

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 6303  
Charlotte Meade, New Preston, CT  
Meade Canine Rescue

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to share some of my observations from my rescue visits to municipal animal shelters throughout the state of CT.

Because of their very high (60%!) euthanasia rate and disturbing conditions, I focused on the Waterbury, CT Pound, where I was able to document many cases of animal abuse and neglect, which were presented to the municipality last year. Just some of the examples:

- On September 29, 2010, a resident of Waterbury, Mike Fine, entered the foyer of the Waterbury Municipal Pound with a cardboard box. He told Animal Control Officer Pat Dionne that the dog had been in a vacant apartment in a building he managed for the last week and there was no food or water evident in the apartment. ACO Dionne asked him for a \$50 surrender fee, and when Mr. Fine said he did not have the money, Pat Dionne told him he would not accept the dog and he should take it back to the vacant apartment. He never even looked inside the box to determine the condition of the dog. I happened to be at the Pound at the time, opened the box, and found a very emaciated and sick Yorkie (see pictures). I immediately took the dog to a vet, and nursed him back to health over the next few weeks, until it was placed by me in a loving home in the City of Waterbury. Michael Fine was so incensed by the callous disregard for the welfare of the dog evident by ACO Dionne that he wrote the attached letter to the Waterbury Police Department and Human Resources Department.
- On August 24, 2010, a dog impounded at the Waterbury Municipal Pound was brought out for me by ACO Mark Ring. The dog was in such matted condition that it could barely stand, although it had been left in that condition by the ACOs for 7 days. The condition was so poor that they were unable to determine sex or breed, making it impossible to advertise the animal properly if a concerned owner was trying to find their dog. The dog was immediately transferred by me to Prospect Vet Hospital, and they prepared the attached report.
- On many visits to the Waterbury Pound, I have seen dogs in terrible shape, left untended and untouched by the Animal Control Officers and receiving no vet care, suffering while waiting out their seven days for the inevitable decision by the ACOs to euthanize them.

The public is entitled to expect humane treatment of animals that unfortunately find themselves at municipal pounds throughout the state of CT. This law is long overdue, and will bring the treatment of animals at the municipal shelters out of the dark ages, which, sadly, is the situation at many municipal pounds.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my statement.



October 10, 2010

To Waterbury Deputy Police Chief Fred Spagnola and William Covell:

My name is Mike Fine and I am property manager in Waterbury, Ct. On September 29, 2010, I found a dog left in one of my apartments, by tenants who just got evicted. The dog was left there for approximately a week without any food or water. In short the dog was left to die.

After calling the Waterbury pound I was told there would be a \$50.00 fee if they were to come and pick up the dog for the property. Being that I did not have the money, I was told that I could come and bring the dog down to the pound for no charge.

Upon entering the pound with the dog in a box wrapped in towels, Pat Dionne who works in the pound approached me and before even asking about what was in the box that I was bringing in, he wanted to know about the \$50.00 to drop a dead dog off. I tried to tell him that the dog was still alive and needed help, but he was not concerned in the slightest. I told him I did not have the money and he was not interested and was not willing to take the dog without the money. After not being able to get anywhere with Pat, I asked him if he wanted me to bring the dog back to the apartment where I found and leave it there for him to go deal with and he threatened to have me arrested for animal cruelty.

As a property manager I have dealt with Pat on a few occasions and his primary concerns was always about money and never about the animals. Near one of my other properties I managed, there was a neighborhood dog with no owner that used to come by one of my properties. The dog was a young pitbull, with signs of abuse and neglect. The dog would circle around the property while barking or growling at my tenants and their kids. Since the dog had no owner, I called the pound. It took Pat over 2 weeks to show up to the property. Upon arrival at the property, Pat demanded \$50.00 for the dog and wanted me to sign papers in case an owner showed up. He also made numerous threats, that if I did not pay him the money to get rid of the dog and that if the dog were to bite someone I would be liable and he also made threats of me going to jail.

After seeing what goes on by the Waterbury pound and how it is run, I could assure you that many people who have dealt with them in the past will not do so in the future. If it was someone else in my shoes, they would have simply just kept the dog in the box and dumped the box with the dog in it, on the side of the road or in a supermarket parking lot. When being faced with threats of jail, being sued and getting charged to try and do a good deed, many people would just rather not deal with it and leave the animal to die out of fear.

In closing, I wanted to state that I am a pet owner myself and it hurts me to see that the workers at the Waterbury pound have just as little compassion as my tenants did who left the dog in my apartment without food or water to die.

Sincerely,

Mike Fine, 917-584-1787

August 26, 2010

To Whom it May Concern:

I examined "Matt", a 2 year old male Lhasa Apso mix on August 24, 2010. On presentation, Matt was bright and alert. Physical exam was Unremarkable.

However, coat condition was extremely poor and compromised. Heave, thick mats covered the entire body, wrapping tightly around his legs and covering his eyes.

Grooming was done under general anesthesia and took over an hour to perform. At times, mats were so tight that surgical blades were needed to remove the mats. Luckily, the skin on his body and circulation to his legs were not compromised.

If there are any questions, please call me at the above phone number.

Sincerely,

Marie Eagan, DVM

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