

Task Force on the Humane Treatment of Animal in Regional and Municipal Shelters Meeting Minutes  
May 6, 2015

Members Present:

Michael Freda

Dianne Collette

Mark Bailey

Paula Poplawski

Sgt. Paula Keller

Members Absent:

Cynthia Theran

Dr. Kimberly MacDonald

Others in Attendance:

Nancy Rice

Meeting Facilitator: Michael Freda

The planning meeting of the Task Force on the Humane Treatment of Animals in Regional and Municipal Shelters was called to order at 1:40 PM, in the conference room of the New Britain Police Department, 10 Chestnut St. New Britain, CT by Michael Freda.

*Opening Remarks:*

Mr. Freda asked for opening remarks. There was a general consensus that it was a good idea to get together today to work and discuss our future.

*Review of SB351:*

Sgt. Keller stated that SB 309 is the core stick of SB 351.

Mr. Bailey agreed and brought up the survey and his frustration with it.

Sgt Keller stated that the ACO's view is that it is an attack to the shelters and there needs to be more of an explanation.

Ms Poplawski agreed with the frustration.

Ms. Collette stated that even though it is a ways off that maybe we should wait until the MACO conference and do the introduction about the survey there then send out the letter and survey.

There was discussion on whether the survey was necessary and its purpose.

Mr. Bailey stated that the survey will help with national funding which could be significant but we need to know how large the kennels each are how many animals they get in and what resources they have.

There was discussion on whether the Task Force needs a mission statement and guiding principles and if we are trying to solve problems or to increase live release rates.

There was discussion about how ACO's have personnel shortages, money constraints, and too many dogs coming in.

Ms. Poplawski stated that if we abide by SB 309, live release rates should increase and that SB309 is an outline for what the task force should be working on.

Sgt Keller stated that in order to inspire live release rates it comes down to staffing. As brought up before there are the old school ACO's and the new school ACO's.

Ms. Poplawski was interested in the fact that an advisory board system was being used for euthanasia.

Mr. Bailey stated that we recommend enacting state law to change laws. Now you can euthanize if you want to, you don't have to. It should be changed to read no healthy, treatable dog is to be euthanized for lack of space.

Mr. Freda stated that this brings us to # 3 on the Agenda

*A review of where we are as a task Force and where we are going:*

We can look at existing laws, draft something's with more substance by working with Cynthia Theran from the justice department, maybe the National donors will even help. We could cut some of the existing laws and come up with suggested new law.

Mr. Bailey stated that the legislators need to be on board also, that they are getting uncomfortable and feel we are acting as an advisory committee.

- 1.) To change the law allowing euthanasia 7 days after advertisement whether the dog is healthy or treatable or not.
- 2.) Breeder's permit- Sgt. Keller stated Waterbury, Stamford and New Haven are interested in ordinance discussion and that this is a great beginning to making this a statute.

Mr. Bailey stated that it needs to be recognized that backyard breeding is a form of abuse.

3.) Spay/Neuter Voucher system- Mr. Bailey stated that the city of New Haven is 100% compliant and has been for some time. The ACO's use 2 vets in the area.

Sgt. Keller stated that some people want to use their own vet.

Mr. Bailey stated that the ACO's just say no, it has to be one of the two that they use.

Ms. Poplawski stated because of overbreeding I feel it is irresponsible to let an animal go from the pound unspayed or unneutered.

Sgt. Keller recommended that the state allow all ACO's to use the vouchers.

Ms. Collette asked why they can't. There was an unknown answer but all agreed that the ACO's should be able to use the vouchers.

Sgt. Keller spoke of the chaos in the kennels with unspayed females and unneutered males.

Mr. Freda asked for help from the committee to crystallize these three topics while he works with the legislature to allow the task force to continue its work.

Sgt. Keller agreed to work with the breeding permits, Mr. Bailey agreed to work on the laws and Ms. Poplawski agreed to work on the voucher system.

Mr. Bailey stated that the state is not going to give money towards the ACO budgets and this will help the National Organizations give funds, possibly millions as they have done in other states.

Sgt. Keller suggested another change would be to kennel licenses, that perhaps the municipal ACO do an inspection prior to the approval.

There was discussion that if we could make these changes the ACO'S then would see that we are here to help . We agreed we had been in advisory mode.

Sgt. Keller had another suggestion of mandatory grammar school education, perhaps 4-5th grades. Some topics being pet ownership, the responsibility of owning a pet, the time and cost of owning a pet, vet visits, training, etc. Sgt. Keller feels we have lost this generation.

Mr. Bailey stated that they have K 9 Council in the High School where the kids partner up with other kids and to google K 9 Council.

Sgt. Keller suggested to use this as a second tier initiative.

Mr. Freda asked Ms. Collette to recap what we have on the three items, all agreed. Mr. Freda asked the three people to report at the June meeting whether they are finished or not.

Mr. Freda asked Ms. Poplawski about the volunteer committee. She will report at the June meeting but will mention now that the meetings are going well and she is working with some great people. She will bring a packet in June but we should keep moving on and focus on legislative things.

*Plan of Action for the June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting:*

Mr. Freda stated he is trying to make the June meeting for June 5. We should know about some of the bills by then. He will redo the action plan to include the three topics.

Mr. Bailey stated that in all due respect we are all acting in cooperation regarding affecting changes involving state laws and hopes that we all are aware of this.

Discussion held that we all felt much more focused after today meeting.

*Public Comment:*

Nancy Rice- originally from Fairfield County now in Norwalk. Feeling bad for Bridgeport dogs not being able to be walked, and is thrilled we are going to inspire ACO's to re-home more dogs.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM by Michael Freda the next general meeting will be announced soon.