

July 16, 2012

Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners  
75 Langley drive  
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Dear Chairman Nash, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Beaudreau, and Commissioner Heard:

On behalf of all Committee Members I want to thank you for passing the Resolution creating the Gwinnett County Animal Task Force (ATF). We appreciate and thank the Board of Commissioners for your concerns for the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit and the Animal Advisory Council.

We welcomed this opportunity to provide and deliver short and long term strategies which will maximize the organizational effectiveness of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit and the Animal Advisory Council; promote the quality of life for animals; propose approaches to reduce the rate of euthanized healthy or treatable animals; and promote responsible pet ownership.

Many hours of research and dedicated work went into our Final Report. The ATF Committee requests you implement our long and short term strategies and recommendations. We welcome an opportunity to interact with the Board of Commissioners to answer questions and discuss our Final Report.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joel Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Joel C. Taylor, Jr.  
Animal Task Force Chairman

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# **ANIMAL WELFARE EXECUTIVE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Gwinnett County Animal Task Force  
July 6, 2012

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## INTRODUCTION

*"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged  
by the way its animals are treated."*

**Mahatma Gandhi**

The Gwinnett County Animal Welfare Task Force was appointed by the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners to recommend short and long-term strategies which maximize the organizational effectiveness of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit and the Animal Advisory Council; promote the quality of life of the animals; propose approaches to reduce the rate of euthanized healthy or treatable animals; and promote responsible pet ownership.

A prominent member of Gwinnett County Animal Advisory Council spoke at one of the general Task Force meetings and spoke about the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit (GCAWE) having a multi-million dollar state of the art facility which should be a model in operations for the entire nation as we are a county wealthy in resources both material and human. Those in attendance of the meeting appeared to be in agreement. Sadly, the Task Force found that operationally, Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center is far below the standard of other shelters in the metro area which have significantly less resources at their disposal, but make up for it with strong compassionate leadership and employees dedicated to a positive outcome for the animals they are sheltering. In fact, if what Mahatma Gandhi says is true, then Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center has set the moral progress of the citizens of Gwinnett County back to the dark ages.

Should it be considered moral when a beloved pet is not properly scanned for a microchip and the owner discovers their dog is at GCAWE, goes to reclaim him, only to find that he has been adopted? This has happened several times within the past few months alone. The attitude of GCAWE could only be considered indifferent and even condescending when they tell the heartbroken owners that it is their fault. An officer was overheard stating that the owner does not deserve to have the animal back if they do not come looking for it.

In terms of sheltering animals in need of loving homes at GCAWE, it was observed that much of the time the shelter is sitting mostly empty yet animals are euthanized daily for space. Is that moral?

The website is rarely up to date and has not been up to date for quite some time. There have been several reported instances of animals never even making it on the webpage before they were euthanized, never standing a chance to be seen by their owners or potential adopters. When this is the only form of marketing these animals receive, is this moral?

When Cathy Bruce, the owner of Canine Country Academy training facilities volunteered to start a CLASS (Canine Life and Social Skills) dog program to help dogs that needed rehabilitating to become adoptable it was a great success, something GCAWE could be proud of...that is...until Frances, a pit bull who had been in the program was returned by her adopters for resource guarding (she became protective of her toys). Ms. Bruce was told she had one week to find a placement for Frances or she would be euthanized. Cathy moved quickly and secured a placement. The Jail Dog Program was also willing to take Frances. Cathy came in to work with the CLASS dogs only to find Frances missing. Against Major Bruno's orders, Frances had been



killed. Cathy tried to find more information about the situation, but was told it was under investigation and they would get back to her. They never did, and now this wonderful program is no more as Cathy will not work with people who treat volunteers and animals this way. Is this moral?

A wonderful longtime volunteer who worked with the CLASS program recently stated he is cutting his hours back at GCAWE and other volunteers are quitting all together. When asked why, he stated increasing restrictions in interacting with the dogs due to disease control is causing him to no longer be able to truly evaluate dogs outside their kennels, and therefore, marketing the dogs to potential adopters has become nearly impossible. This man is very experienced in working with dogs and losing him as a volunteer is a major loss for the animals and citizens wishing to adopt. He also stated that volunteers are leaving because they have no direction and are limited in what they can do, so they feel they can be of no help. Is turning away free help - some of it professional, moral?

Is it moral that rescues are given 45 minutes to a couple of hours to take animals before they will be euthanized? This happened to one member of our Task Force who was contacted and given 45 minutes to find a home for a kitten or it would die. Administrators of the unofficial Facebook page were given a couple of hours to save 4 puppies. While the animals in these two examples were rescued, why did it take individuals not working for the shelter to make this happen? Why were rescues not called earlier if there was no interest in these animals or they had special medical needs that needed to be addressed? Rescues have spoken out for quite some time that this last minute notice, "come get this animal or it dies." is all too common and must change. GCAWE has gained the reputation of not being rescue friendly which only hurts the animals as rescues are more willing work with other "rescue friendly" animal control facilities.

Is it moral that pit bulls are euthanized more than any other breed at GCAWE? A volunteer favorite was a pit bull named Annabelle, who like so many others, was running out of time. Due to the relentless efforts of a couple of volunteers, a foster home was found for her. The potential foster mom took her dog to GCAWE to meet Annabelle. Unfortunately, Annabelle reacted negatively to the other dog. The woman was not pit bull savvy enough to be able to handle this situation, so she did not take Annabelle. One of our Task Force Members discussed Annabelle's plight with various ACO's explaining that Annabelle's reaction to the other dog likely happened because she was in heat. However, one of the ACO's insisted Annabelle was dog aggressive and should be euthanized. Our Task Force member had to plead to get Annabelle more time and again another foster home was found. It's a foster home with several other dogs, all of whom Annabelle gets along with great. It turned out that Annabelle was not dog aggressive and if the ACO, who is supposed to be responsible for the welfare of Annabelle and all the other animals at GCAWE had his way, Annabelle would be dead right now.

The Task Force finds no morality when a simple upper respiratory infection or a terrified cat or dog at intake means a death sentence. These animals are not on death row and GCAWE is not a prison where our adoptable, treatable animals should receive the death penalty because it is easier to move on to the next one, than to deal with each life individually. While there is notable compassion by a select few of the staff at GCAWE; the residents of Gwinnett County will not sit back and stand for indifference, intolerance and apathy observed by the Task Force in the majority of GCAWE staff.

Should it be considered moral when cats are hung by their necks using catch poles and stuck with euthanasia drugs in the peritoneal (abdominal) cavity with no sedation....some cats taking



up to 20 minutes to die? This was confirmed by one of our Task Force Members who also observed a friendly pit bull who staff had decided was aggressive, but was wagging his tail in the euthanasia room, letting the staff pet him prior to euthanasia. Our Task Force Member also witnessed the same “friendly” pit bull after he had been euthanized, placed in the middle of the floor by staff, while the next pit bull was dragged in to the euthanasia room, terrified because he could plainly see the other dog lying on the floor dead. This dog was incidentally killed due to lack of space, while GCAWE was not even remotely at capacity.

These are just some of the many examples of immoral things witnessed by Task Force members and citizens of Gwinnett County since the Task Force’s inception. The Gwinnett County Police Department has turned Animal Welfare and Enforcement into bedlam. Infighting and a general attitude of complacency due to gross mismanagement has cost the lives of far too many of our companion animals and it has to stop if we the citizens of Gwinnett have any chance of progressing with our morality. GCAWE may have a beautiful facility on the outside, but what the public fails to see are the atrocities which occur on the inside, many of which are nothing short of revolting.

## IN MEMORIAM



ID# 22258

***During the four month time period the Animal Task Force actively met, 744 cats and dogs were killed at GCAWE. These animals are not just ID # numbers on the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement website or statistics in a spreadsheet. To the Animal Task Force and the caring Gwinnett County residents, they are living, breathing, voiceless souls whose fate is in our hands. The Animal Welfare Executive Report goes far beyond data and research to look at a moral obligation for our animals: finding the best possible outcomes for all animals that come through GCAWE. Change needs to happen and it needs to happen now because these animals did not die in vain. The faces you are about to see represent a small percent of the total killed.***



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## **A NEW MISSION**

### **Old Mission Statement:**

Prevent the risk of human rabies and to provide animal related services and protection to the citizens and animals of Gwinnett County.

### **New Mission Statement:**

To promote humane treatment of animals residing in Gwinnett County through public education and enforcement of animal protection ordinances; to provide a safe haven for all animals entering the county's animal shelter and provide the best possible care and outcomes for them; to ensure public safety in matters relating to disease control and other community concerns.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Citing a very high euthanasia rate among animals brought into the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center and an increase in the number of animal related complaints to which officers respond, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners jointly established and appointed members to the Gwinnett County Animal Task Force. On average, the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit brings in around 9600 animals annually. In reports from 2009-2011, only 41% of animals left the shelter alive. Rescue groups saved 11% of animals and citizens adopted 19%. Owner reclaims accounted for 11%. Sadly, over 5,000 animals (59%) are euthanized annually.

The Task Force was charged with making recommendations to include 1) Developing an Existing Conditions Report which will review all services Gwinnett County currently provides; 2) Developing a Best Practices Report consisting of recommendations based in part on the Existing Conditions Report; 3) Developing recommendations on how to provide care to animals in the future that are currently, or which may become, the responsibility of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center; 4) Creating a public relations campaign to encourage animal rescue, adoption, spay/neuter programs, and responsible pet ownership; 5) Recommending changes in the current organizational structure and/or mission of the Gwinnett County Animal Advisory Council to strengthen the Council's effectiveness as well as increase the support the Council provides to the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit; and 6) Developing recommendations concerning the management of the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center, including potential partnerships with private organizations and entities.

