

**SPECIAL MEETING  
LOCKHART CITY COUNCIL**

**AUGUST 5, 2021**

**6:30 P.M.**

**CLARK LIBRARY ANNEX-COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 217 SOUTH MAIN STREET, 3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR,  
LOCKHART, TEXAS**

**Council present:**

Mayor Pro-Tem Angie Gonzales-Sanchez  
Councilmember Kara McGregor  
Councilmember Brad Westmoreland

Mayor Lew White  
Councilmember Derrick David Bryant  
Councilmember Jeffrey Michelson

**Council absent:**

Councilmember Juan Mendoza

**Staff present:**

Steven Lewis, City Manager  
Victoria Maranan, Public Information Officer  
Ernest Pedraza, Police Chief

Connie Constancio, City Secretary  
Sean Kelley, Public Works Director  
Jesse Bell, Police Captain

**Citizens/Visitors Addressing the Council:** John Mays of Animal Control & Care Academy; and  
Citizens, James Tiemann, Suzy Falgout and Leslie Banks.

**ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER.**

Mayor Lew White called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**ITEM 2-A. PRESENTATION BY ANIMAL CONTROL AND CARE ACADEMY OF THE  
LOCKHART ANIMAL SERVICES PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT.**

John Mays of Animal Control & Care Academy provided detailed information about the Lockhart Animal Services Program Evaluation Report.

Mr. Mays provided details and there was discussion regarding the following topics:

**The Importance of Staff and Volunteers**

The employees of Lockhart Animal Services are committed to providing quality Animal Control/Care services to the citizens and animals they serve. The majority of the staff's labor hours each day is focused on animal care/cleaning related duties. Without the support from the shelter's volunteers and the rescue community, the current Animal Services' staff - and budget - would be stressed. These individuals and groups offer additional financial/product resources to support the agency's vaccination protocols and the medical needs of impounded animals.

**Animal Shelter Hours – Shelter Operations**

It is suggested that shelter hours have a later start time (such as 11:00 am) and a later close time (such as 6:00 pm). The later opening time would allow the shelter to be in a "presentable" condition prior to opening (the Animal Shelter Attendants could begin work at 7:00 am). On Saturday, the shelter could open at 12:00 pm and close at 4:00 pm. The shelter could remain closed to the public on Sundays and Mondays.

**Legal Animal Impound Periods**

The impound periods for animals should begin at the exact time when the animal is impounded. The recommendation for the stray hold period is 3 business days; for “owned” animals, the recommendation is 5 business days. A business day should be defined as a day that the shelter is open to the public, per established and advertised visiting hours. In addition, the hold period for Caldwell County animals impounded at the facility should mirror the City’s legal hold period.

**Community Cat Management**

In order to protect feral, stray and owned cats, local governments should require the vaccination and licensing of all cats in their community. The law should also require that all owned cats be identified with a traceable license, microchip, or tattoo so as to identify them from feral cats. In an effort to address the cat overpopulation issue, the City of Lockhart and Caldwell County should partner and collaborate with local organizations and veterinarians in order to manage cats in the community.

**Animal Limitations**

Jurisdictions enact animal limitation ordinances as a means of curbing pet overpopulation and nuisance complaints and to prevent the proliferation of so-called animal hoarders. To work well, animal limitation laws should have a grandfather clause as well as allow for ownership of a greater number of animals. Caretakers of feral cat colonies or animal rescue organizations could be exempt from the animal limits requirement. An example, such as limiting a household to own four animals.

**Breed Restrictions**

Based upon the numbers of animals impounded annually, the City of Lockhart and Caldwell County should consider restrictions on the breeding of dogs and cats.

**Reassigning Animal Services**

The City should consider reassigning the administration of Animal Services to a department that may be a more “natural fit” and possesses some knowledge of public safety and health issues, such as the Police Department or the City Manager’s office. Of course, the transfer of such responsibilities should include additional administrative support (such as a Police Department Sergeant or an Assistant City Manager), and animal control-specific training for those involved in overseeing these responsibilities.

**Policies and Procedures**

The agency should review and revise its current policy/procedure manual as soon as possible. The manual should be inclusive of every work area within the agency to allow employees to become familiar with all areas of the operation. This book should then be distributed to all personnel, and employees should be required to “sign off” upon receiving the manual. Employee safety issues should be addressed within each procedure.

