

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Date: May 21, 2025

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: Community Support Services, Conference Room A
218 SE 24th Street, Gainesville, FL 32641

1. [Call to Order](#)**Members Present**

Perry Koon

Chelsea Bower

Melissa Moomaw

Julie Levy

Svetlana Korotkevitch

Jacob Schaffer

Kristen Young

Staff Present

Julie Johnson

Dr. Samantha Stephenson

Sarah Gilley

The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by Perry Koon.

2. [Approval of the Agenda](#)

Perry Koon opened by stating he had additions to the Agenda. He requested adding Public Comment after approval of minutes and response to public comment at the end of the meeting. Julie Johnson requested discussion of Annual Workplan and Accomplishments be added as an agenda item. Kristen Young made a motion to approve the agenda as presented with these additions; Melissa Moomaw second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

3. [Approval of Minutes 2/12/25](#)

Melissa Moomaw made a motion to approve the February 12th, 2025 minutes as presented; Svetlana Korotkevitch second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

4. [Public Comment](#)

The floor was opened for public comment. There was no public comment.

5. [New Business](#)**5.1 [Staffing Updates](#)**

Julie Johnson opened New Business Discussion and welcomed Samantha Stephenson and County Attorney Franklin, who is assigned to Animal Resources, as well as Dr. Stephenson, the Shelter Veterinarian.

Julie Johnson reported ACAR is down to two officer vacancies as one officer was recently promoted to investigator. Julie also reported 2 Animal Care Technician positions are open and a Shelter Supervisor was hired and will begin in June. Chelsea Bower asked where the new supervisor was coming from, and Julie responded she could not say at this time as the supervisor still needed to give notice at her current shelter. Julie also reported an Administrative Coordinator position has been filled, and this person has been assisting in revamping SOPs and creating more concise language. Melissa Moomaw asked what the Administrative Coordinator position entailed, and Julie responded she is her assistant and will be assisting in managing her calendar.

5.2 Breeder Licenses and Registration



Discussion of Breeders Permits began at 1:08pm. Julie Johnson opened discussion by stating Breeder Permits have been mostly complaint driven. Julie explained ACAR receives complaints regarding people selling puppies via signs on the side of the road, but addresses rarely accompany complaints, making permits difficult to enforce. Julie wanted the AWAC members to know that permits are in place and wanted the committee's feedback on this program and how to better spread awareness and enforce permits. Kristen asked how many breeders are currently registered, and Julie responded not many, but she knows of at least one self-reporting breeder who is a commercial breeder. Svetlana Korotkevitch asked if we could follow breeders if location meetups with buyers are not at their place of residence, Julie responded no. Chelsea Bower stated people may not want to give their names if they are unable to remain anonymous when reporting breeders.

Jacob asked what we are doing about unhoused breeders. Julie responded the officers assist LEOs on cleanouts of camps, but many people will not claim ownership once the officers arrive. Jacob asked about people breeding purposefully, and Julie responded citations can be issued, but a form of identification is needed, and many owners in those situations are unable to provide identification. Perry Koon asked consequences of being in violation of the breeder ordinance, and Julie responded the consequence is a fine. Kristen Young stated this ordinance may not be enforceable. Julie responded the officers will continue to go after them with fines, but if breeders get a different dog a week later, the cycle just begins again. Jacob stated what he often sees are individuals breeding a random dog, puppies go off to unknown situations, and a puppy or multiple puppies may be held back to be used for breeding again. Kristen asked if there are other counties that have attempted breeder permits and had success. Julie Johnson asked Julie Levy if she has seen it successful in any other counties, and Julie Levy responded there are already state laws regarding breeding that breeders are not complying with. If they get cited, they just move the dog to a different owner. Julie Levy stated she has not been personally involved with breeder permit programs herself but was unaware of a shelter having success with them. Julie Levy advised checking in with ASPCA lobbyists in Tallahassee to see if they have examples and resources.

Perry Koon asked if there is a violation for each puppy, and Julie Johnson responded yes. Perry Koon suggested having someone under cover to respond to for sale puppy advertisements and having officers meet the seller at the purchase point.

6. Old Business

6.1 Shelter Data and Metrics Discussion



Shelter data discussion began at 1:23pm with Julie Levy. Julie wants everyone to understand shelter dynamics with the goal being moving towards lifesaving. Good data helps explain what shelters still need to work on. The goal is to guide shelters to work on life saving measures for animals that fall into the healthy and treatable asilomar status. The Asilomar status is an objective assessment often made by front line staff who makes their best guess. At the time of discharge there is additional information, so asilomar status may be changed. One of the issues is subjectivity of the category animals are put in when that status is assigned. The ACAR website currently shows monthly and annual reporting, and the standard of live release is dictated by the asilomar status. That number cannot be changed and is transparent. Shelter Animals Count is the new national database, and Julie Levy suggested ACAR links to that site, and Julie Johnson responded that ACAR already reports to their site. Julie Levy stated Shelter Animals Count does not propose a way to calculate a live release rate, and ACAR would have to calculate that and display it separately. Julie Levy also discussed the 90% live release rate, stating many people chase that number, but super successful shelters may have higher euthanasia rates because healthy animals are being diverted away from the shelter, so only dangerous and unhealthy animals end up needing care. Julie Johnson stated both the current statistics page and the Shelter Animals Count page can be shared. Melissa Moomaw made a motion to include the Shelter Animals Count page on the website; Chelsea Bower second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

6.3 Annual Workplan and Accomplishments

Perry Koon stated the Annual Workplan and Accomplishments needed to be approved before it is presented to the Board of County Commissioners in October. The report plan was pulled up on the screen, and Perry asked members to review the workplan. Julie Johnson stated this had been discussed in the November meeting, this was just to vote on the finalized workplan. Motion to approve the Annual Workplan and Accomplishments as presented was made by Svetlana Korotkevitch; Kristen Young second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

7. Response to Public Comment

There was no response to public comment.