### **THE TASK FORCE**

The Task Force began work in December 2011. Task Force members have toured the facility, interviewed staff, observed operations, interviewed staff of related agencies (police, courts, prosecutors, administration, rescue groups, other similar groups within the region) and collected and analyzed data from those sources. In order to achieve greater depth of research and efficiencies of time and resources, the Task Force subdivided into four subcommittees on Policy, Structure, Program and Partnerships. The full Task Force conducted nine meetings which were opened to the public, accepted comments in those meetings as well as through communications directed through an on-line survey and e-mail. A complete copy of the on-line survey results can be found on the Animal Task Force webpage on Gwinnett County's website.

The full Task Force public kick-off meeting was held December 27, 2011. Subsequent meetings were held January 3, 2012 where Gail LaBerge, Chair of the Animal Advisory Council and member of the Lawrenceville Kennel Club, was guest speaker; January 24, 2012 where Valerie Hayes, associated with the No Kill Advocacy Center was guest speaker; February 7, 2012 where Ken Coor was guest speaker on No Kill Facilities; February 28, 2012 where Rebecca Guinn, Director / Founder - Lifeline Animal Project and Major Kathy Mooneyham, Director - DeKalb County Animal Control were guest speakers; March 20, 2012 where Judge Carla Brown, Animal Advisory Council Member and Founder Canine Pet Rescue was guest speaker; March 27, 2012 where the forum was solely for public comment; April 10, 2012 where William Wise, Director of Walton County Animal Control was guest speaker; and April 24, 2012 where the Task Force subcommittees presented and discussed initial proposed recommendations. Time was allotted at each meeting for public comment.



Importantly, the Task Force researched examples from across the country of successful county animal services operations from which to draw best practices of highly successful operations. It should also be noted the subcommittees conducted numerous meetings with their own related guest speakers, and their meetings were open to the public. The minutes of the full Task Force and subcommittees were posted on the Gwinnett County web site. Regretfully it must be noted that the Task Force did not have the full cooperation and support of the Shelter Director and staff. The former Shelter Director instructed her staff not to speak with Task Force members and most of the staff were very guarded. This hindered the ability to gather some information in a timely manner as did the personnel turnover and subsequent turmoil.

The Task Force wishes to give special thanks to Senior Assistant County Attorney Theresa Cox for her diligence and critical support. She and her resources within the county were committed to the Task Force process and success.

## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

During the course of the Task Force's work it was realized that the SOP Manual is extremely outdated and in many instances not followed. The last approved revision of the SOP's was in October of 2005, before the current shelter was even built. When requesting a more current set of SOP's the Task Force was told they were in the works and after half of the assigned work time had passed a partial first draft was emailed to Task Force members. Upon initial review, it appears that the first draft of the SOP's is merely a copied and pasted version of the old 2005 SOP's and is therefore still outdated. The Task Force recommends a complete revision of the SOP Manual both to reflect the new mission statement and to incorporate best practices, particularly with respect to humane animal care. We further recommend that the new Shelter Director be responsible for the revision of the SOPs.

## **BEST PRACTICES**

Research shows that there are a number of animal services agencies across the nation which have transformed themselves, and through that transformation, have dramatically changed their yearly numbers. Travis County (Austin), Texas; Washoe County (Reno), Nevada; Tompkins County (Ithaca), New York; and Albemarle County (Charlottesville), Virginia offer irrefutable evidence that the goals outlined by the Gwinnett Animal Task Force are achievable - and in a relatively short period of time. While none of the policies, practices and operations of these and other successful agencies are exactly the same, their success can be attributed to general adherence to these qualities:

1. Most important of all is leadership, starting with the top elected and administrative officials whose direction is executed by a professional animal welfare executive experienced in and committed to lifesaving practices.
2. A strong focus on pet retention counseling, adoption screening/counseling, a positive, open relationship with a large base of local and out of state rescues.
3. Partnering with local low cost spay/neuter clinics to establish a TNR program for feral/stray cats.
4. Have an onsite volunteer coordinator maintain a large active volunteer base to handle many responsibilities including but not limited to, answering phones, running a help desk to encourage animal retention, walking animals, showing animals to potential adopters, on/off site education opportunities, on-site special event coordination and execution, eventual foster home opportunities, etc.



5. Employees should participate in mandatory training in Animal Behavior and animals should be temperament tested by a method recognized as reputable.
6. Marketing of animals available for adoption should include but not be limited to, the webpage which should be updated multiple times daily, a Facebook page updated multiple times daily, informational/educational segments should be ongoing on all county TV shows, electronic newsletters, the Gwinnett Connection in the monthly water bill, etc. Special events including but not limited to adoption and educational should take place at the shelter on an ongoing basis. Also, volunteers should participate in community fairs/events around Gwinnett to offer educational materials to the public.
7. Euthanasia of an animal should be signed off on by the three people who have had the opportunity to observe/interact with the animal and have deemed it not adoptable/savable. The three people should be the Animal Shelter Director, the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator and the Shelter Veterinarian.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Task Force looked at current operations, practices and policies of Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit as compared to those in other Georgia counties and national facilities and recommends the following:

1. First and foremost is a recommendation for the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners to change the mission and focus of Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement:

*“To promote humane treatment of animals residing in Gwinnett County through public education and enforcement of animal protection ordinances; to provide a safe haven for all animals entering the county’s animal shelter and provide the best possible care and outcomes for them; to ensure public safety in matters relating to disease control and other community concerns.”*

2. With a new mission, the Task Force recommends that the Gwinnett County Police Department continue the supervision of daily road operations of GCAWE, but the supervision and daily operations of the kennel, veterinarian, and office now fall under the direct supervision of the Gwinnett County Administrator.
3. Develop an educational program that stresses the importance of spay/neuter.
4. The Task Force recommends a comprehensive national search be conducted for an experienced Animal Shelter Director to supervise the kennel, full-time veterinarian and office of GCAWE.
5. The Task Force recommends the hiring of a full-time veterinarian to better service the animals at GCAWE as well as for budgetary cost savings.
6. The Task Force recommends that the position of Rescue Coordinator now be deemed Adoption/Rescue Coordinator and that this person’s time be totally dedicated to saving the lives of savable animals at GCAWE.
7. The Task Force recommends that the Animal Advisory Council (AAC) be restructured utilizing the bylaws provided. The AAC will act as oversight of GCAWE and will report directly to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners.



## **CONSIDERATIONS ON RESTRUCTURING**

The Structure subcommittee was tasked with identifying and making recommendations on the future structure of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit. The first draft of their recommendations to the Task Force came after only three working sessions (including one with Lt. Respass). Some felt these sessions included inadequate research and minimal observation time at the shelter which led to a premature conclusion when it was clear the topic of restructuring needed to be explored in much greater depth. The internal investigation, many hours of shadow shifts with officers, and the words of a prominent guest speaker (to the Task Force) on the importance of removing shelter operations from control of the Gwinnett Police Department prompted the Program Subcommittee to add the consideration on restructuring to its list of tasks. In conclusion, the Structure and Program Subcommittees ended up presenting conflicting recommendations. While a majority of the Task Force members sided with the Program Subcommittee recommendations, the chairman felt that both sets of recommendations should be presented to the Board of Commissioners for review.

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Joel Taylor

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Kelly Alder

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Elizabeth Burgner

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Donald Bush

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Dr. Solveig Evans

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Dr. Cathy Fish

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James Freeman

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Wanda Johnson

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Curtis Northrup

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Angela Peevy

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Jon Richards

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Tatiana Romeo

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Jane Stewart

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Dr. Wayne Wallis

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Suzanne Pruitt

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Patti Szanti



## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Animal Task Force was composed of sixteen members appointed by the Board of Commissioners to represent a broad spectrum of animal related viewpoints. This section provides a brief biography of each member.

### **Joel C. Taylor, Jr., Chairman**

Joel Taylor was appointed to the Task Force by Commissioner Beaudreau as a District 3 appointment and was appointed by the Board of Commissioners as Chairman of the Task Force. Mr. Taylor is a banking professional with over thirty-five years of financial services experience and is currently with Community and Southern Bank. He is a former Gwinnett County School Board Member and has served on numerous local boards. Mr. Taylor is also a Leadership Gwinnett alumnus and a past President of the South Gwinnett Rotary Club. He is an active member of Grayson United Methodist Church and teaches Sunday School. Mr. Taylor is a combat veteran of South Vietnam where he served as a Scout Dog Handler. He and his wife Beverly have been married for thirty-five years and have one son and two grandsons. Mr. Taylor has a BS degree from Shorter College.

### **Kelly Alder, Vice-Chair**

Kelly Alder was appointed to the Task Force by the Board of Commissioners as a citizen representative. Ms. Alder is the Vendor Compliance Analyst for Benchmark Brands/FootSmart.com, a catalog/internet retailer based in Norcross. She started in rescue as a volunteer/foster home for Winder, GA based PUPANDCATCO in 2002. After becoming a foster mom for a pit/dogo mix and 2 pit bulls (all of which she kept!), she became really involved in pit bull rescue, fighting BSL, and putting an end to dog fighting. She is a core member of Stubby's Heroes, an organization that was formed to fight proposed Breed Specific Legislation anywhere in the state of Georgia. She volunteers for several local animal rescue organizations, including Operation Second Chance Jail Dogs Program, when help is needed with events. She also speaks at schools and organizations about volunteering, basic animal care, and proper pit bull ownership.

