

## ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Animal Services Advisory Committee Meeting was held on June 10, 2004 in the conference room at the Community Services building. Members present were; Dr. Jack Callan, DVM; Alvin O'Dell; Tony Neitzler; Larry Johnson; Dolly Scott; Leah Herron; Dr. Zane Travis, MD and Jo Roberts, Acting Secretary. Absent member was Megan Santee.

- I. Minutes from January 15, 2004 Meeting - Dr. Callan suggested they be approved unless there were any additions or corrections noted. Dr. Travis moved to approve and seconded by Dolly Scott.
- II. Animal Services Program Manager – introduction – Larry Johnson introduced Alvin O'Dell and welcomed him to the program.
- III. Rabies Cases in Abilene – update – Kay Durilla presented a copy of the current map to show rabies cases in our region. Taylor County has had 25 cases so far this year and is the second highest in Region 2/3. Those positive cases break down as follows; skunks – 23, dog – 1, bull – 1. Seventeen of those cases were within the Abilene city limits but mostly on the outer boundaries. There have been four human exposures and 34 pets have been exposed. Two dogs are missing that might have had exposure to a positive skunk. There are currently seven dogs in 90 day isolation, four horses in 45 day isolation and 16 dogs in 45 day isolation. Kay estimated that of the animals we are sending to laboratory for rabies testing, we are getting positive results on 1/3 of them.  
Dr. Travis asked Dr. Callan if he had seen an increase in people getting their pets vaccinated with the increase of rabies cases. Dr. Callan hasn't noticed an increase but Leah Herron says they are seeing more people getting their pets vaccinated annually.  
There was discussion about cats not being exposed. Dogs are more aggressive and curious so they are more likely to be exposed. Alvin O'Dell suggested that he do a review of the dogs exposed and get a breakdown of the types of dogs being exposed.  
Tony Neitzler commented that we are running out of space to quarantine the exposed animals. The City is doing this as a public service and not charging the pet owners. They are looking at getting some temporary outdoor facilities to move the healthy animals outside to have more space inside for the quarantined animals. There are a few home quarantine animals. Those are possible only if the animal has been vaccinated and the homeowner has the proper secure structure to use to quarantine the animal. Alvin commented that there are only 16 slots available to use to quarantine animals at Animal Services.  
Comments were made that the owners of quarantined animals should at least be paying a minimal fee. Larry Johnson stated that fees were waived for these cases because it was felt the owners did nothing wrong to cause their pets to be exposed.  
Dr. Callan asked about the State bait drop program. It was stated that they are doing it basically for coyotes south from San Angelo.

- IV. Changes to City of Abilene Animal and Fowl Ordinance – review – Larry Johnson presented the new City ordinance which has been approved by City Council and is now in effect. Adjustments were made to specifically address animal welfare and abuse. The City Legal Department looked at ordinances from other cities around and outside the State to put together an ordinance that fits the needs of our community.
- Some key provisions pointed out: clarification of veterinary care, specifications to consider when tethering an animal, and in addressing animal abuse - legally allowing an officer to seize and impound animals in danger without getting a court order first.
- Tony Neitzler commented that under current State law animal abuse was to be prosecuted under Criminal Court, this ordinance allows us to also go through Municipal Court.
- Dr. Travis asked for clarification on the statement “kill an animal, except as allowed by law”. Tony Neitzler clarified that a number of agricultural programs can kill animals endangering farm/ranch animals. Wildlife and game animals are under State and Federal regulations.
- Larry Johnson commented that we do anticipate an increase in the work load for the animal control officers.
- V. Enforcement Procedures for Spay-Neuter Program – Alvin O’Dell presented that when anyone adopts an animal they are given a voucher to get the animal spayed or neutered. The City reimburses them for the cost. He doesn’t feel people realize how strict the law is requiring that they get this done. He submitted samples of letters he has set up to send to the individuals to remind them of the law requiring that they get these procedures done.
- Dr. Callan asked if he had any idea how many residents might be from out of town and not following up on getting the animal spayed or neutered. Tony Neitzler commented that about two years ago a study was done and found that at least 90% were actually getting the procedures done.
- Dr. Callan asked if we can prosecute people from out of the County if they don’t get the procedure done. Tony Neitzler commented that we have agreement with the Taylor County Sheriff’s office to assist with someone who has gone outside the city limits but we can’t go outside the County. He stated that non-compliance is an ongoing problem and we will try these letters for awhile to see if they help increase compliance before considering further options.
- VI. Animal Services Automation Project – Larry Johnson commented that we have been trying to determine if there were ways we could use automation to improve services. He introduced Barry Camarillo to review what projects we have in mind.
- There is a white card that animal services uses to track animals that come into the facility. That information goes into a data base and what we want to do is increase access to that data. Wiring has been added to the Animal Services building and work stations were relocated from the Health Department to Animal Services. This gives more access to the data in the computer system. The Animal

Control officers will be using a notebook computer in the field to speed getting the data into the data base so those at the animal shelter will have the information quicker and will be able to answer questions from animal owners before the animal even gets to the shelter. With the information in the city system, City supervisors will also have speedy access to that information. (This particular computer has handwriting recognition software.)

We are also getting a digital logger system (telephone recorder) that monitors the calls. There will be a message to warn the caller that the call is being recorded for quality assurance and then the recorder will start recording. The computer will be able to play back the calls to verify that the staff picked up the correct address and also verify what was said by both the caller and the person who received the call.

- VII. Quarterly Operations Report – Larry Johnson presented that we are attempting to get a second incinerator and are in the process of getting bids now. We have an increase in demand (more dead animals coming in, not enough animals being adopted and more requests from the public for private cremations). Depending on use the incinerators should last 10 to 15 years. The problem with the current incinerator is that the lining inside is starting to wear out and once that wears out it can't be repaired. When we get a second incinerator we will be able to expand the life of the older incinerator.

Larry Johnson also reported on totals from January through May 2004.

- Total animals picked up – 5,927
- Animals destroyed at shelter – 2,983
- Animals picked up dead – 1,462
- Animals reclaimed by owner – 504
- Animals adopted – 528
- Animal bites – owner – 63
- Animal bites – stray – 43
- Total number calls received – 5,750
- Average response time per call – 31 minutes

- VIII. Meeting Adjourned.