

MINUTES  
Advisory Board to  
Memphis Animal Services

September 14, 2009

Meeting called to order

Item 1 - Shelter conditions and operations. An email received and copies passed to all Board members. Letter regarding volunteer and horrid conditions at shelter, dirty cages, inattentive staff, volunteer offer to help clean cages.

Michelle - these conditions are the same that have existed for years.

Ernie - the Supervisor has been off and not responded to complaint yet.

Item 2 - Letter from Keenon McCloy regarding evaluations of city employees not being done if employee was union member. Director Hooks assured us this was not the case. That all employees would be evaluated.

At this point Director Hooks began to speak about supporting the shelter. That there are some internal issues regarding the shelter that will be addressed within the next 60 - 90 days. Asked for opportunity for resolution. Said that the constant brought to the table is that employees are not doing their jobs. She will check into that.

She is open to the Board but asks that the Board be solution driven and not dwell on anything from the past. She stated that Mr. Alexander had not been here very long and that we needed to give him a chance.

Allen stated that we need strong leadership at the shelter.

Janice - the Board should not address things such as the previously mentioned letter and that the employees should not be continuously criticized at the meetings.

The city ordinance regarding the responsibilities of the Board was addressed.

Frank - the employees are doing a good job and some of the volunteers are just a bunch of trouble makers. The Board is trying to just point out the faults of the shelter.

Michelle brought the meeting back to focus on a new day with Ernie and Director Hooks.

Jackie - photos of the puppy cages, filthy cages, diarrhea, much of it dried with fresh feces on top.

Ernie stated the conditions shown in the photos were a one time happening.

Janice - if the employees, volunteers or public witness problems that they should go to Mr. Alexander.

Mr. Alexander - the volunteers were welcome to clean cages to help.

Director Hooks addressed concerns regarding the cleanliness at the shelter. The shelter could not be like the humane society. That there would be dirty cages and a smell just like if a person has pets at home. That the supervisors would be trained. That policies

and procedures would be implemented. That the employees report problems to the supervisors.

She stated that the Board must move forward beyond the past problems and constantly move forward. That we should not just dwell on the problems.

Director Hooks left the room afterwards.

Jackie - Tracy Russell left a box of puppies in the parking lot at the end of her shift. Ernie - this was the first he had heard of it but would look into it.

Nina Wingfield addressed the meeting and said that she is on the board of ACAT. That she had concerns about the shelter if her animals ever had need to be at the shelter. That the shelter be run adhering to humane standards with SOP available for the staff. Ernie stated that he had implemented this.

Jackie and Cindy - obvious absence of ACO's attending court. Ernie stated the officers were there.

Jackie - shelter received a call on Friday, Sept. 11 @ 3 pm from code enforcement with police present. Code stated that it was cruelty and that a dog was dead, starved and tied to a tree. The address was 395 Parkway. The animal shelter dispatcher told code that the address was not in the city.

Cindy - mislabeling of breeds. Shar peis listed as pits...german short haired pointer labeled as pit bull. Suggested posters or books with photos of breeds.

Nina Wingfield asked about NACA training and the percentage of employees trained. Ernie stated there were three employees trained and that he had no money to send others. Ernie stated that he was first, second and third NACA trained and that training included cruelty, court procedures, handling animals, humane handling, etc. Stated that he also went to the cruelty school in Missouri.

Ernie stated that he brought the Shelter HSUS standard of care along with American Humane Association. That the shelter is operating under and following HSUS and AHA standards. That some of the programs were put on hold but that he did not sacrifice the most important ones in operating humanely. That the shelter has made substantial changes since he came on board.

Ernie stated that he was told not to collect \$2000 bonds for vicious dogs by someone in the previous administration.

Cindy - Shana Jackson was seen in court, wearing her shelter uniform, while there on a personal assault charge against her.

Ernie - this was the first he had heard of it.

Meeting dismissed.

(Transcript by Cindy Marx Sanders)