

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ANIMAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 23rd DAY OF OCTOBER, 2023

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Work Session, on the above date, at 2:00 p.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. Hopkins, presiding, and the following members in attendance, constituting a quorum: Commissioners Blake, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, and Young (5). ABSENT: Commissioners Burrell, and Jones (2).

Mr. Young gave the invocation and Mr. Chavez gave the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Louiza Chan introduced herself as one of the Regional Strategists of the South Central Team of the Best Friends Society and that she has special medical background and training. Dr. Chan worked with several shelters across Louisiana with resources and programming help with lifesaving. Dr. Chan explained that Caddo Parish Animal Services is one of the many partners of Best Friends Society in Louisiana and they've been partners since 2017. Dr. Chan said that she has worked with them for the past 2.5 years. Dr. Chan explained that they have been collaborating and holding each other's hand to make lifesaving work happen. Dr. Chan explained in Summer 2023 Best Friends Society gave Caddo Parish a grant to do lifesaving for many medical cases at the shelter that previously were not able to be saved. The program structure had a shelter medicine team from Best Friends in Shreveport to help Caddo Parish Animal Services (CPAS) start the program. While the Best Friends team was there, they compiled a report assessing Animal Services' areas of improvement and a checklist that Best Friends would like to work with Animal Services Director Travis Clark and Assistant Director Kelvin Samuel about. Mr. Atkins clarified that the Best Friends Society team went to Animal Services to do an assessment and sought out areas of improvement, and as a result of that work the Best Friends Society provided a recommendation to the leadership team at the Animal Services Department. Mr. Atkins said that he hadn't heard any details on the Best Friends Society's assessment of CPAS yet, and wanted to know what Dr. Chan's opinions on the way that the CPAS runs. Dr. Chan responded that Caddo Parish is a great partner of Best Friends and that everything is going on track. There were areas of improvement and that the Best Friends Society comes in as a national organization to help with making those improvements. Mr. Atkins clarified that Director Clark and Assistant Director Samuel are doing a fine job and that there were areas of improvement and that the report points out those areas of improvement. Dr. Chan explained that the report points out the next steps for improvement. Dr. Chan said that Best Friends is a national organization that has a goal to get all shelters in the country to no kill by 2025. Dr. Chan explained that no kill is defined as saving 90% of animals that could be saved and that every shelter has a benchmark of life saving number at that goal. The assessment report would move the Caddo Parish Animal Services department towards that goal.

Dr. Donna Bishop introduced herself as a contract Shelter Veterinarian at Caddo Parish Animal Services since 2010 and has been a veterinarian since 1990. Dr. Bishop explained that CPAS always had contract veterinarians and that she works about 30-40 hours per week. Dr. Bishop explained that she had seen the transformation of Animal Services in a positive direction and that she was thankful for Best Friends for giving guidance on different protocols and things that could be done better. Dr. Bishop said that they had been plagued with understaffing and that there is large turnover in animal care assistance due to the hard work of the job. Dr. Bishop explained that shelter medicine is considered a herd health approach to veterinarian medicine which requires difficult decisions by management to keep the entire population healthy. Dr. Bishop explained that there had been a positive direction with the animal care assistants, who are more intimate with animals compared to her position. Dr. Bishop explained that she appreciates the team work to keep the animal population healthy. Dr. Bishop explained that CPAS does not turn down any surrendered animals or animals from the street and that the animals would get checked in without obvious signs of a disease. Dr. Bishop said that CPAS had been hit hard this year with parvo and feline panleukopenia, which are difficult diseases and deadly to younger animals and unvaccinated animals. Dr. Bishop explained that animals would come in, eat and be fine, then the next morning they're dead. Dr. Bishop said that the parvo has been deadly but there are treatment protocols in place. Dr. Bishop said she had a meeting scheduled with Dr. Becca on November 2nd to nail down some protocols. Dr. Bishop said she was leaving this year and that animal services jobs are for young people. Dr. Bishop explained that it is time for her to step back, but the challenge is the field is competitive to hire young veterinarians and the Parish would have to pay a new grad more than what she is earning. Dr. Bishop explained that she spoke to young veterinarians and that vet school is expensive and the young vets were saddled with student loan debt. Dr. Bishop explained that vets could work directly with the Parish for 10 years people could earn student loan forgiveness, but only if they are a direct employee of the Parish and not if they are contract like she is. Dr. Bishop said that she would talk to Dr. Becca with other veterinarians and diagnosing diseases. Dr. Bishop explained that rabies vaccines require a veterinarian to do it.

NEW BUSINESS

The Clerk advised the Committee that a motion is needed to move into the executive session that requires 2/3s vote of the Committee members present. The Clerk advised that staff will discontinue public access and recording of the meeting, and that any persons not invited to remain for the executive session will need to leave.

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Epperson, *to move into executive session with all persons present to remain except for Dr. Chin and Dr. Bishop.* Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES Commissioners Blake, Chavez, Epperson, Hopkins, and Young (5). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Burrell, and Jones (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

The Committee moved into executive session.

Upon the completion of the Executive Session, the committee meeting was reconvened at 2:27 and the meeting was adjourned at 2:28.



Linda J. Montgomery
Office Specialist I