



DU PAGE COUNTY

Animal Services Committee

Final Summary

421 N. COUNTY FARM ROAD
WHEATON, IL 60187
www.dupagecounty.gov

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

7:30 AM

Room 3500A

1. CALL TO ORDER

7:30 AM meeting was called to order by Chair Brian Krajewski at 7:30 AM.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:	Cynthia Cronin Cahill, District 5 Dawn DeSart, Paula Garcia, Krajewski and Sheila Rutledge
ABSENT:	Grant Eckhoff

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS - CHAIR KRAJEWSKI

Chair Krajewski remarked that budget season is here. Animal Services budget will look a bit different for FY25 since by that time the new building will be in operation. Laura is pulling together figures that will take into account the larger footprint, greater opportunities for public outreach, etc. One of the biggest needs now and as we move into the new facility is for veterinary staff - veterinarians and veterinary technicians. Staff are also looking into additional revenue streams including renting space for special events in the new facility.

5. MINUTES APPROVAL

5.A. [24-1800](#)

Animal Services Committee - Regular Meeting - Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Attachments: [Summary Minutes May-2024.pdf](#)

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Sheila Rutledge
SECONDER:	Paula Garcia

6. GRANTS

6.A. [FI-R-0099-24](#)

Acceptance and appropriation of interest earned on investment for the DuPage Animal Friends Phase II Capital Project Grant, Company 5000, Accounting Unit 1310, \$142,082.

(Animal Services)

Attachments: [Attachment I - Budget Attachment](#)

RESULT:	APPROVED AND SENT TO FINANCE
MOVER:	Cynthia Cronin Cahill
SECONDER:	Paula Garcia

7. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

The current shelter population is 225 animals including: 116 cats, 4 chickens, 51 dogs, 25 guinea pigs, 29 rabbits.

Out of county owner surrender requests are on the rise. All shelters in the area and around the county are experiencing higher demand, higher intake and longer lengths of stay. While in the past DCAS has accommodated out of county requests, staff are currently turning away out of county surrenders due to construction, while providing resources, surrender counseling, and contact lists of other area shelters and rescue organizations.

Staff are working with the Chicagoland Humane Coalition to plan a weekend long mega adoption event September 28-29th at the Lake County Fairgrounds.

An urgent plea for fosters and adopters has been communicated as the shelter is at critical capacity. Unfortunately, while foster gets animals out of the shelter, what we are finding is that once in foster, animals are sitting for extended lengths of time without interest or adoption.

Construction is still on pace to allow move-in to the new addition in early October.

8. DISCUSSION

8.A. [24-1802](#)

Discussion of resident animal welfare concerns.

Laura addressed concerns recently raised during County Board public comment...

Complaint #1: Animal Services transferred two French Bulldogs to rescue before their stray hold was completed.

Response: False. Some police departments complete all or partial stray holds at their own holding facilities prior to transferring animals to Animal Services. In some cases, animals can arrive at Animal Services already having completed their formal stray holds. This is what happened in the case of the two French Bulldogs. While the dogs were already emancipated and a rescue partner was ready to pull the animals same-day, Animal Services ended up holding the dogs three days past their stray hold to further promote

them via social media and give any potential owner(s) the additional time to reclaim them. Additionally, one of the dogs had a very serious medical issue that needed to be addressed immediately. Animal Services took the time to medically evaluate both dogs, communicate the issue to the rescue partner, and ensure that the dogs were transferred to a partner that was willing and able to follow through with the necessary medical care immediately.

Complaint #2: Animal Services does not share the name of the rescue that animals are transferred to.

Response: False. Animal Services will share the rescue to which animals are transferred as long as the rescue has given staff permission to do so. It's important to note that often times rescue partners will pull animals with placement - foster or adopter - already lined up for the animal(s), so that adoption inquiries are not fielded.

Laura confirmed that in the case of the French Bulldogs, Animal Services went above and beyond what was required to ensure someone had an opportunity to reclaim the animals and that they received the medical care they required.

Complaint #3: Animal Services refuses to adopt out two unfamiliar dogs at the same time, to the same household.

Response: True. Animal Services has a policy that unless two dogs arrive at our facility already bonded, or unless staff have identified during their stay with us that two dogs are friendly with one another, two unfamiliar dogs will not be adopted out or fostered together.