### **Elizabeth Burgner**

Elizabeth Burgner was appointed to the Task Force by Commissioner Lasseter as a District 1 appointment. Ms. Burgner has been involved with cat and dog rescue for many years and is a co-founder of the Companion Animal Rescue League, based in Gwinnett County, which began in 2003. Having found her passion in helping homeless pets and the people who care for them, several years ago Ms. Burgner left a corporate management career to focus on spay/neuter. In 2010, Ms. Burgner co-founded Planned PETHood of Georgia, a non-profit, high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinic that is open to the public. A native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ms. Burgner has lived in or near Gwinnett since 1983. She shares her home with several rescued cats, and enjoys the beach and outdoor activities when time allows.

### **Donald Bush**

Donald Bush was appointed to the Task Force by Chairman Nash as a Chairman's appointment. Mr. Bush is self-employed as a wallpaper contractor specializing in providing services for the high wealth client in Atlanta and surrounding states. He has been a Gwinnett County resident since the mid-80s living in Suwanee, Duluth, and Lilburn. Mr. Bush has always been a pet owner, but four years ago he acquired his English Springer Spaniel for the purpose of showing in conformation. He is the owner of Revolution Springers consisting of three English Springer



Spaniels, two of which are AKC Champions. Mr. Bush is very active in The Lawrenceville Kennel Club, currently serving as a Board Member and serving on various committees as requested. He is also active with the Chattahoochee English Springer Spaniel Club of Greater Atlanta and serves on the Show Committee and assists with other functions as requested. He is dedicated to the well-being of animals and the education of pet owners.

#### **Dr. Solveig Evans**

Dr. Solveig Evans was appointed to the Task Force by Commissioner Howard as a District 2 appointment. Dr. Evans has been practicing veterinary medicine in Gwinnett County and surrounding areas for 8 years. Her primary focus is small animal medicine with a special interest in shelter medicine. She is currently the forensic veterinarian for Gwinnett County and is a consult for Fulton County. This entails the veterinary aspect in cruelty and neglect cases. She works at several area veterinary offices including the spay/neuter clinic at Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement. Dr. Evans shares her home with several dogs and cats.

#### **Dr. Cathy Fish**

Dr. Cathy Fish was appointed to the Task Force by Commissioner Heard as a District 4 appointment. Dr. Fish is currently employed at ValueVet of Lawrenceville, where she provides routine veterinary care for small animals at an affordable price. Dr. Fish has lived, worked, and played in Gwinnett County for almost 40 years. She graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Health in 1993 and received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1996. She has practiced in small animal medicine since her graduation. She worked for a few Gwinnett County animal hospitals before opening her own facility in 2002, including day practice and emergency clinics. Dr. Fish recently sold her practice, Apalachee River Animal Hospital, to allow more time to raise her two children.

#### **James Freeman**

James Freeman was appointed to the Task Force by Commissioner Heard as a District 4 appointment. Mr. Freeman has lived in Gwinnett County since 1946 and in Lawrenceville since 1969. He is retired from the United States Postal Service after 32 years of service. For the last twenty plus years, Mr. Freeman has been involved with the Gwinnett County Fair. His work with the Gwinnett County Fair has enabled him to learn about cattle, swine, sheep, and goats. Mr. Freeman has appreciated the opportunity to serve on the Gwinnett County Animal Task Force.

#### **Wanda Johnson**

Wanda Johnson was appointed to the Task Force by the Board of Commissioners as the Not-for-Profit Dog Rescue appointee. Mrs. Johnson was born and raised in Lawrenceville, Georgia. Mrs. Johnson's love and understanding for all animals began while growing up and having the responsibility of caring for her pets, from her horses to her hamsters. While attending Central Gwinnett High School, she and one of her horses named, "Dream", were the Black Knight mascot. In 1993, she started her own business, Workplace Health Services, which provides occupational health services for businesses nationwide. Mrs. Johnson devotes a lot of her time to animal rescue, mostly with German Shepherds through Canine Pet Rescue and helping save horses from being slaughtered nationwide. Her involvement in animal rescue is with a huge focus on educating people on the importance of spaying and neutering. Wanda dedicates some of her time to promoting and helping the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department Jail Dogs Program. The Jail Dogs Program "Operation Second Chance" saves dogs from death row at the Gwinnett shelter and pairs them with selected inmates with whom they live while being trained



until adopted. Mrs. Johnson and her husband, Randy, reside in Lawrenceville and consider their German Shepherds and horses their children.

### **Curtis Northrup**

Curtis Northrup was appointed to the Task Force by the Board of Commissioners as the Gwinnett Municipal Association representative. Mr. Northrup is the Mayor Pro Tem and City Councilman Post 4 for the City of Sugar Hill. After graduating from Davidson College in 1984, he took a job as a stock clerk at the local K-Mart. What started as a way to make ends meet quickly morphed into a career in retail as he rose from Assistant Manager to Store Manager, District Manager and ultimately Facilities Manager for several different companies. In addition to his elected responsibilities, Mr. Northrup lives with his wife, son and two dogs. Mr. Northrup has served as an assistant Cub Master, has been appointed to his subdivision HOA board and has volunteered at his son's school music ministry. He is also a member of the Patriot Guard Riders.

### **Angela Peevy**

Angela Peevy was appointed to the Task Force by the Board of Commissioners as an agricultural representative. Ms. Peevy was born in Gwinnett County and has resided in Gwinnett County her entire life. Ms. Peevy has been married to Kenneth Peevy for 30 years and has 5 children. She and her husband own 2 commercial Pet Resorts, one in Gwinnett County and another in Jackson County. She has been in the pet care business for 25 years. Ms. Peevy and her husband also own a working dairy farm in Gwinnett where they milk Jersey cows and Alpine dairy goats. Ms. Peevy has been involved in farming in both the beef and dairy industry from birth. She has participated in all forms of domestic rescue of dogs, cats, birds and equine for over 30 years. She has also been involved in wildlife rescue and rehab for as many years and has a working knowledge of most livestock as well as companion animals.

### **Jon Richards**

Jon Richards was appointed to the Task Force by Commissioner Beaudreau as a District 3 appointment. Mr. Richards is the president of Site ROI, Inc., an internet marketing company. He is a member of the Gwinnett Transit Advisory Board and served on both the 2030 Unified Plan Citizens Advisory Committee and the Engage Gwinnett Task Force. He is vice-chairman of the Gwinnett County Republican Party, and is a member of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce. He graduated from Leadership Gwinnett in 2011. Mr. Richards has been a resident of Gwinnett County since 1988. He lives in the Brookwood school cluster with his three cats.

### **Tatiana Romeo**

Tatiana Romeo was appointed to the Task Force by the Board of Commissioners as the Not-for-Profit Cat Rescue representative. Ms. Romeo is originally from Jacksonville, Florida and has been a Gwinnett County resident for over twenty-five years. Ms. Romeo graduated with a Bachelor of Science from Georgia State University and has spent the past fourteen years working in the non-profit sector with organizations such as the Feminist Women's Health Center and The Women's Crisis Center. Ms. Romeo is currently employed with a local Domestic Violence Shelter. Ms. Romeo has affiliations with a number of rescue groups; including Ahimsa House, the Feral Cat Program of Georgia, and the American Black and Tan Coonhound Rescue. Ms. Romeo served on the DeKalb County Juvenile Court Citizen Panel Review and is currently an active volunteer for the Gwinnett County Sexual Assault and Child Advocacy Center. Ms. Romeo's family includes three rescue cats, one of which was recently adopted from Planned PETHood of Georgia and is a one-eyed cat named Sparrow.



### **Jane Stewart**

Jane Stewart was appointed by Commissioner Lasseter as a District 1 appointment. Mrs. Stewart is currently the Executive Director of the Georgia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The Georgia SPCA is a 501c3 non-profit animal rescue that is located in Suwanee, Georgia. Mrs. Stewart has been employed by the Georgia SPCA since 2008 and has been the director since June of 2010. She is a native of South Carolina. She graduated from Clemson University in 1986 with a degree in Tourism Management. After spending eight years working in the airline industry, Mrs. Stewart took some time off to raise her two children, before returning to the work force. She has been married to Tim Stewart for 23 years, and they have a 17-year-old son, and a 12-year-old daughter. Mrs. Stewart's work with the Georgia SPCA has given her much insight into the issues that face animals in the State of Georgia. She has been a resident of Gwinnett County since 1997. She has actively pursued reducing the number of healthy adoptable animals euthanized at animal control facilities throughout Georgia. Her work with the Georgia SPCA includes promoting humane education, supporting spay/neuter programs, and promoting the adoption of homeless animals in our state.

### **Dr. Wayne Wallis**

Dr. Wayne Wallis was appointed by Chairman Nash as a Chairman's appointment. Dr. Wallis is a native of Gwinnett County and was born and raised on a small family farm just outside Lawrenceville. Dr. Wallis graduated from South Gwinnett High School in 1973. At the age of 13, he began working for Dr. P.J. Wall, a local veterinarian and founder of Gwinnett Animal Clinic. He worked for Dr. Wall throughout high school and part of college. He attended Middle Georgia College, majoring in pre-veterinary medicine. He then attended the University of Georgia where he received both a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Food Science and Technology before attending the University of Georgia, College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Wallis graduated with a doctorate in veterinary medicine in 1983 and returned to Lawrenceville where he again worked alongside Dr. Wall. Dr. Wallis purchased the Gwinnett Animal Clinic from Dr. Wall in 1993, and continues to enjoy practicing veterinary medicine and surgery. Over the years, Dr. Wallis has been a member of the Gwinnett County Animal Advisory Committee, and he is a member of the Gwinnett Veterinary Medical Association, the Georgia Veterinary Medical Association, and the American Veterinary Medical Association.



