

Animal Management & Welfare
Advisory Board Meetings

MINUTES

On January 26th, 2025, 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. Schilling, Vice Chair called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Amarillo Animal Management & Welfare Advisory Board to order at 5:04 P.M.

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD SINCE APPOINTMENT	NO. OF MEETINGS ATTENDED
Sandra McCartt	Yes	0	0
Dr. Bethany Schilling. DVM	Yes	11	10
Les Simpson	Yes	04	03
Glenn Crowder	Yes	0	0
Andrea Slater Gulley	Yes	02	02

Also, in attendance:

Victoria Jaramillo Medley
Ty Vernon
Brandi Bullock
Stephanie Smith
Dalton George
Kali Dennis
Andrew Freeman
Laura Hamilton
Donna Knight
Pam Denholm

Director, AM&W, City of Amarillo
Assistant Director, AM&W, City of Amarillo
Assistant Director, AM&W, City of Amarillo
Shelter Manager
Field Manager
Positive Outcomes Manger
Deputy City Manager
Presiding Judge, Amarillo Municipal Court
Director of Court Services
City Prosecutor

ITEM 1: Introduction

The board members introduced themselves. All board members were present.

ITEM 2: Public Comment

- Sara Cervantes (Amarillo Citizen) expressed a desire to see Amarillo Animal Management and Welfare partner with Randall and Potter County to communally support animal welfare initiatives. She hoped the new management team would bring new perspectives, innovative approaches, and renewed commitment to the community. She said AMW collaborating with Randall/Potter County would 1) reduce animal cruelty and neglect cases; 2) promote responsible pet ownership not just within city limits, but out in the county as well; and 3) pool community and county resources to provide better service to citizens and animals. Overpopulation/Hoarding takes place mostly outside of city limits. She cited examples of other counties requiring shelters be placed for populations of over 75,000 and noted that Potter County's population is over 118,000. She pointed out the limited resources with which Potter County must manage their animal population.
- Dee Kraus (Amarillo Citizen) -- Gave a rescue hoodie to Andrea Gully. She commended AMW for a positive, productive encounter on Jan 12th where they assisted her with rescue efforts in trying to secure two stray dogs. She expressed concern and frustration with the community's tendency to neglect and dump animals. She pointed out all the work that rescues in the community do to try to protect animals and called for stricter punishments for people who violate ordinances.

ITEM 3: Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes from the October 25th board meeting was presented. The minutes were approved by a vote of 5-0.

ITEM 4: Nominations for Chair

Andrea Slater Gulley was nominated as Chair of the board by Dr. Schilling, seconded by Les Simpson, passed by unanimous vote.

ITEM 5: Regular Meeting Items

- **AMW Activity Report:**
 - VJM reported on key statistics from the year 2024: outcomes, surrenders, returns, rescues, and intakes. Numbers are high due to increased focus on public safety initiatives. Increased rates of RTO in the field and reduced stray intake is due in large part to the previous years' microchip clinics, allowing animals to be reunited with their families before ever stepping foot in the shelter. Andrea Gulley asked about the risks and benefits of open versus managed intakes, worrying that managed intakes led to more animals being abandoned out on the street. VJM said that the managed intake model encourages individual responsibility while mitigating shelter overpopulation. Owners waiting for

their surrender appointment are offered donated food and supplies and encouraged to rehome their pets through social media/rescues before bringing them to the shelter.

- **Staff Updates:**

- 88% of budgeted positions are filled. The field is fully staffed for the first time in a long time, which has contributed to a high number of intakes from the field. AMW currently has twelve field officers and two field supervisors. Ms. Gully did ask if the council understood the need to for more field officers. VJM explained that as the city grew so would the needs of AMW and that those discussions were taking place during the budgeting process. VJM noted that improved retention of field officers is attributed to professionalized training, higher pay, and an emphasis on first responder and public safety training. The Animal Care Worker position faces ongoing retention challenges due to the impact of weather on this primarily outdoor, physically demanding role.

- **Field Services:**

- 2024 Calls for service statistics: There were a total of 16,730 calls. Highlighted statistics were dead animal calls -1837; sick and injured animals -1347; stray dogs - 4864; vicious/dangerous animals - 2318; and welfare calls - 1593.
- Directed patrols: Directed patrols took place in Eastridge, North Heights/San Jacinto, NW 1st extending North to the BLVD, and High Plains Ranch Park. A cumulative total of 16 animals were impounded; 29 animals were returned to owner; 17 citizens were issued citations; 8 welfare cases were opened; and 11 code violations were opened.

