



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY
MIKE STRAIN, DVM
COMMISSIONER



Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2019
10:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE

ROLL CALL

Members present: Deputy Commissioner Brent Robbins, DVM, Chalyn Fayard, DVM, Shelly Fontenot, DVM, Ellen Abington, and Hilton Cole, EBR Animal Control Director and Ashley Delrie.

Guests Present: Mike Strain, DVM Commissioner of Agriculture & Forestry and, Robbie Averett, LACATF Program Manager, Lilly A. Wiley, LDAF Liaison, Tyne Bankester and Todd Parker, Deputy Chief of Staff.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Commissioner Strain discussed the upcoming legislature, and updated the board on the arrests of persons responsible for the theft of water buffalo as well as their death. Dr. Strain also spoke on the topic of the uptick in cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and West Nile Virus which are transmitted via mosquitoes. Dr. Strain also commended the importance of training in the field of animal control officers as well as the importance of animal control officers as they pertain to the control of populations of feral dogs, cats, and other nuisance animals traveling into populated areas. He then talked about the importance of being available to assist those shelters in case of emergencies of any kind. Hilton Cole remarked on the positive interaction and strong backing of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry toward the LACATF. Dr. Strain also expressed concerns over feral animal packs as a danger to human population including packs of dogs, swine, and cats.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes are approved with revisions.

OLD BUSINESS

Report on shelter inspections: 88 total shelters, 62 inspections, 1 re-inspection, 28 shelters need improvement, 34 meet the requirements, 26 shelters not inspected and received 40 Emergency plans. Common concerns were public access, facility maintenance, animal inventory exceeding capacity, and personnel turnover/training.

NEW BUSINESS

Questions were made by the board concerning any governing authority bringing up or making negative issues about the shelter inspections. Robbie Averett explained that the shelters inspected were appreciative of the assistance and education provided by their visits. She also made mention that it was important to not only provide education for those municipal employees serving as the animal control officer but to give them support, resources and training to better their interaction with the public and to improve their shelter operations, overall. Procedures, checklists, vaccines, and overall health checks for animals taken in by the parishes' shelters were also discussed.

The subject of applying grants for shelters to improve quality of care, medications, microchips etc. were also discussed.. Robbie told the board that the intake PowerPoint was created to assist/educate parish shelters on the basics of safe animal intake for their shelters. There was also an idea of using quick reference cards for each shelter to insure safe and healthy care for each animal upon entry. Dr. Fayard, DVM volunteered to create a draft of the quick reference card/ poster and said she would try to complete it by the end of the year. Mrs. Abington's motion as to the guidelines, PowerPoint concerning procedures and signage were discussed.

Dr. Gary Balsamo, DVM of Louisiana Public Health, Ashley Delrie and Dr. Wendy Wolfson ,DVM edited the Animal Welfare Commission guidelines document to help make the changes addressing the necessary protocols, procedures, and basic healthcare for all animals entering the shelters

Hilton Cole shared his concerns about the amount of pit bull breeds in shelters along with the stigma surrounding the bully breeds in general. Robbie made several suggestions to better educate the public on not only rescues but of responsible pet ownership as it pertained to pit bull type breeds in general. Mrs. Abington mentioned how low a priority animal abuse is in the judicial system. Robbie explained that better ordinances as it pertained to spay and neuter, registration etc. There was an extensive conversation that followed concerning pet licensing fee increases, registration, revenue streams, animal control funding, and working with local veterinary clinics. Subjects discussed included euthanasia, gathering parish support for increases in fees, and finding a way to garner support from veterinarians.

Robbie then brought the discussion back to LACATF packets to observe the shelter map within the packet before giving the board a report of training personnel in parish facilities which was sponsored by LSU, LSART training, Code 3 with Nacho3 training, and LACA conference.

Updates, amended, and or revised statutes for animal control was discussed. The LACATF proposes an amendment to section 4 of revised statute 3:2364 in the next legislative session which allows for a statewide voluntary pet database. It is the board's request that the part of section 4 advocating for this database be removed or omitted. Motion made to recommend the removal of that section made by Ashley Delrie.

Ashley Delrie led the next revised statute discussion of RS 3:2464 dealing with euthanasia of shelter animals for the use of scientific research and or educational use. Ms. Delrie explained that the meaning behind this revision is to give transparency to the public that will inform anyone who is bringing a pet to a shelter that the shelter does donate live animals for research and euthanasia. The LACATF members recommended that the shelters be provided a copy of the new statute.

Ms. Delrie asked the question: During inspections of shelter facilities how compliant have the shelters been as it pertains to RS 3: 2472 which involves the sterilization program? Robbie Averett replied: the inspection program does not capture that data. Ms. Delrie continued the discussion about the wording as it pertains to RS 3: 2366 which involves the basic animal data statistics was discussed. Ms. Delrie recommended after discussion that the wording be changed from may to shall in order to make the submission by each shelter mandatory instead of voluntary.

Online ethics training for all board members was brought up by Robbie and it was asked that all members send a copy of their ethics training completion certificate to Robbie.

Lily mentioned to the board that Robbie had received the award for Humanitarian of the year for her tireless work and efforts throughout the state of Louisiana setting the standard for animal care as well as for her efforts to improve emergency assistance programs for shelters during times of hardship and states of emergency. The award was presented to Robbie Averett by LACCA.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded. The meeting was adjourned.