**Develop a Long-Range Plan**

Animal Services should develop a long-range plan (strategic planning), to include agency goals, objectives and action plans, formally identifying agency strengths and weaknesses. A formal evaluation program should be created to measure success of methods and activities implemented to achieve agency goals. Planning should hinge on future facility upgrades and increased service delivery.

### **Veterinary Care**

Animal Services should secure some level of veterinary care through a contractual relationship to oversee the agency's sanitation and animal care responsibilities, and to make behavioral recommendations for long-term shelter stays. In these instances, the contract veterinarian and/or a veterinary technician offers on-site services (such as health examinations, administering treatments), with a set work schedule. In addition, after-hours care should be a requirement of the contract, allowing Animal Services and the Police Department to transport injured/ill animals directly to the contract veterinarian for examination (and thus limit the need for "wait" time for an animal to obtain treatment). Contracts should set pricing limits such as daily fees being less than after hour fees and to set cost limits for services and drugs.

### **Safety Related Issues**

A continuing safety program should be developed for all employees. Areas that should be included are animal behavior and handling, officer safety, lifting techniques, self-defense, conflict resolution and zoonotic diseases. Unreported safety-related incidents involving any staff member or volunteer is a serious concern. Such reporting should be mandated. If any safety-related incident is not reported, the staff member or volunteer involved should be disciplined or terminated.

### **Response to Calls for Service**

Response to calls for service by the Animal Control Officer (ACO) is largely dictated by shelter-related responsibilities. Utilizing the Animal Control Officer for shelter-related duties promotes delays in field service delivery and limits proactive enforcement. The agency should release the ACO from these assignments. The ACO should not be utilized as a shelter worker unless serious staffing deficiencies exist.

### **Communications**

Animal Services should consider establishing an alternative dispatch scenario, such as utilizing Police dispatch, to improve service delivery to citizens and release shelter personnel from this responsibility.

### **The Need to be Proactive**

Animal Services needs to increase its role and visibility within the community. The agency must cultivate and improve media relations by providing information relating to the positive aspects of the organization. The agency should take a more aggressive approach to public relations and "sell" the organization to the community on a continuing basis to increase support among taxpayers and improve its level of funding.

### **Cat Population**

There was discussion regarding the cat population in the Lockhart. Mr. Mays suggested that the city address the cat issue because there are too many cats in the community.

### **Condition of the Current Animal Shelter Facility**

Mr. Mays stated that the current facility is adequate yet he recommends that the city consider building a new facility to accommodate future growth.

### **Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) Program**

Discussion regarding the TNR program. Consider consulting with surrounding organizations about how to implement a TNR program that includes animals in the County.

Mayor White requested the following citizens to address the Council:

James Tiemann, 406 Concho, encouraged the Council to seek options to help cats in the community.

Suzy Falgout, 710 S. Commerce, commended the Council for moving forward with the evaluation of the Animal Shelter. She stated that she has formed a 501C3 non-profit organization that has a team that can come to Lockhart six times a year to provide low cost spay/neuter services. She expressed concern about how cash donations are used towards the Animal Shelter. She commended the shelter staff for their dedication.

Leslie Banks, 525 S. Guadalupe, President of Lockhart Cause for Paws, thanked the Council for moving forward with the evaluation of the Animal Shelter and she offered assistance with improvements. She encouraged the Council to consider implementing the TNR program and offering spay/neuter services at the Animal Shelter.

Mayor White read several questions that were submitted from the public about the Lockhart Animal Shelter (LAS):

How can the LAS uphold the Mission statement in regard to protecting stray, injured, abused and unwanted animals? Mr. Mays replied that the LAS is dedicated to helping animals. He suggested that the Lockhart Police Department handle all complaints about animal abuse and stated that the Mission Statement could be revised if necessary.

How would a Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) program be implemented? Mr. Mays suggested that the staff seek information from surrounding organizations that utilize a TNR program and that the community and staff get together with Council to come up with a final TNR program.

How are donations made to the LAS used? Mr. Mays replied that he did not know how those funds were being used. He believes that staff mentioned that those funds are used towards improvements at the LAS.

Mr. Mays suggested that Lockhart begin implementing programs that will help the LAS be a safer place for animals and that will accommodate future growth.

Mayor White thanked staff, volunteers, and volunteer groups for their dedication to animals and the Lockhart Animal Shelter.

**ITEM 3. ADJOURNMENT.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Sanchez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Westmoreland seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

PASSED and APPROVED this the 17<sup>th</sup> day of August 2021.

**CITY OF LOCKHART**

  
Lew White, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Connie Constancio, TRMC, City Secretary