- **Municipal Courts/AMW Dockets:**

- Total cases: 831; Total Number of Defendants: 224. Average Failure to Appear rate: 63.4%.
- Judge Hamilton clarified a statement given by Sandra McCartt during the 10/30/24 meeting regarding the 28,000 outstanding warrants specifically affiliated with animal charges. There are currently 609 outstanding post-judgement animal warrants and 602 outstanding pre-judgement warrants. She also pointed out the alternative animal accountability course, but it has low attendance. Andrea Gulley asked about the possibility of hiring off-duty certified peace or City Marshal officers to address the outstanding warrants and make it a priority. Judge Hamilton clarified that there were budgetary restraints, and that the City Marshall's office hosting a court compliance campaign. She suggested talking with Jacob Diaz about organizing an "Animal Court Compliance campaign". Ms. Gully discussed her belief that citizens need to be held accountable and what the community has been doing has not worked. Ms. McCartt stated that she appreciated the support of the justice system

- **Positive Outcomes and Community Updates:**

- 2024 totals: 2,511 adoptions - 1,377 dogs; 1,102 cats; 32 others. 355 barn cats. 643 animals were transferred to rescue. 1280 animals returned to owners.
- Andrea Gulley raised concerns about the evaluation process for barn cats, wanting to ensure AMW is not sending companion animals out as barn cats. Brandi Bullock responded by outlining AMW's behavioral assessment process, noting that only cats that cannot be held/socialized after their 3-day stray hold period are sent out as barn cats.
- AMW participated in the Downtown Electric Light Parade with an "Adopt, Don't Shop" float and several one-day adoption events at Pets Supplies Plus. Assistant Directors engaged with area students by speaking with classes, while local 4H groups volunteered at the shelter on Saturdays. AMW also continues its weekly media segments, highlighting shelter animals available for adoption and sharing essential pet ownership information.
- "New Year - New Friend Campaign" - \$25 adoptions fee – discussed 'long stays' and 'the fix and ready-to-go' animals being featured.

ITEM 5: Discussion on Strategies for Effective Animal Population Management

- VJM stated that 16 TTUSVM students participated in shelter rotations, completing approximately 700 surgeries in total. This would have cost approximately \$140,000 to Amarillo's taxpayers if not provided by TTU. The first graduating class at TTUSVM was recognized, with VJM explaining the 30-day fourth-year student rotation and the holistic approach students took in working with the shelter. This included ride-a longs to gain a better understanding of the community and participation in free microchipping/vaccination clinics. Ms. Gully inquired about the long-term animals at TTUSVM and whether they had been adopted or returned to the shelter. Dr. Shilling confirmed that all had been adopted.
- Mr. Simpson shared that the mayor held a special meeting with concerned citizens and committed funding toward spay/neuter efforts. He also emphasized the success of the microchip campaigns and sought assurance that they would continue even if grant or donation funding declined. AMW confirmed that microchip purchases are supported through a dedicated budget line item and would be presented to the council during the budgeting process.
- Dr. Schilling highlighted the importance of public awareness, noting that while spay/neuter services may be free to residents, they come at a cost to the city. Ms. Gully addressed the local rescue burnout and stressed that without city investment, fewer citizens would be willing to assist.
- Ms. Gully asked the board for input on potential strategies. She proposed a \$0.03 surcharge on water bills with an opt-out option to help fund spay/neuter services. She also raised concerns about the city's existing TNR (trap-neuter-return) ordinance, noting that many residents are personally funding TNR efforts in certain neighborhoods. She advocated for city-sponsored spay/neuter services to support these individuals. Additionally, Ms. Gully suggested implementing a pet registration ordinance, citing successful models in other cities outside of Texas and the South. Ms. McCart, drawing

from her previous experience on the AMW board, noted that many Texas cities had repealed similar ordinances due to logistical challenges. She compared pet registration to rabies tag requirements, explaining that compliance would allow owner information to be accessed through the veterinarian who administered the vaccine. Mr. Gully respectfully disagreed. Ms. Gully also suggested the city produce educational videos to help educate the public.

- Deputy City Manager Freeman asked whether the board wanted staff to present voucher program parameters to them first or directly to the council. Ms. McCartt preferred the latter, as the council makes the final decision. Ms. Gully inquired about the board's role, emphasizing its history of active participation in finding solutions. It was agreed that future meetings would include action items for board involvement, be scheduled as needed, and have quarterly reports on activities. Mr. Simpson supported this, noting that board vetting helps streamline council decision-making.

ITEM 5: Future Agenda Items

Next meeting will consist of an action item that will address the spay and neuter voucher program.

Item 6: Set the Schedule for the Next Advisory Board Meeting: February 26, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 pm.

ATTEST:

Dr. Bethany Schilling, Acting Chair

Victoria Jaramillo Medley, AMW Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Jaramillo Medley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "V".