Shelter life is extremely stressful on an animal. Best practice is to take one animal home, allow that animal sufficient time to decompress, get to know its new home and its new family, bond with their new family, and adapt to its new routine, before introducing another stressor (in this case, an unfamiliar animal). If after sufficient time has passed and an animal has successfully acclimated to their new home, staff would be happy to help someone introduce a new pet. This is the same advice that staff uses to counsel new adopters when introducing their newly adopted pet to a resident pet. Staff want all adoptions to be successful. Shelter animals have already experienced a significant amount of stress. It is our intention to avoid piling on more stress by adding another animal into the mix too soon.

Complaint #4: Animal Services will not work with rescue organizations that utilize shock collars (AKA e-collars) and/or prong collars.

Response: True - if the rescue is not willing to embrace fear free methods. We know that animals that find themselves in a shelter environment are subject to a significant amount of stress. Every single staff member at Animal Services is required to complete

their Fear Free Certification. Fear Free Certification teaches strategies to reduce fear, anxiety and stress in animals with the goal of improving their emotional and mental well-being. Animals can and do arrive with behaviors that can be challenging. Our staff is seeing that not many people are investing the time and energy into training their dogs. So by the time the dog arrives at the shelter they are displaying unwanted behaviors like jumping, pulling, leash biting, etc.

The good news is that there are tools available that make it possible to work with these behaviors without inflicting fear and pain. These include flat martingale collars which apply gentle pressure distributed evenly around the neck when pulling. Staff use Easy Walk and Freedom harnesses that gently correct the animal's body position while limiting the ability to pull. Staff will use chain leashes if the dog is biting at the leash too much, which gives the dog agency to make the choice of whether to continue biting the chain which is unpleasant, or whether to stop. Our staff focuses more on reinforcing the behaviors we DO want to see using positive reinforcement (AKA reward based training) in the form of treats, praise or play, based upon what the animal shows us is most reinforcing to them.

Prong and shock collars cause pain, cause distress, and increase fear and anxiety. Scientific studies have shown that aversive tools (such as prong and shock collars) can actually cause an increase in undesirable behaviors. Laura shared The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior's (AVSAB) [Position Statement on Humane Dog Training](https://avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AVSAB-Humane-Dog-Training-Position-Statement-2021.pdf) <<https://avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AVSAB-Humane-Dog-Training-Position-Statement-2021.pdf>> with the committee. Additionally, Dominance Theory made popular by TV dog trainers like Cesar Milan are outdated, increase the animal's fear and anxiety, and damage the bond between human and animal. See AVSAB's [Position Statement on The Use of Dominance Theory in Behavior Modification of Animals](https://avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Dominance_Position_Statement-download.pdf) <https://avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Dominance_Position_Statement-download.pdf>.

Dr. Hanek has personally had to clean the puncture wounds, damaged tissue, and singed fur on countless dogs caused by the misuse of prong collars and shock collars. As a result, Dr. Hanek and all of the Animal Services staff are big proponents of force-free, Fear Free tools and training methods.

In short, Animal Services requires the same from its rescue partners as we do for our own staff and volunteers. The added benefit of doing so is that it allows us the ability to set that animal up for success by replacing fear and stress with fun and reward during training, while also providing continuity of training during and after the animal leaves our care, and greater opportunities for the animal to bond with the human(s) at the end of the leash.

Laura shared that not all rescue organizations are created equal. There are many people in the community that have good intentions for trying to save animals. But they are not all embracing best practices, not only when it comes to training methods. Animal

Services has seen an increase in the number of rescues who are transporting animals from other parts of the country, then not supporting those animals once they arrive. Or worse, warehousing (kenneling) animals indefinitely without any plans to move them out into homes quickly. Animal Services has recently experienced fosters of other rescue organizations dropping of their rescue's animals as found pets after support from their own rescue organizations dried up.

Animal Services welcomes conversation with any rescue that would like to work with us and that is open to talking through and understanding our position on these topics.

Laura invited any organization or member of the public to contact her directly with any questions or concerns regarding Animal Services policies, guidelines, practices, etc.

9. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Member Rutledge shared that she recently used A Gentle Goodbye, Dr. Sam, for in-home end of life euthanasia. She highly recommends them.

11. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.