

MINUTES
Advisory Board to
Memphis Animal Services

June 9, 2009

Present were:

Board Members:

Earnest Alexander
Carol Katz
Michelle Buckalew
Allen Iskiwitz
Janice Taylor Vaughn

Visitors:

Kristy Caylor
Amy Kalkbrenner
Carol Word
Ann Marie Easton
Cindy Sanders
Jackie Johns

Michelle called the meeting to order at 10:25 a.m. The first order of business to discuss how long to wait before dismissing the meeting for lack of quorum. A procedural rule proposal was made as follows: "Any member more than 15 minutes late will be construed as an absence." The vote for this measure was three for and one against, and the measure failed to pass, as any change to procedural rules requires a minimum of four votes. Thereafter, Michelle strongly urged any member who is not going to attend the meeting, please let Michelle know in advance. Having to wait indefinitely for a quorum is inconsiderate to board members and visitors.

Minutes from the May meeting were approved.

Carol asked Ernie about the proposed operating budget that is currently before the city council. Ernie said that he could not comment on specifics in the budget until it is approved by the city council, but stated that it does contain a 12 percent cut from the 2009 budget. The operating budget does not affect the construction improvement project for the new shelter. Ernie said bids when out on the new shelter on June 5, and the \$10 - \$11 million projected cost "looks promising," and he expects that some bids will come in under budget. The council understands the city needs a new shelter, however, there are with budgetary restraints on its cost.

Michelle said there are those who envision the new shelter as a joint venture with the county. Ernie had not heard anything to that effect. Jackie Johns said that the council had public input that this is a very good idea. Janice suggested that this is not feasible since the county was

unable to handle other expansion issues such as extending sewer, fire and police coverage to annexed areas. Allen pointed out that the animal shelter will have the same employees and that an expansion in infrastructure would not be necessary if the shelter were under county control. Pros and cons of this were discussed with visitors' input. The idea was considered generally favorable.

Cindy Sanders stated her concern that people in the Second Chance program are perhaps inappropriate to be employed as animal control officers, who are authorized as law enforcement officers. Michelle said that the selection process should be looked into, since violent or cruel offenders should not be at the shelter. The board recommended that Ken Moody review any Second Chance candidates who will be working for the shelter at law enforcement levels. Carol said that board members should become acquainted with the specifics of the program.

Ernie reported that a large number of trucks are presently out of service due to maintenance problems. The shelter got two new trucks last year and two new trucks are expected to be authorized for this year. Eventually, he would like to see the entire fleet of 17 trucks replaced. He said it is not practical to put a lot of money into the repair of trucks that are so old. Trucks are being manned with two employees, rather than one. The calls are prioritized, but they are approximately 175 – 200 calls behind. A priority call is generally answered in 20 minutes but non-priority calls are backed up. Janice reported that she placed a call regarding two stray dogs, and it was responded to in 10 minutes. Ernie said that it would depend on where the trucks are at the time they get the call. Cindy Sanders said that due to the current economic situation, some non-profits are going out of business and may have specially equipped trucks for sale. Ernie asked anyone to let him know of used truck available for purchase from the non-profit sector.

There has been no news from the city council on the status of the spay and neuter ordinance. Michelle said that California passed a statewide law regarding spay and neuter in that state. Carol and Cindy Sanders are both exploring this issue within separate groups to try to find common ground to adapt the ordinance to the Memphis community.

Michelle recommended that one council member personally visit the animal shelter each month. She will send a letter to the city council members to this effect. Additionally, every Board member agreed to attend a volunteer orientation program. Ernie will let the board know by email as to when the next volunteer orientation will be held.

Ernie said that he is training employees to take photos for the MAS website. It now goes through "web shots" at petfinders.com, which does not allow for a description to be attached. Ernie will change the procedure to send photos directly to the petfinder.com site in order that a description can be added.

Some of the visitors present objected to comments made by a board member at the May meeting involving disciplining dogs and leash laws. Discussion followed. Ann Marie Easton distributed copies of scientific studies showing how harsh treatment makes a dog aggressive, and showing proper training techniques.

Cindy said that MAS is the only entity doing animal cruelty investigations and that they are doing a very good job.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Smith Katz, Secretary

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 14th at 10:00 a.m.