facility or pursue new construction.

#### **8. Old Business:**

None.

**9. Persons to be Heard on Meeting Topics:**

None

**10. Informational Items:**

- a. The next Title 17 Review Committee meeting will be held Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Anchorage Animal Care and Control.
- b. The next Animal Control Advisory Board meeting will be held Thursday, January 23, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Anchorage Animal Care and Control.

**11. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn. Adjourned at 7:37 p.m.**