## **GWINNETT COUNTY - ANIMAL TASK FORCE OVERVIEW**

### **1.0 Purpose**

Like many local governments over the past few years, Gwinnett County has experienced a high euthanasia rate among cats and dogs taken into the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center and an increase in the number of complaints to which officers respond. Over the past two years, the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit has worked diligently to reduce the number of animals euthanized and has been successful in reducing the number of animals euthanized. The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit also responded to more than 25,000 complaints in 2010 alone.

The Board of Commissioners recognizes the difficult mission placed upon the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit to reduce euthanasia rates, provide outstanding animal services to the citizens, and balance animal welfare and human safety during difficult economic times. The Board also recognizes the dedication and hard work of the officers and employees of the Unit in carrying out this mission. In order to provide support for the efforts and the work of the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit, Gwinnett County has instituted a process to identify short and long-term strategies that can be implemented in difficult economic times that will increase adoption rates, improve animal welfare and protect human safety.

Strategies will include programs which promote good behavior from pet owners; evaluation of the structure and policies of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit; promotion of collaboration between local agencies, non-profit organizations and citizens; and strengthening current enforcement tools and practices.

### **2.0 Objective**

The Gwinnett Animal Services Task Force is created as part of an effort designed to develop and implement ideas and strategies which will promote animal welfare and promote responsible pet owner practices. Objectives of the Task Force include:

- Developing an Existing Conditions Report which will review all services Gwinnett County currently provides or promotes that address the care of animals as well as safety in human and animal interactions. This should include a review of Gwinnett County versus comparable peer agencies in the areas of operations, administrative activities, animal care, adoption rates, the investigation rates of animal neglect or cruelty, and the investigation and response to aggressive or biting animals;
- Developing a Best Practices Report consisting of recommendations based, in part, on the Existing Conditions Report. Recommendations will discuss organizational structure and service offerings that promote lifesaving programs including adoptions, fees, spay/neuter services, pet-retention, and responsible pet ownership;
- Developing recommendations on how to provide care to animals in the future that are currently, or which may become, the responsibility of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center. Recommendations may explore opportunities for efficiencies, which include, but are not limited to, partnerships, programs, recommended policies or other methods as identified in the Best Practices Report;
- Creating a public relations campaign to encourage animal rescue, adoption, spay/neuter programs, and responsible pet ownership;



- Recommending changes in current code and policies used to promote preservation of life, humane treatment of animals, responsible pet ownership, and human safety. During this process, issues determined to be long-term or outside the scope of this Task Force will be identified for further study; and
- Recommending changes in the current organizational structure and/or mission of the Gwinnett County Animal Advisory Council, if any, to strengthen the Council's effectiveness as well as increase the support the Council provides to the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit.
- Developing recommendations concerning the management of the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center, including potential partnerships with private organizations or entities.

It is anticipated that during this approximately four-month period Task Force members will develop recommendations concerning modifications to the Gwinnett County Code of Ordinances and policies concerning animals, modifications to the organizational structure and activities for the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit, changes to current operating procedures, modifications to the organizational structure and activities of the Gwinnett County Animal Advisory Council, and recommendations for relationships determined to have an immediate impact on animal issues in Gwinnett County.

## **2.1 ATF Work Plan**

In order to accomplish the intended goals within the specified timeframe, it is critical that the Animal Task Force have a clear process to monitor progress and manage activities as well as inclusive of the appropriate audiences throughout Gwinnett County. Based on these objectives, the work plan is broken into the following areas:

- Outreach Activities
- Task Force Membership and Structure
- Project Timeline

## **2.2 Outreach Activities**

Successful outreach requires allowing individuals, elected officials, and other stakeholders to help identify challenges, prioritize needs, and assist in development of solutions. Therefore, it is critical to engage these groups in the discussion early, before the assessment of the current challenges is completed and before solutions are proposed. The following activities will be implemented to address these groups:

**ATF Web Page:** A web page will be housed on the Gwinnett County Website. The purpose of this page is to provide the general public the following information throughout the study:

- An opportunity to participate by filling out a survey on the needs of the community relative to animals (See Animal Task Force webpage on the Gwinnett County website for Survey Results);
- Provide event information to the general public, including timeline, public meeting notices and other presentations directed toward the public; and
- Provide documentation developed through the efforts of this Task Force, including study reports, best practices and meeting minutes.



**Elected Official Questionnaire:** A short survey will be emailed to elected figures in the County that are responsible for administering programs involving companion animals. This questionnaire will be similar to the survey found on the website.

### **Public Meetings**

All meetings of the Gwinnett County Animal Task Force will be open to the public. Two public meetings will be scheduled to receive input at key milestones in the process. These meetings are:

- **Kick-Off Meeting.** The purpose of this meeting is to obtain information from a wide sample of Gwinnett County to better understand community and stakeholder issues; refine guiding principles; solicit and inform the public of the purpose of this process; and identify any additional key resources to include in this study.
- **Preliminary Findings Meeting.** This meeting will occur near the end of the study. The purpose is to review preliminary results, provide best practices and preliminary recommendations and next steps.

### **2.3 Task Force Structure**

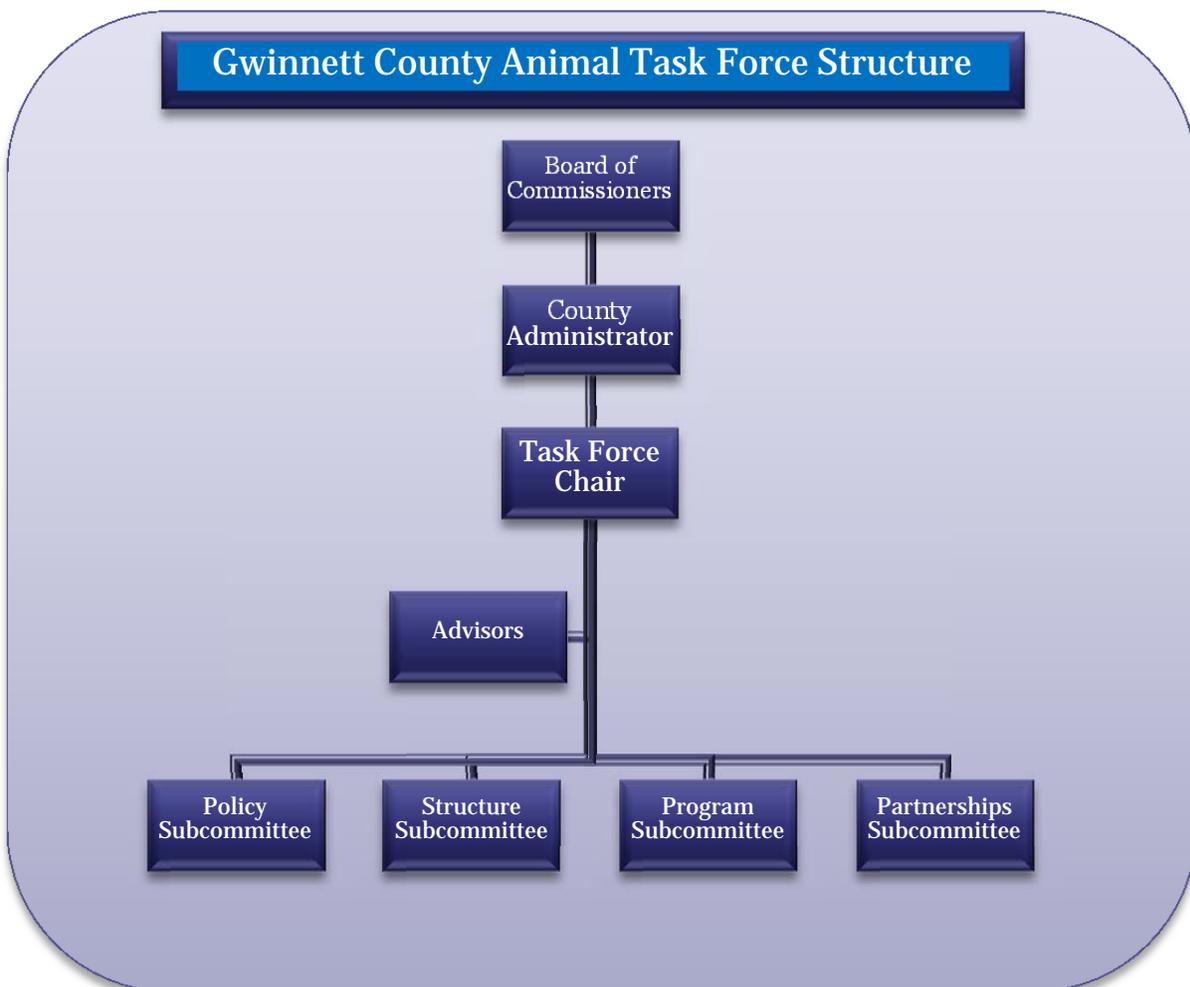
This Task Force is designed to have a diverse group of organizations, agencies and citizens represented so that it may collectively identify and implement strategies and policies tailored to the needs of Gwinnett County. The Task Force will be made up of 17 members appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The Board shall appoint 3 members who represent Not-for-Profit Rescue Groups (1 representative each from cat, dog, and large animal rescue), 1 member who is a veterinarian, 1 member engaged in agricultural activities, 1 member engaged in an animal-related business, and 1 member representing the Gwinnett Municipal Association. The remaining 10 members shall be private citizens with each Commissioner having two appointments. Task Force members shall not be individuals serving on the Gwinnett County Animal Advisory Council.

