

MINUTES

On March 6th, 2024, the Animal Management & Welfare Advisory Board met at 5:00 p.m. in the City Council meeting room located on the third floor of City Hall at 509 E. 7th Ave to discuss the agenda. Dr. Bethany Shilling, Vice Chairman, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Amarillo Animal Management & Welfare Advisory Board to order at 5:10 P.M.

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD SINCE APPOINTMENT	NO. OF MEETINGS ATTENDED
Charlie Sanchez	No	16	14
Bethany Schilling	Yes	09	09
Les Simpson	Yes	02	02
David Martinez	Yes	08	07
Kerry Dawson	Yes	02	02

Also, in attendance:

- Victoria Medley Director, AM&W, City of Amarillo
- Ty Vernon Assistant Director, AM&W, City of Amarillo
- Brandi Bullock Assistant Director, AM&W, City of Amarillo
- Rozena Helton Shelter Manager
- Dalton George Field Manager
- Laura Storrs Assistant City Manager
- Leslie Schmidt City Attorney, City of Amarillo
- Margie Gonzalez Administrative Specialist II, AM&W, City of Amarillo

ITEM 1: Introduction: All board members introduce themselves. It was noted that the Chairperson, Charlie Sanchez, was not present due to scheduling conflicts nor was Kerry Dawson when the meeting began. Victoria Medley introduced AMW staff.

ITEM 2: Public Comment: Andrea Gulley asked about the lack of detail in the agreement between AM&W and the Texas Tech School of Veterinary Medicine. She is concerned about the length of time the animals are at Texas Tech and then returned to AM&W. Dr. Schilling, as the TTUSVM representative, explained the process by which animals are selected for the long-term program and that legally they are AMW’s and if they aren’t adopted out, they would have to return to the shelter. Dr. Schilling and Victoria Medley stated that since the inception of the program, none of the long-term dogs have returned to the shelter, all had been adopted out. Ms. Gulley also expressed concern about an animal that was euthanized after hours. She questioned any policy that allows non-veterinary staff to make euthanasia decisions. Victoria Medley did explain the process and the AMW policy regarding Euthanasia. Les Simpson questioned what if any changes have been made. It was explained that the process was reviewed, and changes were made regarding after-hours decisions. Mr. Simpson asked her if there were cameras in the intake garage that could provide video evidence. Victoria explained the antiquated camera system and the monetary challenges of installing a new system. Mr. Simpson asked that AMW management look into the cost of upgrading the camera system, including adding cameras in the intake area of the shelter. Mr. Simpson asked about field officers and their having body cameras. Director Medley explained that Body cameras have been purchased through the police department and that AMW is scheduled to receive the hardware and undergo training starting in early May. However, Director Medley noted that while there isn't a confirmed delivery date yet, the Police Department (APD) will ensure that AMW remains informed of any updates regarding the implementation. He would also like to see how much it would cost to have cameras installed in the intake area as well as upgrading the current system.

ITEM 3: Minutes. The motion to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting, on January 10, 2024, was presented. The motion carried 3:0.

ITEM 4: AMW Activity Report PowerPoint

- A. **AMW Activity Report-** The first slide shows an overview of the animals that came into the shelter and the outcomes of those animals for the last 2 months as the last AMW advisory board meeting was on 1/10/2024.
- B. **Shelter Evaluation:** The city council approved allocating funds for a 3rd party shelter

evaluation. The city has recently signed a contract with Animal Shelter Services, LLC. Their purpose is to conduct a thorough evaluation of AMW. Their mission is to help animal shelters and rescue groups operate more efficiently and effectively. They will provide a comprehensive evaluation that will be the basis for them to provide strategic solutions and recommendations. AMW has received the following tentative dates: March 8 through the 20th contractor will review all the requested documentation, April 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th the contractor will conduct an onsite evaluation: May 27th is the target date for the finalized report.