6. Old Business

6.2 [Pain Protocols](#)

Discussion of Pain Protocols began at 1:40pm. Julie Johnson stated Melissa Moomaw wanted to discuss ACAR protocols surrounding pain. Melissa responded she had asked at the previous meeting and did not receive an answer, and she believes the public would also be interested in answers. Dr. Stephenson stated she was available to answer any questions regarding the protocols. Kristen Young asked who is involved in the evaluation of animals, and Dr. Stephenson responded the kennel staff and medical staff use the scales provided in the protocol. Julie Johnson stated Dr. Sheila Robertson gave a presentation to staff on how to assess pain using the Grimace Scale. Perry Koon asked the committee if they saw anything in the SOPs that could be updated or added. Chelsea Bower asked when the veterinarian is not present if the team has access to evaluate, Dr. Stephenson responded yes. The team can contact her anytime, but staff can begin administering pain medication. Melissa Moomaw asked if the staff gives medication via food or mix in, and Dr. Stephenson responded staff will typically give the medication directly but may mix in food if that is not possible. The committee did not respond with additional feedback for the protocol as written.

6.2.1 [Community Partnerships](#)

Discussion of Community Partnerships opened with Julie Johnson stating Sarah Gilley added an attachment for a PowerPoint for 2024 that shows overall impact of the work ACAR did last year. Julie Johnson said the public is claiming animals are aggressive to expedite stray intakes, but many animals are discovered to be owned by those calling in. Julie also explained intakes have been high over the holidays and with the summer months approaching. The staff has been working on events to help move animals, and there is a list of rescue partners in the PowerPoint that also helped get animals out of the shelter.

Julie Johnson stated she was asked a question of how many animals are sent to offsite emergency clinics. Julie stated that 118 animals have been sent offsite to emergency clinics over the last year, both in house and animals that have been recently adopted or placed in foster. Julie stated ACAR has partnerships with CCVS since they opened a year ago and will utilize UF when needed, though UF does not provide discounts. ACAR had also utilized Blue Pearl frequently prior to Blue Pearl's closure. CCVS is not 24 hours yet, so losing Blue Pearl was difficult, but there are future plans to go 24 hours at CCVS. Julie stated ACAR does not want animals to suffer, so they can be sent to offsite clinics when the veterinarian is not present, and Julie stated she will reach out to Operation Catnip for additional resources for sick and injured stray cats often. Julie offered the committee copies of invoices of animals that have been seen at offsite clinics. Melissa Moomaw asked what happens on days ACAR is closed. Julie Johnson responded 911 would be contacted, officers would be dispatched, officers go to scene and assess, and if the animal needs immediate care the animal will go to an emergency clinic. Julie Johnson stated she works with the UF practice manager to establish services to stabilize an animal, and an officer will pick up that animal in the morning. Kristen Young asked if foster numbers could be included on the website because she enjoyed seeing over 1,000 animals being placed in foster and the impact hurricane fosters had on the shelter population, and Julie responded yes.

6.2.2 [Veterinarian Comments](#)

At 1:54pm Julie Johnson asked Dr. Stephenson to share surgery statistics. Dr. Stephenson reported ACAR had 1,640 surgeries over the last year, 1,604 were spay/neuter, others were procedures such as amputations and enucleations. Julie Johnson stated this was accomplished primarily with one veterinarian. Melissa Moomaw asked if there is a turnaround time for RTFs, and Dr. Stephenson responded community cats typically get fixed within 1-2 days, then either an officer returns the cat to the field or the caregiver picks the cat back up. Doc said it's fewer officer pickups than people coming back to pick up. Perry Koon asked if volunteers can assist with returning cats to the field as needed, and Julie Johnson responded yes. Julie Levy stated a paper was just published about TNR programs, and this committee can identify collaborations where we can refer people calling in from rural areas wanting assistance with community cats to the appropriate resources. Kristen Young asked if 1600 animals spay/neuter is for TNR and adoptable animals. Dr. Stephenson responded yes and stated there are also many animals that are reclaimed by their owners after the owners agree to allow ACAR to fix their pets free of charge.

8. [Next Meeting](#)

The next AWAC meeting was scheduled for August 13th, 2025 at 1:00pm in same location, Conference Room A of the Community Support Services building. Julie Johnson stated the Administrative Coordinator will be taking over liaison duties once she is trained and will be in attendance at the next meeting.

9. [Adjournment](#)

Chelsea Bower made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:07pm; Svetlana Korotkevitch second; unanimous approval; motion carried.