The ATF will utilize subcommittees and advisors to operate efficiently and effectively. Research and the development of recommendations will be conducted through subcommittees and presented to the entire Task Force for consideration. The Task Force will present its final written recommendations to the County Administrator and the Board of Commissioners. Each member of the Task Force will serve on at least one committee. The following provides a description of how the ATF will be structured and function:

- The **Chair**, appointed by the Board of Commissioners, will be responsible for the overall direction and work progress of the Task Force which includes serving as a member of each committee; ensuring use of quality assurance/quality control practices and procedures; assignment of ATF members to subcommittees and committees; facilitating the use of advisors; and providing updates to the County Administrator as necessary.
- A group of **Advisors** will serve as support to the Animal Task Force. The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit Manager or her designee will facilitate the meetings and work of the Task Force. Advisors may be staff, individuals, committees, or institutions that bring important knowledge or expertise and will assist the Task Force in the successful development and/or implementation of this study's findings. Members of the current Animal Advisory Council may serve, at their pleasure and in the discretion of the Task Force, as advisors.



- The **Policy Subcommittee** will make recommendations on how Gwinnett County should modify current code and policies used to preserve and enhance the quality of life of animals.
- The **Structure Committee** will be tasked with identifying and making recommendations on the future structure of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit and developing recommendations for the priorities and structure of the Gwinnett County Animal Advisory Council.
- The **Program Subcommittee** will address how to modify current County policy and practices to better promote good health and well-being for animals that have been received by the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center; facilitate adoption; encourage visitors to the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center; encourage and increase volunteers at the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center, and review and make recommendations for modifications to the fees charged for animal services provided by Gwinnett County.
- The **Partnerships Subcommittee** will identify and create strategies which promote key intra/inter-governmental relationships to facilitate effectiveness and efficiency and determine how to best connect with key agencies and organizations in order to promote the health and well-being of companion animals.





## **2.4 Project Timeline**

This Task Force is to meet for approximately four months.

## **3.0 Deliverables**

The Task Force is expected to provide the following documentation:

### **3.1 Monthly Status Reports**

Details of Task Force efforts will be provided to the County Administrator to include Task Force activities to date, technical support needs, attendance, and next steps.

### **3.2 Identified Partnership Opportunities**

A strategy will be developed to identify and cultivate potential partnerships with governments and nonprofit agencies in and around Gwinnett County and beyond its jurisdictional boundaries. The purpose is to share resources, information on trends, best practices, and funding opportunities.

### **3.3 Recommendations for the Animal Advisory Council**

Issues identified by the Task Force outside of the core issues will be provided to the Animal Advisory Council. In addition, recommendations will be made for the following topics:

- Animal Advisory Council governance structure, if any;
- Prioritized list of needs; and
- Prioritized list of long-term issues.

### **3.4 Final Report**

The Final Report will be used as a map to implement short and long-term strategies which maximize the organizational effectiveness of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit and the Animal Advisory Council; promote the quality of life for animals; propose approaches to reduce the rate of euthanized healthy or treatable animals; and promote responsible pet ownership. The following items will be included in this document:

1. Executive Summary
2. Review of Existing Conditions
3. Best Practices Review
4. Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit Structure Recommendations
5. Animal Advisory Council Structure Recommendations
6. Marketing Strategy
7. Prioritized Short-Term Work Plan
8. Prioritized Long-Term Work Plan
9. Compiled Monthly Status Reports

Implementation requirements, time frame, and estimated costs will be provided for each issue identified.



# **POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **OVERVIEW**

The Gwinnett County Animal Task Force Policy Subcommittee was tasked with making recommendations as to how Gwinnett County should modify current code and policies used to preserve and enhance the quality of life of animals. We met a total of six times to discuss our ideas and meet with guests to obtain their views on matters of interest to the committee. The committee was made up of two people active with area rescues, one representative of the local AKC and one elected official. We welcomed Gail LaBerge, of the Georgia Canine Coalition and Chairman of Animal Advisory Council, Major Bruno, of the Gwinnett County Police Department, staff and volunteers of the Animal Welfare Center and also various members of the community who all provided valuable input and insight.

Our first objective was to compare the current code of Gwinnett County with that of surrounding Counties and others across the country. We looked at DeKalb, Fulton, Cobb, Boulder CO. and Mecklinburg County NC. We also considered input from citizens as to the most pressing problems facing Gwinnett. Based on this information we generated the recommendations that follow.

The next area we concerned ourselves with was the standard operating procedures at Animal Welfare and Enforcement. This was somewhat of a moving target as staff is currently re-writing them on their own. We were provided with drafts of some areas that are being revised and considered the SOP from 2005 we were given at the outset in making our recommendations. This area is similar to both an employee handbook and a business plan, and thus, requires constant and continuous revision in order to remain relevant. Our recommendations follow the code recommendations.

### **We would recommend that the following areas receive immediate attention:**

- 1.) Address SOP regarding the hours the shelter is open for adoptions.
- 2.) Address SOP regarding training all Animal Control Officers on animal behavior.
- 3.) Adopt code recommendations for noisy animals.

Other recommendations we have made can be adopted in the near future as the board sees fit. We believe them all to be important improvements to our County and thus, do not wish to give the impression of their being casual. We wish them to be implemented, but recognize the time requirement to do so.

## **SOP RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **FINDING:**

The current hours for adoption are too restrictive to allow for easy adoption for most families.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Adjust hours for adoption to a more customer friendly schedule. Our stated goal of increasing adoptions will require that we be open when people can come to the shelter. Initially, at least



two weeknight evenings should be used. The goal would then be to open on other nights as well. These sessions would not have “full service” in that they would be for adoptions and reclaims only. Turn-ins would still have to come during regular business hours. This would allow for a more limited staff. All employees and management should be made aware that a strong emphasis on adoptions is required and in order to accomplish this they will have to adjust to a schedule that maximizes this. Management with a business success attitude can accomplish this by staggering scheduling so that more hours are not needed.

**FINDING:**

There may be instances where a Road Officer may not be trained in a specific situation and have to call in a second officer as back up. This could have the effect of reducing the number of officers on the road.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

All officers should be cross trained in all aspects of animal control. If this is accomplished, management can choose from many options to send any backup necessary. This would allow both quicker response and easier staff adjustments in the event of an emergency.

**FINDING:**

It is often difficult to tell the difference between a scared animal and a vicious or feral animal. We do not want to euthanize animals that could be adopted.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

All officers should receive training in basic animal behavior. With this training, officers would have training and tools to make difficult decisions with confidence and accuracy. There would be less incidents of both unnecessary euthanasia of scared animals and adoption of vicious or feral animals.

## **CODE CHANGE/ADDITION RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **SECTION 10-34. ADOPTION**

**FINDING:**

In an effort to return more stray animals to their owners, microchipping has proven effective. There is no requirement to do so in our code.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1.) Change the last sentence of Section 10-34(b) to read:

*“... all or part of the costs associated with neutering or spaying **and microchipping** dogs and cats.”*

- 2.) Change the first sentence of Section 10-34(c) to read:

*“Any person adopting an intact animal shall cause to have the animal spayed or neutered (sterilized) **and microchipped**...”*

This would ensure that all animals that are adopted have the best chance of being reunited with their owners should they become separated at minimal cost.



## **SECTION 10-36. HUMANE DISPOSITION**

### **FINDING:**

It is the perception of this committee that some animals are euthanized when they could be offered to rescue groups.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

In order to help achieve our stated goal of reducing euthanasia, Sec. 10-36(a) should be amended to read:

*"... It shall be the duty of the animal control department to offer the animal to a recognized animal rescue group or groups before any steps to euthanize said animal are considered. Only after the initial hold period and after any interested rescue group is given three (3) days to retrieve said animal shall euthanasia be considered."*

## **SECTION 10-51(B). DUTY OF ANIMAL OWNERS TO BE RESPONSIBLE OWNERS (AKA: NOISY ANIMALS)**

### **FINDING:**

The most vocal complaints we hear about animals, animal control and quality of life are about barking dogs. The requirement of the complainant obtaining a second sworn statement is the most often cited issue. Resolution becomes an additional burden on the harmed party. In researching other ordinances (DeKalb, Boulder CO. etc.) we find two differences from our current law.

- 1.) Other ordinances do not require a sworn statement by a second party.
- 2.) The Animal Control Officer can be a witness to validate a complaint.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Several areas of this portion of the code require revision.

- Sec. 10-51(b)1:  
The word "intruder" should be defined as: *a person or domestic animal who intrudes (especially into a building or property with criminal intent)*. As is, intruder could be argued to be wild animals, the neighbor's pet or family in their own back yard. The definition should be narrowed to include only humans and domestic animals who do not belong on the property. This section should not exempt noisy animals and their owners from sanctions for wild animals (i.e.: squirrels) that may go in to their yard. It should, however, allow for exceptions when the animals coming in the yard would normally be required to be under restraint. As is, the word "intruder" could be argued to be a wild animal and would therefore exempt the noise from the time limits of 10-51(b).
- Sec. 10-51(b)2:  
Officers enforcing this subsection should be allowed to be witnesses if they observe the behavior during their investigation.



