

City of Rock Springs)
County of Sweetwater)
State of Wyoming)

City Council met in special session on March 6, 2019. Mayor Timothy A. Kaumo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present included Councilors Glennise Wendorf, David Halter, Keaton West, Tim Savage, and Jeannie Demas. Councilors Shalata, Zotti and Tate were absent from the meeting. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Mayor Kaumo clarified that the goals of every person in the room are to care for the animals in the City of Rock Springs, and that it would be virtually impossible for the Animal Control office to become a no-kill facility. It is hoped that this meeting will provide a productive discussion among animal-related groups.

NEW BUSINESS

Rock Springs Animal Control Presentation

Mike Kiggins, Animal Control Supervisor addressed the Governing Body and introduced Officer Kim Pickrell. Mr. Kiggins started his tenure in 2012 by eliminating the Ordinance regarding the time limit for animals to stay in the shelter, which was 10 days. In 2012, impounded a total of 1,190 animals. 561 were return-to-owners and 618 were adopted out, and 641 were euthanized. The spay/neuter program was started with the help of the Jackson Adoption Center. In 2018, 1,161 animals were impounded, 374 were return-to-owners, 515 were adopted out, and 136 were euthanized. The Salt Lake No-Kill Coalition is a rate of euthanasia that is 10% or less, so Rock Springs Animal Control is close. Volunteers help clean up the shelter and there are 2 current employees, one that works in the shelter and one that is on patrol or on calls. Many different rescue organizations are used to house animals in the shelter. Foster and Volunteer programs were introduced in 2018. City Ordinance 3-544 also passed in 2018, banned the purchase of mill puppies in the City.

Red Desert Humane Society Presentation

Stephen Shea, President of the Red Desert Humane Society, addressed the Governing Body and stated that packs of wild dogs used to run around Rock Springs and were hunted by citizens. The condition of the animals in Rock Springs is largely due to Mike Kiggins' efforts. The Red Desert Humane Society is run by the Board, and members were introduced. Much promotion is conducted for spay/neuter programs, and the hope is to have enough homes for all animals in the shelter. A new cat room has been created. The shelter has been trying to work with the Animal Control staff to adopt out animals. Mayor Kaumo stated that adoption efforts are with the Animal Control shelter, and that many people in attendance have been in his office stating that Red Desert Humane Society and Animal Control no longer work well together on adoptions. President Shea stated that there have been issues and he doesn't wish to go into detail at this time. The Shelter Manager was stated to be Renee Householder, who was not present.

Companion Animal Rescue Presentation

Clarification was provided regarding the Mayor's Companion Animal Committee. Dorothy Savage addressed the Governing Body and stated that Mayor Demshar formed this committee to promote responsible pet ownership and to find solutions to the animal over-population problem. The committee has promoted vaccination and spay/neuter programs throughout the City and were able to get pet waste bag dispensers put on the green belts through city. The committee has also hosted public forums. Mayor Kaumo asked for clarification that the Companion Animal Committee is working with both Animal Control and the Red Desert Humane Society, which Mrs. Savage confirmed.

Teresa Shively, President of Second Chance to Dance Dachshund Rescue, which also helps Chihuahua breeds. Have operated in Sweetwater County for 4 years, and the Rescue has helped almost 300 companion animals and are a foster home based rescue, providing vaccinations and spay/neuter for each animal. Monthly adoption events are held with Petco, and recently, with Murdoch's also. Maintain Petunia's Pet Food Pantry to help low-income folks feed their pets and have donated food to the food bank. Second Chance to Dance Rescue's goal is to keep animals out of Animal Control. Some small grants have been written by the group. Mayor Kaumo asked where they are located, Ms. Shively clarified that they are located in the Farson-Eden area. Councilor West asked where funding comes from, and Ms. Shively confirmed that it comes from private funding.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Goals

Mayor Kaumo stated that all of these groups have the same goals, which are the best interests of animals, so why have several people in this room come to complain about animal care. Frustrating to see these entities not working together to get things done.

Obstacles

Mayor Kaumo asked what is keeping this group from working with one another. Rock Springs Animal Control discussed its biggest obstacles as being space and weather. The Red Desert Humane Society also added that space and location are issues also. Mayor Kaumo asked what can be done better, stating that communication is one thing. Another issue, stated by Rock Springs Animal Control, is the citizens treating animals as if they are disposable. Mayor Kaumo asked about groups themselves and what can be done. Councilor Savage asked for a show of hands for multiple questions, and added that it's important to figure out where the gaps can be filled in. He also discussed important things to be promoted and participated in, such as foster care. Mr. Kiggins discussed how difficult euthanasia is and that gas chambers are still legal, with the least amount of gas to be used for humane purposes. The Red Desert Humane Society stated that their main obstacle is that there are many different cases for each animal, that policies and procedures are constantly being reviewed and changed to keep up. The public is also an issue, and the need to educate the public is present. The possibility of using the 6th cent tax to build a new facility out by the jail and utilize inmates to provide service and interaction with the animals was discussed. Janice Knagen stated that feral cats are a huge problem in the City and that a program should be developed. Discussion took place regarding feral cats and possible funding. Angela Thatcher stated that she has a four-year degree in animal sciences, and stated that trapping and releasing for feral cats would be beneficial, and suggested funding a program like this. Collaboration is a problem as well with fundraising and programs, along with education to citizens regarding pet ownership. Cheri Sains asked whether fostering would be an exemption from the pet allowance of 4, and Councilor Savage stated that additional animals are allowed on a temporary basis for up to 30 days. Discussion took place once again, regarding gas chambers. It was stated that spreading the word regarding the Animal Control shelter not killing animals right away needs to take place.

Funding: Where does the money go?

Discussion ensued regarding procedures by the Animal Control for the selection of organizations for services. Mayor Kaumo asked Mrs. Savage where the funding goes for the Companion Animal Committee's fundraisers for spay/neuter programs. Mrs. Savage confirmed that the funds do go towards filling in the gap where citizens pay for some of the cost, and the funds from the fundraisers pay for the rest of the cost of the spay/neuter.

Transparency: Meetings/Minutes/Accountability

Mayor Kaumo suggested that the Companion Animal Committee take minutes since they are a City committee. Councilor Wendorf asked who is reviewing policies for the Red Desert Humane Society, and discussion ensued regarding who is reviewing and making decisions on policies.

Consensus Plan Forward

It was discussed that having monthly meetings including all organizations would be beneficial to discuss possible funding mechanisms and bring recommendations to the Governing Body for consideration.

Action Items: Who, What, When

Mayor Kaumo stated that the Governing Body will discuss Ordinances that may be needed, such as TNR and as budget planning take place, possible funding issues will be addressed. This entire group needs to fix internal problems and communicate against one another. All groups have monthly meetings, and he would like to see, at least, a quarterly meeting that includes all groups together to find out what the animals' needs are, what needs to be done, and improve communication. Councilor Savage could attend and report back to the Governing Body regarding what was discussed.

Follow-Up Progress Meeting

Mayor Kaumo stated that the suggested quarterly meeting will serve as the follow-up progress meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

By: _____
Council President

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor