

LOUISIANA ANIMAL CONTROL ADVISORY TASKFORCE MEETING

December 18, 2020

10:00 AM

Veterans Memorial Auditorium

5825 Florida Boulevard, 1st Floor

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806

Proceedings

Oaths of Office: Brent Robbins, DVM completed.

Call to Order: Brent Robbins, DVM called the virtual/zoom meeting to order at 10:10AM

Pledge of allegiance: John Walther

Roll call: Roll call was taken by John Walther, LDAF Assistant Commissioner for Animal Health and Food Safety.

Members present: Deputy Commissioner Brent Robbins, DVM, Henry Wimbley, Ashley Delrie, Shelly Fontenot, DVM, Ellen Abington

Members absent: Chip Fitz and Chalyn Fayard, DVM

Quorum: yes

Brent Robbins is to approve the minutes of the last meeting.

Brent Robbins, DVM on behalf of the Commissioner of Agriculture wishes everyone a happy holiday and thanks everyone for their service on the task force and welcome to Henry Wimbley from the Louisiana Animal Control Association.

Public comment: None

Discussion concerning the agenda motion to use the revised agenda. Page two, eighth paragraph second sentence statute should be changed to reflect 3:2472 sterilization statute. Also, page 2 third paragraph Dr. Wolfson not Wilson. Henry Wimbley made a motion to accept the minutes with revisions. Ashley Delrie seconded. Motion passed

Old Business/ Inspection report: 2020 Report on shelter inspections, 80 total shelters, 59 inspections, 40 met the minimum requirements, 14 needed improvement, 3 were closed and 2 were under construction. 3 requests for inspections and re-inspections; Jefferson, St. Tammany, and St. Landry parish facilities. We received 27 facility emergency plans and 51 parish emergency pet plans. Most of the issues were still facilities but most of the shelters inspected were not exceeding capacity.

The biggest concerns were facility maintenance, high personnel turnover, and training.

Continuing education (CE) proposal was made to the Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine a campaign to provide CE for veterinarians to support publicly operated animal shelters. However, the board declined the proposal as they felt that the program did not meet the requirements/ criteria for CE. Robbie Averett suggested that the task force revisit or possibly

attempt to re-write the proposal. The idea of using a working group to campaign for it more and try to get the LVMA support behind the proposal for continuing education. It was suggested that the taskforce make revisions that could include vaccination, de-worming, general health exams, and or spay and neuter programs that could then be an incentive for the veterinarians to work toward their continuing education. Dr. Robbins made a motion to create a committee to revise and campaign at the Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine's next public meeting. The task force members all agreed that the committee needed to be formed.

Brent Robbins, DVM made the motion to create a committee to revisit and improve the proposal to create CE for publicly operated shelter veterinarians.

Ashley Delrie seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Delegation of authority for the purpose of handling Sexual harassment: Amy McInnis, legal counsel for the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, explained the new resolution and its obligations and delegation of authority for handling sexual harassment cases against board members. Should the board not choose to adopt the resolution, the board members will be accountable to handle any/ all charges of sexual harassment themselves.

Ashley Delrie made motion to accept/adopt the resolution.

Brent Robbins, DVM seconded the motion.

Motion to accept/adopt the resolution is passed unanimously.

Regarding the earlier proposal for continuing education, Shelley Fontenot, DVM, expressed great interest and desire to be a part of the committee, or assist in any way to further the campaign to approach the LBVM for approval to grant CE hours to veterinarians who assist publicly operated animal shelters.

Robbie Averett reports that the St Tammany animal shelter requested assistance and the task force loaned them twenty/ 10'x10'x6' exterior kennels for sheltering and to give the shelter some space during their critical point this year and then St Tammany further asked for an inspection and review of the shelter premises, with the purpose of identifying areas of operation that needed improvement. The inspection team then requested Dr. Wolfson with the Shelter Medicine group at LSU School of Veterinary Medicine to meet with management at the St Tammany animal shelter and prepared a briefing on best practices. It was then necessary to transport the same 20 kennels to New Orleans to support the 75 hotel pets and their owners who were forced from their homes due to hurricane Laura. These kennels were used by the LASPCA to support those pet owners and pets who had been displaced due to the storm. St Tammany delivered those 20 kennels to the LASPCA/ New Orleans for their needs. As of this meeting all those resources have been returned to LDAF.

Emergency management has played a critical role in assisting animal shelters during the storms. The shelters in conjunction with the Louisiana State Animal Response Team (LSART) were then able to help pet owners get whatever resources they need i.e., food, vaccines, bedding, medical attention, etc., to ensure that the animal is healthy. There were approximately 400 pets housed with their owners in hotels with the assistance of multiple shelters and LSART during that time. There were daily conference calls with animal control agencies, and nonprofit groups to identify gaps and to better serve the needs of those affected.

