

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 4TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2025

The Caddo Parish Animal Services Committee met in legal session on the above date at 12:00 noon in the Government Plaza Chambers, with the following members were present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Blake, Cothran, Kracman, and J. Young (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Burrell, Gage-Watts, and Jones (3).

Mr. Cothran gave the invocation, and Mrs. Blake led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no Agenda Additions, so the Committee moved onto Citizens Comments.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

The Chair allowed Ms. Tanya Parker come and give the following comment after New Business was conducted:

My name's Tanya Parker, I'm President of Paws 4 Life. We are locally here. We have been an organization since 2015, 2016 was our nonprofit status. I don't usually come to Caddo Parish meetings, but I wanted to speak about the seriousness of the situations that we have here, but that is not what's being discussed here today. So, I really want to talk about your veterinarian resolution. I'm a retired nursing professor of 40 years and had a legal nurse consulting practice that I reviewed nursing malpractice cases. I retired in 2012 from the nursing school. I was going to have a wonderful life and just retire and so decided then to, was asked to come into Caddo Parish shelter. I don't know how much time I have because I could talk for days, but I'm going to keep going. So, we have been across, our team has saved since January 1st of 2016, 12000 animals. We have saved them from this area, from all over Louisiana, east Texas, We have directors in different areas. We are all volunteers. We are funded by donations and no one gets paid. I'm going to talk to you a little bit about the veterinarian association and the veterinarians. I go to, I've probably been to over 150 animal control facilities and private facilities in the last, whatever since 2016. We have the largest no-kill in the world that we work with. In 2023, we transported 52 transports, 1 a week. There's no excuse for any animal that can be adopted to not get out of this shelter. With a 3.5 million budget, okay. So, there is veterinarians available. You can have veterinarians to come, but I'm gonna be honest with you. Veterinarians are not gonna come to Caddo Parish shelter. I don't care how much you give them. I don't care what you do. They're not gonna come. Because the situation at the shelter is not conducive to a professional veterinarian to come in. So, they're not gonna come. I have had veterinarians tell me, even in the community, that they will not work with Caddo Parish animal shelter. They've tried, they will not work. I have asked them, please do some spay/neuters for us on a, you know, on a grant, we've been able to do that. Your team of this shelter can be writing grants, and so forth to do these spay/neuters. Bissell is one of your partners. They go across the country, and they do come with their team. They gave St. Landry Parish \$1 million to spay/neuter their animals out of that shelter, and I've been to that shelter. I've done 5 hurricanes. I do hoarding cases, I just went to a hoarding case yesterday, pulled 10 puppies out. I am under the houses. You can see, I'm a community nurse, so I appreciate that you're saying, let's do these resolutions, and let's let the people know, but the people are afraid of animal control. They're afraid of the government. They're afraid when I go in, I act as if I'm a nurse, okay, and say, "Hey, I'm here to help you, what can we do? Yes, you are hoarding animals, but that's not what I'm here for I'm here to get these animals out and how can I help you and bring you a bag of food?" That's what we're missing. Okay. That's what's missing here. You know, I understand that we have a lot of animals, we have a lot of problems, but it starts at the shelter. It starts at the shelter. Policies, procedures, meeting people, getting out to the community. We can have veterinarians come to these areas. That's what we're working on right now, as Paws 4 Life, is having a veterinarian come to Commissioner Cothran to your area, to our area in South Highlands. I'm in South Highlands and Highlands, okay. We still have problems and people think, "Oh, you're in South Highlands, you have problems?" Yeah, we do, we have them, it's not as much, but I'm not in that area. I am in all the other areas, okay. Commissioner Jones's area. Okay. And so, what I'm saying is that you can address all your problems because shelters across the country had the same problems. They're being addressed and you have to have solutions and you have to have a team and a community to come out to help. So, when there are things that are not working at the shelter, on the shelter level, okay, then no one's coming. Okay, I was in this shelter, Caddo Parish. Kelvin was hired from 2016 to 2017, every day, okay, every day, volunteering with Chuck Wilson, every day. I developed a program, I developed everything you needed for a community agency to help this underserved. I am passionate about that, okay. We did it. We saved 2800 animals in that year and 8 months. We set up even a grooming area. We did so much. We had money coming in from the community, but it doesn't take that much money. Okay, I send out dogs every month, sometimes twice a month, and all I have to do is pay \$400 for gas. So, I would like to just leave that with you. And I'll be glad to speak to any of you, I would love to speak with you. I don't typically come to these meetings because, you know, we left Caddo Parish, because we felt that this was not, we couldn't make any changes. Thank you.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discuss and make recommendations regarding a resolution urging and requesting the American Vet Association, Louisiana Veterinary Association and other industry controllers to explore and implement innovative solutions to the address the shortage of veterinarians working in shelter medicine, public health, spay/neuter, registered vet techs, vet techs and other support fields related to Animal Services in the public sector.*

Mr. J. Young said that spay/neuter is the most human way to get control of the pet population. The issue is, there is not a full-time veterinarian at Animal Services. We could spay/neuter a lot more animals if we had somebody on staff who was allowed to spay or neuter animals. The Veterinarian Association and the Louisiana Veterinarian Association does not allow for people with some veterinarian experience short of a doctorate to perform spay/neuter operations in Louisiana. The lack of veterinarians limits the ability to expand spay/neuter efforts, leading to pet overpopulation and increased euthanasia rates. Mr. J. Young proposed the possibility of a resolution to encourage veterinary associations to consider allowing veterinarians technicians to perform spay/neuter surgeries.

Mr. Cothran suggested assembling veterinarians to discuss potential solutions, including monetary incentives for veterinarian education. Mr. J. Young asked that the Clerk of the Commission to invite a few veterinarians to attend the next committee meeting.

Director of Animal Services, Mr. Travis Clark, mentioned that Colorado State University offers a two year curriculum on this type of program. It is the Veterinarian Professional Associate. Mr. J. Young suggested adding this type of curriculum to Louisiana's curriculum.

Parish Administrator, Mrs. Erica Bryant, said that the Parish of Caddo does offer tuition assistance.

Mr. Cothran suggested having some local professors to come to the table. Mrs. Bryant said that the veterinarian school is in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Cothran, *that the discussion regarding a resolution urging and requesting the American Vet Association, Louisiana Veterinary Association and other industry controllers to explore and implement innovative solutions to the address the shortage of veterinarians working in shelter medicine, public health, spay/neuter, registered vet techs, vet techs and other support fields related to Animal Services in the public sector be added to the next scheduled meeting.* Motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Burrell, Gage-Watts, and Jones being absent (3).

- *Discuss Public Awareness, community education and awareness of laws related to animals and responsible pet ownership and identify low cost, high impact means of improving public awareness and compliance with these laws.*

Mr. Thomas proposed signage in communities to inform residents about animal-related laws and emergency contact information. Some suggestions include QR codes linking to a list of rules, excerpts from Animal Services codes, and increased signage directing people to Animal Services.

Mr. Cothran suggested having literature to distribute during National Night Out. He also suggested talking about the rules and regulations on the local TV channels.

There were also discussions addressing chronic animal dumping and improving the reporting process for animal violations. Mr. Clark mentioned that there is a place on the website to make reports. He also suggested having cameras installed at known dumping sites, along with the signage.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, Mr. Cothran, *to have Administration follow up and provide information regarding signage to have available at the next committee meeting.* Motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Burrell, Gage-Watts, and Jones being absent (3).

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:53 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant to the Commission Clerk