

## Alachua County Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Minutes

August 9th, 2023

### **Members Present**

Brandi Ormerod  
Meredith Montgomery  
Chelsea Bower  
Perry Koon  
Stacy Hudak

### **Members Absent**

Amy Tate  
Melissa Moomaw

### **Staff Present**

Julie Johnson  
Sarah Gilley  
Faye Gould  
Chelsea Meyer  
Skye Barkley

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:02pm

### **Approval of the Agenda and Meeting Minutes**

Motion could not be made to approve the agenda and minutes from previous meeting as quorum was not met. Final Agenda and minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

### **Public Comments**

Floor was opened for public comment at 1:03pm. The following questions were raised:

- ACAR Volunteer Chris Deutsch wanted to bring attention to dogs getting time outside of kennels, stated she knew heat was a factor but wanted to ensure enrichment distribution was not a substitute for dogs getting one-on-one time with staff and dogs with behavioral problems get more time out. Requested ACAR investigates other shelters and organizations also in hot climates to see what they do in times of extreme heat. Also raised the question why ACAR had so many puppies currently in the shelter compared to previous years when they went to rescue quickly.
- ACAR Volunteer Melissa Wokasch wanted to call the committee's attention to the heat in the kennels, specifically the heat on the back row. She requested that ACAR looks into misting devices to keep the shelter cooler, that shades go up in the back yards as only yards 1-3 have adequate shades, requested later volunteer hours in the summer months to allow for cooler evening shifts. Mentioned kennels on the edges have water pooling in from the covers during rain. Also mentioned having an easier way to document volunteer medical concerns for the animals to ensure they are being followed up on.

- Public citizen Dottie Dreyer asked about anonymous reporting, specifically if public citizens could gain access to know who in the community called in to report, stated she wanted to thank citizens for reporting cruelty. County Attorney Diana Johnson responded that public citizens can make public record requests.
- Public citizen Kathleen Rupert asked if there was a minimum number of trips/reports that need to be made for cruelty before ACAR takes action with cases. Also asked about the funds for the new shelter building, Julie Johnson responded that the money is still in our budget for use, and asked what the policy was for reporting found animals. Chair Brandi Ormerod responded that there is more information on the ACAR website with that information.

### **Introduction of New Staff and Committee Members**

- 1:15pm – Introduction of new committee member, LEO Perry Koon. Perry introduced himself as a sheriff's deputy with the Alachua County Sheriff's Office and handles cases related to livestock.
- Introduction of new Shelter Supervisor, Chelsea Meyer. Chelsea has a background working in non-profit rescue and veterinary practices.
- Introduction of new Foster Coordinator, Skye Barkley. Skye was a previous Kennel Technician at ACAR promoted to the Foster Coordinator role.
- A new Animal Behavior and Rescue Coordinator begins on August 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Onboarded 4 new Kennel Technicians, an Investigator, and an Officer was promoted to Investigator. Just completed interviews for a new veterinarian from the University of Florida to begin at the shelter.

### **Old Business**

- 1:25pm – Jessica Hurov, the Tourism Development Manager for Alachua County, stated the board requested that the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee look into the activities for the Agriculture and Equestrian Center to ensure practices are acceptable before implementing. The mounted shooting events were already removed. Quorum was not met at this time, determined the activities would be reviewed again during a meeting with quorum.
- Director Announcements: Heat Concerns - Director Julie Johnson made several announcements, began by addressing heat concerns. Stated heat was preventing regular playgroups, but staff is still distributing enrichment items, specifically frozen items, and taking dogs out when they can closely monitor for signs of heat distress, and there are plans in place to alleviate heat in kennels. New fans have been ordered, 2 new fans are on the back row with more coming. At the recent budget meeting, more items were approved – pet-friendly astroturf in the yards, shades to be erected over ever play yards, and splash pads. ACAR will look into misters and where they can be placed to minimize slip accidents. The new shades will be marine shades that will be more breathable to allow air in and out and improve air flow. Addressed a dog that had

recently passed at the shelter – a full necropsy was completed with no definitive results, but high anxiety levels and heat could have attributed to the dog's demise. Chelsea Bower also responded that the Humane Society of North Central Florida has paused play groups due to the heat. Brandi Ormerod suggested signs with information on signs of heat distress, Chelsea Bower suggested retraining staff and constant reminders about heat concerns.