- Sec. 10-51(b)(4):  
This section should be re-worded similar to as follows: *If the disturbance is not resolved within ten days and the animal control unit receives a second complaint from the original complainant, he or she will be asked to provide a sworn statement and either a) a sworn statement regarding the disturbance from another individual not residing at the initial complainant's address but within a reasonable distance to the disturbance or b) dated video or other evidence related to the disturbance. If the second complaint comes from another individual or if the Animal Control Officer witnesses the disturbance, the above shall not be required. Upon completion of the above requirements, the animal control unit SHALL issue a citation.*
- Sec. 10-51(b)(5):  
This section should be re-worded to include conditions required in 10-51(b)(4).
- Sec. 10-51(b)(6):  
This section should be re-worded similar to as follows: *The original complaint shall remain on file and accessible to Officers in the field for a period of one (1) year after which time the complaint shall expire and the process shall begin again. Complaints with second or more complaints shall remain on file for two (2) years. This will allow for more effective follow up on repeat violations.*
- Sec. 10-51(b)(7):  
This section should be re-worded similar to as follows: *Any person violating any provision of Sec 10-51(b) shall, upon conviction, be punished according to the following: FIRST OFFENSE: A cease and desist order shall be issued. SECOND OFFENSE: A fine not to exceed \$1000.00 AND completion of a mandatory "owner responsibility" course to be authorized by the animal control unit and administered by a qualified animal behaviorist or trainer (an example of a possible curriculum can be found in appendix A, from the Canby OR police dept.).*

## **SECTION 10-29. RESTRAINT**

### **FINDING:**

It is difficult for officers to enforce the anti-tethering portion of our code as it is written. Unless the officer is able to observe the animal that is tethered for a period of one hour, they would be unable to reliably cite the owner for the offense.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Sec. 10-29(c)(1) should be re-worded similar to as follows:

*"The owner or adult custodian of the animal must be outside with the animal and the animal must be visible to the owner, except that an animal may be tethered outdoors unattended but still under the supervision of the owner for not more than one hour in any 24 -hour period. No animal may be tethered unattended between the hours of 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM."*

This would allow the officer to establish that the animal was illegally tethered more easily.



**FINDING:**

It is generally accepted that one goal of the Animal Welfare/ Enforcement Dept. is to provide for the welfare of all animals in the community. It is also generally accepted that, except in certain circumstances, it is in the best interest of domestic animals to be spayed or neutered. Many stray animals arrive at the shelter intact. Owners are currently allowed to re-claim their animals without having to alter them, thus endangering the welfare of other animals if that re-claimed animal again becomes loose.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Sec. 10-29 should have a new subsection with the following penalties added:

*“For any dog or cat impounded and found to be intact, FIRST OFFENSE: the owner shall be assessed a fine of up to \$1000 or offered a low cost option to spay or neuter the animal. The fine will be waived if the owner opts to have the animal altered. SECOND OFFENSE: mandatory spay or neuter and up to \$1000 fine. The fine for the second offense will be assessed whether the owner re-claims the animal or not. “*

This will encourage the owner to provide the many health and behavioral benefits of spay/neuter to their pets.

**AREAS NOT CURRENTLY ADDRESSED IN OUR CODE**

**FINDING:**

Casual, uneducated breeding of animals needs to be discouraged. Many of these litters are unintended or counter to acceptable breeding practices. Owners should always be encouraged to Spay or Neuter their animals. If not, many unwanted litters either end up at the shelter or are abandoned. In addition, many times, these litters are sold in violation of Georgia Dept. of Agriculture Rules. Another consideration is that these sales rarely collect sales tax.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

SOP 1-5 states that a service currently provided by our Animal Welfare/Enforcement Department is that of “Enforcement of State and Federal laws pertaining to wildlife, animal protection and animal welfare.” All officers should be made aware of Dept. of Agriculture Rules regarding animal protection. Chapter 40-13-13-.01 defines a “Foster Home” as a place that provides temporary shelter to animals and is under written contract with a licensed shelter. “Breeding Establishment” is a place where pets are bred or compensation is received for breeding. A “Pet Dealer” is a person who sells animals (all definitions are paraphrased). All require either a license from the Dept. of Ag or an established relationship with someone who does. Anyone who has a litter and claims they are “fostering” should be able to demonstrate a relationship with a shelter. Anyone who is selling an animal, should be able to provide their “Pet Dealer” license upon request (the minimum threshold for such license is \$1 in sales). There are provisions for fines established by the Dept. of Ag, but we would recommend adopting code similar to as follows: *Any advertisement (of any kind, to include, but not limited to: newspaper, internet, sign or bulletin board posting) for an animal for sale shall include the individual's Georgia Department of Agriculture Pet Dealer license number. The penalty for violations of the above would be FIRST OFFENSE: fine of not more than \$1000; SECOND OFFENSE: fine of not more than \$5000 and/or imprisonment of not more than 90 days. This is in addition to any penalties the State may assess.* This would give our officers the enforcement opportunity to help curtail backyard breeding and other nefarious activities associated with casual breeding of animals. It would also help collect sales taxes on transactions that would not usually be forthcoming.



# **PROGRAMS SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **OVERVIEW**

The Programs Subcommittee was tasked with analyzing processes ‘inside’ the shelter, as opposed to county codes/ordinances or policies followed by officers on the road, and recommending improvements and enhancements to current procedures. We focused on specific items that we considered to be of the most urgent nature, while also recommending other, more broad programs that we believe will enhance shelter operations and improve the conditions and outcomes for animals housed at GCAWE.

The Programs Subcommittee held thirteen meetings at the Lawrenceville Police Department, including one joint meeting with the Policy Subcommittee, to work on the aforementioned areas charged by the Board of Commissioners. Program’s guest speakers included, Shaunieka Taste, Public Relations Coordinator from the Gwinnett County Communication’s Division and Cindy Weimann, Shelter Director at City of Madison Animal Control.

In order to reach out to the community and have a more expansive view of how animal control facilities in the surrounding area operate efficiently, two of our subcommittee members met with Jamie Martinez, Adoption/Rescue Coordinator with DeKalb County Animal Services. Our Task Force Members spent several hours with Ms. Martinez observing operating procedures regarding Adoption/Rescue and Volunteer Management.

With regard to obtaining valuable insight into the day-to-day operating procedures at GCAWE, the Programs subcommittee felt it paramount to spend time shadowing staff and observing existing conditions in order to develop the most comprehensive best practices recommendation. Our Programs subcommittee members participated in two ride-alongs with field Officers Brooks and Richey. Shadow shifts were also conducted with kennel personnel, including Officer Hughes and Cain. And, a telephonic interview was conducted with Sergeant Schiralli, the Gwinnett Police Volunteer Program Coordinator.

We considered four areas to be in need of immediate change, and will make our concerns in these areas known directly to Major Dan Bruno and Assistant Chief Brett West. The items that we consider to be urgent are:

1. Euthanasia criteria: Ending an animal’s life should be a last resort, a decision never to be reached until all other possible outcomes have been exhausted. To ensure that this is the case, we believe that every euthanasia request must be signed off by (a) the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator, who will certify that every effort to send the animal to rescue has been made; (b) a veterinarian, who will verify that an animal’s illness or injury is not treatable in the shelter, and (c) the shelter director, who will indicate his/her agreement that all other alternative outcomes have been exhausted and that physical space in the shelter is not available to prolong the decision.
2. Euthanasia method: Ending an animal’s life must be performed with extreme concern for the levels of stress and discomfort experienced by the animal. Current methods of restraint and injection used with cats do not meet this criterion. Specifically, we recommend that cats be sedated with IM injection prior to a lethal dose being given, either IP or IV. They should be gently restrained pre- and post-injection to avoid injury. Employees should be re-trained in humane restraint techniques.



3. The feral cat population is underserved in Gwinnett County. A local non-profit organization is forming a team of volunteers and obtaining grant funding to assist with humane alternatives for these wild creatures at no cost to the county. Calls regarding feral cats can be referred to a team coordinated by Planned PETHood that will advise citizens on alternatives to delivering cats to the shelter. Feral cats delivered to the shelter will be diverted to this team for TNR or relocation.
4. The shelter website must be kept up-to-date to facilitate adoption and rescue. We recommend cross-training so that more than one ACO can maintain this data. Pictures should be taken and posted within 24 hours of intake, and removed promptly when animals leave the building. Adequate human resources must be made available for this; volunteers can be used.

In addition to these four immediately implementable items, we present the following five desired outcomes:

1. Cost justification offered for full-time staff veterinarian.
2. Proposed job description for full-time Adoption/Rescue Coordinator.
3. Improved temperament testing of animals, along with training of employees in animal behavior and temperament testing: Employees who are knowledgeable about animals' body language are less likely to have negative encounters with the animals, which puts both the animals and the employees at risk.
4. Enhanced Volunteer program to assist with smooth shelter operations.
5. Marketing of shelter facility, services, and animals – to improve the public's perception of the value and effectiveness of this county agency and to increase the amount of public interaction and the number of animals adopted from the shelter.