LDAF participated in POD distribution of pet foods at the National Guard POD site. During this time, the shelters that supported the hotel pets and their sister shelters are LASPCA, Jefferson Parish Animal Control, Tangipahoa Animal Control, Lafayette Animal Control were able to support Calcasieu Parish Animal Control with a feed in place program, requested in an iMac. They sent animal control officers and their units to Calcasieu daily to offer support and feed animals that were left behind with a feed in place program. St Charles Parish also assisted and were key in getting donations and materials sent out to the affected areas. Caddo and St Martin, CAA, EBR, Slidell Animal Control, St Tammany Animal Control, Terrebonne Animal Control, and the City of Alexandria Animal Control; all these shelters went above and beyond to help their sister shelters and the public which were so severely impacted by hurricanes and COVID-19. Along with that, the Greater Good, Hills Pet Nutrition, LSART Vet Medical Reserve Corp, HSUS, Acadian Animal Aid, Tractor Supply, Mutt Nation, ASPCA, and the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine all supported these coordinated efforts to be a seamless operation to better protect the animals that were sheltered due to the hurricanes with their owners. It should also be said that Mutt Nation and Tractor Supply donated 40,000 dollars' worth of gift cards valued at \$40.00 dollars a piece for pet owners that were sheltering at hotel with their pets. This is all the updates on this year's emergency support for shelters, pets, and pet owners.

The task force congratulated LDAF on the emergency support program's success, the remarkable partnerships made between the many animal organizations and the milestones of achievements in dealing with the emergency situations brought on by this year's hurricane season.

New Business:

The Department of Agriculture and Forestry's internal auditor, Corey Marino, was brought forward to begin his update on the performance audit concerning the shelter inspection program which was being conducted by the Louisiana Legislature Auditors Office (LLA). Performance auditing process, scope and status of the audit will all be discussed if necessary. The performance audit evaluates the efficiency, economics, and effectiveness of the state level agencies, activities, and their programs. These audits are usually seen by members of the legislature, the agencies being audited, and of course the public. These audits can last anywhere from a few months to over a year; in this case, auditors reached out to program staff on approximately August 12th, 2020 and they anticipate completing the audit by January 2021, which would make this audit approximately six (6) months. These audits involve three main phases: During the planning phase, the auditors begin with collecting and analyzing data, legal criteria, statutes, policies and procedures, regulations and compiling empirical research on the programs involved in the audit. The second phase of the audit is known as the field work phase. The auditors then begin to evaluate the information collected during the planning phase and organize their process to ensure they can answer all audit objectives of this phase. Once the auditors complete that work, they will communicate their initial findings during a field work exit conference with program staff. After the initial findings are communicated, the final phase will be the reporting phase. In the reporting phase the auditors will compile all work they have done into a public audit report; if there are any audit findings, the auditors can then request a management response to those findings and recommendations that are made. This audit report will take in 3 fiscal years between 2018 and 2020, with the two audit objectives being: to evaluate the sufficiency of Louisiana's framework, as it pertains to being capable to regulate animal welfare and control. Management has been made aware that the method of ascertaining the sufficiency will be done by comparing the overall responsibilities of Louisiana's animal health and welfare officers with those of other states. The second objective is an informational objective which, unlike the previous, may not use criteria to measure the program performance against; instead, it will provide information to the public and not make an evaluation. This portion of the audit is purely informational and may only be to inform the public on the programs, and likely will not have any audit findings associated with it. It will be to inform the public as to the duties and responsibilities of the Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task Force, including the shelter inspection program. One last thing to mention is a component of the audit is a thirty (30) question survey that was sent to public animal shelters on November 16th of 2020. The survey's purpose was to gather information primarily on three main areas of interest; current practices, local government oversight, and concerns and challenges the shelters face. Beyond

these areas, the survey asked about the shelter inspection program, budget and finance, and shelters' opinions on the expansion of state government oversight of the public shelters. This concluded the information from Corey Marino concerning the audit of the Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Taskforce from the Louisiana Legislature Auditor Office LLA.

Ashley Delrie voiced some concerns about the survey questions and how they would help to better the public shelters overall. The manager of the performance audit, Krista Baker-Hernandez, came on from the Zoom video conferencing system and reiterated that the information that Corey Marino provided is correct. She also let the task force know that this is the first time her audit team did a performance audit on this program in the state of Louisiana, and that their first objective was to provide information concerning the public shelters, state-wide shelter inspections, and investigations to the legislature and the public. Ms. Baker-Hernandez also let the task force know that the surveys that were sent out also encompassed the law enforcement agencies that assist the shelters, judicial systems that investigate animal cruelty cases and district attorneys whose job it is to prosecute those cruelty cases. The surveys are only one element or piece of the audit report, and in terms of recommendations for the task force or agency involved, the audit may also create a matter of legislative consideration: recommendations to the legislature. These matters of legislative consideration can assist legislators to study a particular area of the report and to further educate themselves on the growing needs of the agency listed in the report. These auditors will work with the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and will meet and discuss the findings with the staff involved. Ms. Delrie expressed her approval of the audit and its scope

Public Comment: John Walther for the sake of the minutes, please identify yourselves to clarify the board meeting minutes. There is no public comment.

Schedule next meeting: Tentatively, November 10th

Meeting is adjourned. Ashley Delrie made motion to adjourn, Dr Robbins seconded.

Meeting of the Louisiana Animal Control Advisory Task force is adjourned.