- Director Announcements: Intakes and Outcomes – Julie Johnson addressed public comment about increased number of puppies in-house. Stated rescue partners are also full or have cases of parvovirus and unable to accept larger puppies at this time, but pleas are being sent. Reported intake numbers are up from this time last year, primarily due to cases being completed and animals confiscated in a timelier manner. Brandi Ormerod asked if animals being fostered by finders is factored into the intake number, Julie responded yes. Brandi Ormerod and Chelsea Bower requested that the numbers be broken down further for the next meeting if possible. Julie Johnson also shared that adoption percentage is up, rescue transfer percentage was about the same. Chelsea Bower stated HSNCFI would be willing to collaborate with ACAR on microchip and/or sterilization initiatives. Meredith Montgomery (entered at 1:43pm) and Stacy Hudak requested more social media posts regarding lost/found animals, microchips to assist with return-to-owner initiatives. Sarah Gilley confirmed ACAR is looking into a return-to-owner volunteer task force. Julie Johnson stated calls to dispatch have almost doubled since last year, and certain cases require animals are housed longer. Perry Koon asked if humane euthanasia is being considered when ACAR is over-capacity, Julie Johnson stated multiple members of leadership meet often to discuss outcomes, and humane euthanasia may be considered if it is in the best interest of the animal and public safety. Sarah Gilley stated average length-of-stay has decreased to 30 days for dogs, and initiatives to push foster homes and rescue partnerships helps ACAR identify behavior cases faster to discuss potential outcomes at these meetings. Sarah Gilley stated feedback from volunteers and their reporting has also been extremely beneficial. Chelsea Bower responded about volunteers, addressed the earlier public comment about medical reporting stating that HSNCFI has a medical clipboard for volunteers. ACAR will look into this as an option for volunteers.

### **Agriculture and Equestrian Center**

- Meredith Montgomery entered at 1:43pm, quorum was now met to allow for voting of activities at the Agriculture and Equestrian Center. Meredith Montgomery brought articles related to several activities and had concerns regarding several activities, petting zoos, bull riding, steer roping, sorting and any activities using calves. Meredith Montgomery and Stacy Hudak mentioned several items that would help make the petting zoos less of a zoonotic risk and more comfortable for the animals in the petting

zoos, including hand wash stations, no food in the petting zoo areas, and having retreats with physical, visual, and auditory barriers for the animals to take breaks.

- Perry Koon made the motion to go through each activity individually at 2:34pm. Chelsea Bower seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.
  - Barrel Racing – all in favor
  - Breed Shows – all in favor
  - Bull and Bronc Riding – one in favor
  - Carriage Driving – four in favor
  - Cattle Sorting – one in favor
  - Clinics – all in favor
  - Colt Starting – all in favor
  - Cutting – three in favor
  - Dog Shows – all in favor
  - Dressage – all in favor
  - Drill teams – all in favor
  - Equestrian Theatrical Shows/Performance Events – all in favor
  - Hunter/Jumper – all in favor
  - Intercollegiate – all in favor
  - Livestock shows – all in favor
  - Mounted Games – all in favor
  - Removal of mounted shooting – all in favor
  - Open pleasure shows – all in favor
  - Petting zoos – four in favor. Motion made by Stacy Hudak at 2:43pm to keep petting zoo on list with stipulations, seconded by Brandi Ormerod. With stipulations, all in favor.
  - Team penning – one in favor
  - Team roping – one in favor
  - Western dressage – all in favor

### **Old Business**

- Old business continued at 2:45pm with Committee Announcements - Several terms end before next meeting. Amy Tate declined to reapply. Shannon Murphy has missed more than 50% of meetings. Melissa Moomaw has reapplied. Brandi is still considering. Next meeting may involve discussion over reappointments. Brandi also mentioned the work plan is due on October 1<sup>st</sup>. We should add the ag and equestrian center (preapproved list of activities). We established committee, ordinances, meeting dates, asked if there were any goals for coming year. Any additions can be sent to Sarah and Julie to be added in.

### **Approval of Agenda**

- Brandi Ormerod motioned to approve the agenda now that quorum was met at 2:49pm, seconded by Stacy Hudak, all in favor.

### **Approval of Minutes from 5/10**

- Stacy Hudak motioned to approve minutes from May 10<sup>th</sup> now that quorum was met at 2:52pm, seconded by Chelsea Bower, all in favor.

### **New Business**

- New Business began at 2:50pm with Julie Johnson asking the committee if they had any other suggestions for what the new shelter should have. Current plans include the following:
  - 300 dog kennels separated into pods
  - Adoption showcases in the lobby for long-term animals
  - Critter spaces for small mammals
  - Separate isolation wards for dogs and cats
  - Play yards with shades and splash pads
  - Training center and conference room
  - Food and resource pantry
  - Surgical suite for UF with recovery space
  - Surgery suite for shelter staff
  - Separate dispatch area with locker rooms and sleeping quarters for officers
  - Officer holding kennels
  - Clinic space for public animals
  - Staff spaces
  - Quiet space for euthanasia
  - Indoor interaction areas for dog adopters and volunteers
  - Intake space
  - Disaster supply staging
  - 2 catios
  - Welcoming lobby space
  - Separate intake/outcome spaces
  - 4 adoption areas for cats
  - Retail store
  - Laundry/food prep areas
  - Foster Lobby
  - Foster/volunteer spaces
  - Meredith Montgomery suggested space for dental procedures
- Summer Lovin' Adopt-a-thon – Sarah Gilley notified the committee that the annual Summer Lovin' Adopt-a-thon was being held Saturday, August 12<sup>th</sup> in collaboration with the UF Chapter of the Student Association of Shelter Veterinarians.

### **Next Meeting**

The next AWAC Meeting was set for Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm in the Community Support Services Center, Conference Room A.

**Adjournment**

Perry Koon made the motion to adjourn at 3:02pm. Seconded by Chelsea Bower, all in favor.