While not specifically in the purview of our committee, we found other items to be of such importance that we did not want to risk them being overlooked:

1. Recommendation for changes to the Animal Advisory Council
2. Qualifications for new Shelter Director
3. Potential outsourcing of shelter services, and/or re-assignment to an agency other than Police Services

## **IMMEDIATE GOALS**

### **1. EUTHANASIA CRITERIA**

Ending an animal's life should be a last resort, a decision never to be reached until all other possible outcomes have been exhausted. To ensure that this is the case, we believe that every euthanasia request must be signed off by three individuals:

- 1) The Adoption/Rescue Coordinator, who will certify that every effort to send the animal to rescue has been made.

*It is clear to this Task Force that every effort is not currently being made, as the members of rescue organizations on the Task Force have recounted many instances of*



*not being notified at all or of being given less than 24 hours to pull an animal. Our recommendation for a full-time Adoption/Rescue Coordinator includes examples of this.*

- 2) A veterinarian, preferably a full-time staff veterinarian will certify that the animal has an illness or injury that is not treatable in the shelter.

*In particular, the decision to end a life is frequently made because the animal is sneezing or has "a runny eye." While we are aware of the need to prevent the spread of disease in a shelter environment, most Upper Respiratory Infections are easily treatable with very inexpensive antibiotics. Many rescues will accept animals with URI's if given a chance to pull them.*

- 3) The shelter director, will indicate his/her agreement that all other alternative outcomes have been exhausted and that physical space in the shelter is not available to prolong the decision.

*A visitor to the shelter has documented empty dog cages on 17 days during Feb-March-April, and found an average of 68 cages open daily (attached). Our inquiries about why dogs are put to death when space is available have met with two replies, neither of which is acceptable: (1) empty cages are used during the cleaning process to prevent the spread of disease, per shelter medicine protocols. In fact, these protocols are not universally agreed upon, and the size of Gwinnett's shelter allows for other alternatives. (2) some cages have to be left open for incoming dogs. Yet the number of empty cages on any given day exceeds the number of dogs received on an average day.* According to S.O.P. 4-2 A (7) (a)- The policy governing the selection process for euthanasia will be adhered to when the shelter population is such that cage space is not immediately available and an animal has to be removed to provide cage space for a stray. Therefore, no cages need to remain open for cleaning or in anticipation of incoming dogs until proper communication from field officers with what they have incoming is made. The Task Force recommends that dogs be walked or have supervised play in an outside pen while the kennels are being cleaned. Volunteers or officers can walk or provide play time. Field officers should communicate with the Kennel Supervisor regarding the number of animals they are bringing in, allowing them to prepare the exact amount of space needed. For animals that come in during the night shift. Those animals should be held in holding pens not on the adoption floor until space can be prepared for them on the adoption side in the morning.



Date	Pod A 100-127	Pod B 128-155	Pod C 156-183	Pod D 184-211	Pod E 212-239	Total Kennels empty*	% empty*
Feb. ?	7	5	11	17	23	63	45%
Feb. ?	9	11	22	15	did not check	57	41%
Feb. 12	10	6	14	18	18	66	47%
Feb. 15	13	6	6	17	22	64	46%
Feb. 21	4	8	13	20	22	67	48%
29-Feb	10	7	10	17	20	64	46%
7-Mar	8	9	13	16	19	65	47%
9-Mar	6	6	4	17	18	51	37%
13-Mar	3	4	13	17	21	58	42%
14-Mar	2	7	16	15	24	64	46%
17-Mar	9	8	18	19	23	77	55%
21-Mar	7	6	8	20	21	62	45%
22-Mar	5	14	17	21	25	82	59%
1-Apr	12	8	17	16	19	72	52%
7-Apr	12	8	17	21	19	77	55%
13-Apr	19	13	16	21	25	94	68%
15-Apr	17	12	15	19	25	88	63%

\* total # available in all pods: 139

The ultimate goal should be to always ensure that shelter employees view the selection process not as: “*We can end this animal’s life because ...*,” but rather “*We cannot end this animal’s life until ...*”

## 2. EUTHANASIA METHODS

An immediate, thorough review of training protocols for ACO’s is in order. We have learned that, after initial training in euthanasia techniques, which is not always done by a veterinarian, ongoing review and training are non-existent. According to a National Animal Control Association guideline statement, “Euthanasia should be performed by a minimum of two persons and only by persons who are trained in humane euthanasia procedures and can demonstrate their ability in accordance with methods put forth in training approved by NACA, HSUS, ASPCA, AVMA or an accredited educational institution.”<sup>i</sup> Shockingly, when a Task Force member witnessed euthanasia of animals during a visit to the shelter, a new ACO was allowed to perform her first-ever euthanasia with no training other than the verbal instruction given to her by another ACO.

The most urgent items that result in outright inhumane treatment involve cats.

- 1) Catch poles are not approved for use on cats. Per the Association of Shelter Veterinarians: “The use of catch poles for routine restraint of cats, including carrying or lifting, is inhumane and poses significant risk of injury to the animal; therefore they must not be used for such purposes.”<sup>ii</sup> While we were told unequivocally that catch poles



are not used on cats at the shelter, our Task Force member did witness them being used in a manner that is nothing short of inhumane. Immediate training is needed in gentle, humane restraint techniques. It IS possible to humanely and safely restrain even a feral cat.

- 2) Intra-peritoneal (IP) injections are used to euthanize cats at the shelter. While this is an approved method, most experts recommend first sedating the cat with an intra-muscular (IM) injection of a sedative such as a mixture of ketamine and xylazine. This causes the cat to lose consciousness more quickly, after which a smaller dose of euthanasia solution (sodium pentobarbital) can be administered intra-venously (IV). The IM injection has the added benefit of being easier to administer, requiring less restraint. From a cost perspective, ketamine and xylazine are very inexpensive, and the lower dose of sodium pentobarbital will justify the cost of the additional drugs.

A comment from a vet consulted on VIN (a veterinary discussion board) in reply to Dr. Bowyer's inquiry about euthanasia methods in shelters: "I provide euth services for a pretty big county animal control unit, who hired us when it became illegal to use their gas chamber. Every animal receives pre-euth sedation until unconscious (confirmed as above) then an IC injection. For cats, we use a combination of ace/xylazine/ketamine and give it with a syringe pole. We have (finally - it's been 4 years!) gotten the officers trained to not handle the feral cats, to not remove them from traps, or to put them in bottom cages to minimize their stress. Using the pole allows us to give the sedation without handling. They are unconscious within minutes and the IC injection is effective within seconds. "

These syringe poles are available for as little as \$57 online.

For both cats and dogs, the room in which their life ends is very important. Above all, "Animals should not be permitted to observe or hear the euthanasia of another animal, nor permitted to view the bodies of dead animals."<sup>1</sup>

### **3. TNR COALITION - (SEE TNR AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE BELOW)**

### **4. GCAWE DIRECTOR**

#### **A NEW WAY OF THINKING**

On average, Gwinnett County Animal Control brings in around 9600 animals annually. In reports from 2009-2011, only 41% of animals left the shelter alive. Sadly, over 5,000 animals (59%) are euthanized here yearly. The Gwinnett County Animal Welfare Task Force is recommending a nationwide search of exceptionally talented candidates from the public and private sector with proven success in lowering euthanasia rates.

The old shelter mentality was made perfectly clear at our first Animal Task Force meeting by Lieutenant Respass, who stated, "We are not in the sheltering business, we are in the enforcing

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<sup>1</sup> Disposition of Animals – Euthanasia, approved 8/24/10, revised 10/02/10 by John W. Mays, Executive Director, National Animal Control Association

<sup>1, 3</sup> Guidelines for Standard of Care in Animal Shelters; The Association of Shelter Veterinarians, 2010



business.” The Animal Task Force strongly disagrees with this narrow way of thinking, which is ineffective for the animals, the staff at GCAWE, and the citizens of Gwinnett County. Somewhere along the way, the term “animal welfare” has disappeared from GCAWE and we have lost sight of our focus: saving lives. Animals passing through the doors at GCAWE are not statistics, nor are they disposable. Each animal deserves humane treatment while being given an opportunity for the best possible outcome.

It is imperative that our next Director have a firm comprehension of both sides of the equation: proven shelter methodologies, including effective strategies for saving the lives of treatable animals, as well as enforcement procedures. It is this type of proven visionary who will take us in a direction we can all be proud of.

### **THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

The ideal candidate will be an experienced, creative, problem-solving administrator (from the public or private sector) who is a collaborative and progressive leader able to develop and maintain positive relationships within the community and partner organizations. This individual will promote community-based involvement in the development of programs aimed at reducing the number of homeless and unwanted animals. The successful candidate will have a keen awareness and sensitivity to the various community and organizational considerations that must be incorporated into solutions and courses of action. The selected candidate must be analytical, approachable and able to manage competing priorities.

The director's basic function is to "plan, organize and direct the activities of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center." In order to fulfill those requirements the desired/required experience and training for the GCAWE director are as follows:

Most of all, our next Director must have a proven track record of success in increasing positive outcomes for shelter animals, and a sincere desire to see animals' lives improved.

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Public Administration, Animal Science, or a related field. Five years of increasingly responsible work experience, three of which must have been in a management capacity, in the field of animal services and shelter management, including responsibility for field operations and animal health services.

Preference will be given to candidates who are Certified Animal Welfare Administrators by the Society of Animal Welfare Administrators. If not already certified, this qualification should be met within six months from the date of hire.

### **SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The GCAWE Director is responsible for administering county animal welfare policy and programs. The duties and responsibility for this position include:

#### **Humane Care and Shelter for Animals in Need:**

- Oversee the care provided for animals that come under the protection of GCAWE and ensure their humane treatment.



