



Municipality of Anchorage
Animal Control Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
May 22, 2025



1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:59 p.m. by Raylene Griffith.

Board Members Present:

Raylene Griffith, Matthew Hall, Cathy Foerster, Sandy Potter, Pamela Schamber, Samantha Fierro.

Board Members Absent:

Timothy Ebben.

Staff Present:

Debbie Burks – Anchorage Health Department (AHD)

Melissa Summerfield and Joel Jorgensen – Animal Licensing and Placement Services (ALPS).

2. **Minutes from April 24, 2025:**

Page 5 - Due Process and Legal Concerns - Last bullet point to be corrected to clarify that the legal expert is a personal contact with relevant experience from the Lower 48 and is not affiliated with the ACLU. Matthew Hall, seconded by Pamela Schamber, passed unanimously.

3. **Requested Presentations:**

None.

4. **Persons to be Heard:**

Buffy McLeod read a letter expressing concern about off-leash dogs on the multi-use trails at Ruth Arcand Park, particularly near the WCC-EC Horseshoe Grounds. She has lived in Anchorage since 1968, owned nine horses, and has long been active in both the horse and dog communities. Buffy has been involved in trail development and maintenance since the 1980s, including service on the Trails and Facilities Committee, which worked with WCC-EC leadership on improvements. She noted that while the trails have historically served multiple user groups well, recent increases in off-leash, untrained dogs have led to safety issues for horseback riders. She supports the idea of forming a new subcommittee to address these concerns and emphasized the need for all trail users to exercise control and mutual respect, noting that the trails are not intended to function as a dog park.

Deanna Graff inquired whether patrols could continue to be requested for specific area.

Staff confirmed that while patrol requests can be submitted at any time and are helpful for tracking activity trends, patrols can only be conducted when staffing allows, per the terms of the community contract. ACAB members highly encouraged them and others with same concerns to contact their assemblymen.

5. Standing Reports:

Anchorage Animal Care Control (AACC) Monthly Reporting and Public Outreach

Melissa Summerfield Updates - Shelter Manager

Significant intake event involving 70 dogs from a single residence under a protective custody case, resulting in an immediate and extreme strain on shelter capacity. The facility typically operates with 54 double kennels, and the sudden intake has pushed the shelter well beyond its intended limits.

Efforts are underway to transfer animals to partner shelters across the state (including Mat-Su, Kenai, Seward, and Valdez), as well as to coordinate with local rescues and foster networks. However, the protective custody status of the dogs prevents movement or adoption until surrenders are obtained or legal proceedings conclude.

While euthanasia remains a last resort, staff acknowledged that if animal flow cannot be improved through adoptions or transfers, it may become a necessary option for non-protective custody animals due to capacity limitations. Staff emphasized ongoing efforts to avoid this outcome and are actively encouraging public support through fostering and adopting.

Joel Jorgensen Updates - Outreach & Program:

- **Inter-shelter Collaboration**
Over four shelters statewide have offered to take in adoptable dogs. During a visit to Seward, staff secured placement for one or two dogs. Juneau will take a dog and cover transport, and Mat-Su selected dogs from PetHarbor.com.
- **SPOT Program Partnership**
A dog that completed training through the SPOT program at Seward Correctional Facility was successfully picked up and returned to the shelter.
- **NACA Conference Impact**
Connections made at the recent Alaska NACA conference have strengthened partnerships, with several shelters expressing willingness to help during this crisis.
- **Community Engagement**
Urgent adoption efforts and discounted fees were promoted on social media following the large intake. Staff held a vaccine clinic, attended a safety fair at Chester Valley Elementary, and continued weekly outreach at post offices to discuss dog safety with mail carriers.
- **Outlook**
Staff remain optimistic. While the recent intake is the largest in over two years, the dogs are adoptable, and every effort is being made to avoid euthanasia through transfers, fostering, and adoptions.

6. Committee Reports:

Title 17 - Sgt. Matthew Hall Report:

- **Title 17 Update**

Matt reported the group did not meet earlier this week. He is currently tied up with an active case but confirmed progress is ongoing. The team recently met with the Prosecutor's Office to review proposed changes and will continue discussions at the next meeting, which will include an invited expert.

- He also offered to check with APD's PR team about sharing Animal Control's adoption promotion on APD's social media to help expand public reach.

7. AHD Staff Reports:

Tamiah Liebersbach –

- A brief update was emailed to all members for review.

8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

None

10. Persons to be Heard on Meeting Topics:

None

11. Informational Items:

- a. The next Title 17 Review Committee meeting will be held June 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Anchorage Animal Care and Control.
- b. The next Animal Control Advisory Board meeting will be held Thursday, June 26, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Anchorage Animal Care and Control.

12. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 6:25 p.m.