- C. Staff Updates-** AMW has promoted Dalton George to Field Services Manager and Rozena Helton to Shelter Manager. Aleigha Smith is a departmental transfer to Animal Care Worker. Mykayla Hunter is an internal promotion to Animal Management Officer. Christopher Carrillo is a new AMO Trainee and Aurelia Valenzuela was hired as a CSR Intake Specialist. 15% of our budget positions are not filled. We have 4 vacancies for Animal Care Workers, one vacancy for a Veterinary Assistant, a Shelter supervisor, one Field Services Supervisor, and an Outreach Manager.
- D. Field Stats-** The snapshot of a day for the Field Officers shows we had a total of 63 calls on
- E. Field Services-** We have 6 officers attending The Texas Department of State Health Services Basic Class on March 27th and 28th. Our spring hours will begin on March 14th. They will be 7:00 am to 10:00 pm with on-call hours being 9:00 pm to 7:00 am. AMW coordinated with other responding departments for the emergency wildfire on Tuesday 2/27/2024. We responded to River Road High School and the Warford Activity Center with 4 employees to provide animal care supplies and temporary kennels. AMW had Officers on standby 24/7 to respond to any assistance calls.
- F. Positive Outcomes Departmental Update:** AMW found employment for 47 barn cats in January and February. We also found new homes for 350 animals through the Adoptions office. 101 animals were transferred from AMW to Partner rescue organizations and 146 animals were returned to their owners through the Intake office and Field Services.
- G. Rescue Team-** AMW's shelter dog, Fog, found a new home with a woman in Washington state. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Dr. Giebel, one of our compassionate veterinarians, Fog was safely transported to the airport. This heartwarming tale highlights the power of teamwork and dedication in ensuring that every animal finds the love and care they deserve.
- H. Community Outreach Update-** AMW continues with weekly media spots at KAMR Channel 4, Alpha Media Radio, and ABC Channel 7 (biweekly). On January 20th and February 17th AMW had adoption events at Pet Supplies Plus. A Homeschooled student group came to the shelter for a school project and an educational presentation on January 26th. On February 21st Primrose kindergartener group came to the shelter for an educational lesson about shelter animals and read a book to puppies. On February 27th AMW attended a meeting with the Black Pastors Alliance to discuss on-going issues in the North Heights area. On February 29th AMW participated in the AmTech job fair. While there AMW staff educated high school students about AMW and informed them of volunteer and job opportunities, as well as internship possibilities for students interested in animal science. The Bissell Foundation is providing vaccines and microchips for all the vaccine clinics planned for this spring. Chewy.com also donated cat and dog food, as well as cat litter that AMW gives to residents and local rescues as a community outreach program. AMW also received food donations from Merrick to give out to the public as well. AutoNation has given AMW a \$1,000.00 donation to go towards program needs. AMW's website has been reviewed, refreshed, and updated. AMW is preparing to undergo testing with the COA virtual assistant "Emma" to help improve communication with our citizens.
- I. Veterinary Services-** AMW has 5 rotating contract veterinarians and 3 full-time veterinary technicians, and TTSVM vets provide vet services as needed. WT Vero Veterinarian provides AMW onsite spaying/neutering services once a month. AMW currently has 4 AmTech interns. As part of the vet services, all shelter animals have daily veterinarian care as well as 2 documented observation logs done by shelter staff. AMW had 319 in-house surgeries performed in January and February of this year.

- J. Distemper on the Rise-** AMW is seeing cases of distemper rising in the community reported by local vet clinics. AMW has distemper protocols and screening in place. For January and February AMW tested 20 dogs for distemper and 50% were positive. We are also tracking the area of town where we are finding the distemper-positive dogs (disease prevalence map), this helps us understand the areas that need vaccination services the most.
- K. Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine Partnership-** On January 2nd 16 dogs were chosen for the long-term program. On January 24th 23 female dogs were spayed and 2 of those were chosen for the long-term program. On January 31st 14 female dogs were spayed and 8 male dogs were neutered. 22 dogs were transported to TTU for an ultrasound lab on February 6th. On February 14th 24 dogs received spay/ neuter. On February 19th 21 dogs were neutered. On May 27, 2024, TTU students will start clinical rotations at AMW.
- L. Overview of Animal Control ordinances enacted by other municipalities-** Several city ordinances were reviewed from all parts of the state. Director Medley provided the following highlights: Licensing Requirements: mandating that pet owners register their animals with the city and obtain proper identification tags. Dangerous Dog Ordinances: Regulations regarding the handling and containment of dogs deemed dangerous or aggressive. Spay/ Neuter Requirements: Some cities may have ordinances mandating the spaying or neutering of pets to control overpopulation. Limits on Number of Pets: Establishing limits on the number of pets a household can own. Microchipping requirements: Enacting microchipping laws to return animals to owners and promote responsible pet ownership. Rabies Vaccination Requirements: Requiring pets to be vaccinated against rabies and maintaining up-to-date vaccination records. Ordinance repeat offender Enhancements establishes higher penalties for habitual offenders. Mr. Simpson asked what city was experiencing the most success. Director Medley explained that the cities reviewed have tried several different approaches depending on the city's focus, public safety and/or live release rates and that with any recent changes there was not enough quantitative data to know what is working. Each city has its own challenges and are consistently looking to improve their services.
- a. Presentation included: [How Can I Change A Local Ordinance To Protect Texas Animals? - Texas Humane Network \(thln.org\)](#) "Many jurisdictions feel that requiring pets to be sterilized or microchipped helps promote responsible pet ownership and gives them the ability to address problem owners who will often fail to meet any standards. Others believe this is government overreach and that pet owners should be able to decide for themselves if they want to have these procedures done. Some jurisdictions have decided that the best fit for them is some sort of middle ground on these potentially contentious issues where it is not mandatory to sterilize or microchip your pet unless they are impounded for violating the law."
 - b. Current City statistics regarding AMW issued citations: 2,246 violations have active warrants, 66 violations currently in summons status, 122 active cases with not guilty pleas, 206 active cases with convictions. That is a total of 2,640 active cases/violations.

Item 4: Identify Future Agenda Items: Possible review of the TTUSVM agreement. Mr. Simpson requested an update at next meeting on possible Technology for uploading field information during the intake process and a follow up regarding Municipal court settings and case follow up.

Item 5: Set the Schedule for the Next Advisory Board Meeting: The next Animal Management & Welfare Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2024, at 5 pm at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTIES OF POTTER & RANDALL
CITY OF AMARILLO

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 pm.

ATTEST:

Bethany Schilling,
AM&W Advisory Board Acting Chairperson

Margie Gonzalez,
Administrative Specialist II, AM&W