- Implement short and long term strategies which responsibly reduce intakes, increase adoptions, improve animal care, provide behavior and medical rehabilitation, encourage spaying and neutering, and help pets stay with their responsible caretakers.
- Ensure responsible pet care through enforcement of animal cruelty laws.
- Provide final approval for all euthanasias.

**Program Development and Administration:**

- Plan, organize, coordinate, review, evaluate, and direct the implementation of programs providing animal care services to the general public and other animal welfare agencies.
- Review current animal control and sheltering activities for effectiveness, and implement improvements.
- Ensure that the organization has a long-range strategy which achieves its mission toward which it makes consistent and timely progress.

**Staff Management and Development:**

- Be responsible for overseeing the recruitment, employment, direction, management and release of all personnel, both paid staff and volunteers.
- Review Standard Operating Procedures annually; mandating all staff continuously follow current shelter policies and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Ensure that job descriptions are developed and remain updated, that regular performance evaluations are conducted, that motivation systems are utilized, and that sound human resource practices are in place that abide by local, state and federal law.
- Maintain a climate that attracts, retains and motivates a diverse staff of top quality people who support and promote the mission and goals of the agency.

**Budget and Finance:**

- Monitors revenues and expenses.
- Develop, implement and maintain strategic, fiscal and capital improvement plans for the Animal Care and Regulation division.
- Prepares and monitors departmental budget and prepares reports as required.

**Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Policies and Guidelines:**

- Oversee record keeping practices of legally compliant adoptions, staff personnel files, budgetary accountability, and all other functions.
- Maintain official records and documents, including compliance with Georgia Department of Agriculture regulations.
- Perform related work as required.

**NATURE OF WORK**

This is a high-level management position, responsible for planning, organizing and directing the activities of the County's Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division.

Work involves responsibility for the effective enforcement of the animal care and regulation ordinances and the development and management of supporting programs, including adoptions, shelter operations, clinics, humane education, and public relations. Work involves



considerable interaction with local, state, and national organizations relating to animal care and regulation programs. Considerable independent judgment is needed in directing animal ordinance enforcement operations. Assignments are received in the form of broad policy statements. Work is performed independently with general supervision by an administrative superior. Performance is reviewed periodically through conferences, reports, and observations of program effectiveness.

**KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND SKILLS:**

- Thorough knowledge of county, state and local animal care and regulation laws and ordinances.
- Thorough knowledge of the remedial care of animals.
- Thorough knowledge of principles, practices and procedures of supervision, organization and administration.
- Considerable knowledge of the funding process in a county environment as related to budgeting, cost accounting, financial planning and management.
- Ability to plan, implement and coordinate administrative programs.
- Ability to express ideas effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Ability to serve the public and fellow employees with honesty and integrity in full accord with the letter and spirit of Gwinnett County's Ethics and Conflict of Interest policies.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective work relationships with the general public, co-workers, elected and appointed officials and members of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds regardless of race, religion, age, sex, disability or political affiliation.

**5. ADOPTION/RESCUE COORDINATOR RECOMMENDATION**

In an effort to revitalize the critical role of the Rescue Coordinator, the Task Force recommends redefining this vital position as the “Adoption/Rescue Coordinator.” While the current position only focuses on locating suitable rescues, it is critical for the staff in this role to also facilitate adoptions at GCAWE as well. The Adoption/Rescue Coordinator must be a full-time position 100% focused on increasing rescue and adoption rates at our shelter. While GCAWE rescue adoption rates have remained stagnant over the past three years, counties such as DeKalb, have shown a significant increase.

	<b>Total Animals Impounded/Brought to Shelter</b>	<b>Animals Adopted</b>		<b>Animals to Rescue</b>	
<b>2005</b>	All Animals 10432	2326	22%	1335	12.8%
<b>2006</b>	All Animals 9580	1850	19.3%	1492	16%
<b>2007</b>	All Animals 9662	1982	21%	1770	18%
<b>2008</b>	All Animals 10976	1906	19.3%	1201	12.2%
<b>2009</b>	All Animals 11383	2093	18.4%	1071	9.4%
<b>2010</b>	All Animals 9171	1583	17.3%	1016	11.1%
<b>2011</b>	All Animals 8224	1856	23%	1008	12%



The Task Force believes that these stagnant adoption/rescue rates clearly indicate the need for the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator to dedicate his or her time exclusively to adoption and rescue. With a highly dedicated individual, open and willing to implement new ideas while improving working relationships with established rescues and building new relationships in and out of state, the possibility for increasing adoption/rescue rates will increase dramatically.

While GCAWE Adoption/Rescue Rates Remain Stationary, Others are Dramatically Improving:

While GCAWE rescue and adoption rates have shown no appreciable improvement in the past seven years, counties such as DeKalb have shown a significant increase. Thanks to the efforts of its dedicated Adoption/Rescue Coordinator, DASE has seen a 325% increase in the number of animals transferred to no-kill rescue groups, from 506 animals in 2008 to 1,648 animals in 2010. Social networking plays an increasingly vital role in attracting rescue groups to the DeKalb facility, as does out-of-state transport; Friends of DeKalb Animals, a group formed exclusively to transport animals from DASE to no-kill groups located primarily in the northeastern United States, has helped DASE significantly increase the number of animals transferred to rescue groups for adoptive placement.<sup>1</sup>

Find the Best Qualified Candidate for the Position:

Shelters in surrounding areas have hired civilians to fill their current Adoption/Rescue Coordinator positions, which have proven highly effective. The person filling this critical position at GCAWE should have previous animal rescue experience, a high level of enthusiasm, effective customer relation skills, public relations and marketing expertise, excellent organizational skills, and computer literacy, including familiarity with social media. He or she must be motivated by a sense of compassion and a desire to find life-saving options for animals coming through the shelter, and persistent in seeking the best possible outcome for each one. The Task Force would like to see a visionary fill this position and raise the bar for our sluggish Adoption and Rescue rates.

In an effort to aid the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator with his or her duties, we are recommending a volunteer leadership position be established to directly assist with all related duties as outlined in the Volunteer Recommendation Section. It is also highly recommended that a dedicated staff person be cross trained to continue the work of the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator on his or her two days off per week. When animals' lives are on the line, the Task Force believes the role of the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator is exceedingly critical seven days a week.

The Task Force recommends the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator's redefined role include mandatory training by a certified behavioral specialist if he or she is to conduct temperament testing. We have also been told that the Rescue Coordinator is currently in charge of deciding which animals are to be euthanized on a daily basis. The Task Force does not agree with this protocol and recommends the euthanasia selection process be made by (3) staff members, including the full-time veterinarian, the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator and a staff supervisor, as outlined in the Section I.1., Euthanasia Criteria.

Effective Marketing:

The Task Force believes that stagnant adoption/rescue rates clearly indicate the need for the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator to dedicate his or her time exclusively to adoption and rescue. This individual must have a firm grasp on effective marketing strategies. With a highly dedicated individual, open and willing to implement new ideas, while improving working relationships



with established rescues, building new relationships in and out of state, the potential for increasing adoption/rescue rates will increase dramatically. The Task Force recommends general guideline(s) for adoption and rescue goals to be set forth with the implementation of the new shelter director:

Responsibilities:

- Ensure that animals move from Intake to the adoption floor in a timely, efficient manner.
- Assist with documentation of temperament, plan, progress, and reassessments.
- Assist in temperament testing with a certified behavioral specialist, unless otherwise trained by a certified behavioral specialist.
- Answer all correspondence relating to the adoption or rescue of all animals daily.
- Reach out to rescue organizations to notify them about animals at the shelter in a timely manner.
  - Animal Rescues do not spend their time calling animal shelters looking for animals. The A/R Coordinator must be diligent in contacting rescues within 48 hours of an animal's arrival. This would include, calling breed specific rescues and sending out email blasts to approved rescues, and delegating these tasks to the volunteer Assistant Adoption/Rescue Coordinator. After speaking with local rescue groups in the surrounding areas, it has been established that rescues have a greater chance of finding placement for shelter animals when given at least a (3) day notification period.
- Cultivate relationships with local & out of state rescues.
- Assist rescue groups when they come into the facility.
- Ensure appropriate interviews and approval or declination of adoption applicants.
  - There is currently no application/screening process in place for potential adopters. The Task Force strongly recommends the implementation of a basic application for potential adopters to fill out on-site, similar to that of Walton County Animal Control, for the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator to review. (See Appendix B for a copy the Walton County Animal Control's Adoption Application.)
- Supervise intake photo process; if a photograph is not taken of an animal during intake or by road officers, it is the responsibility of the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator to ensure a photograph of the animal is taken and placed on the county website within a 24 hour period. Following this recommendation is critical for potential owner reclaims and locating potential rescues and adopters. The Task Force has learned of instances where animals' photos never made it to the website before scheduled euthanasia. This is unacceptable.
- Interview, select and train volunteer to fill role as Assistant Adoption/Rescue Coordinator.
- Cross-train appointed staff to fulfill Adoption/Rescue Coordinator duties during off days and vacation.
- Create written descriptions of the dogs to promote them for adoption on websites and cage cards, if volunteers have not already done so.
- Supervise internet websites such as Petfinder.com as well as the GCAWE website to reflect current and accurate availability of animals.
- Provide Data Entry officer with information on new animals and animals to be delisted daily. It is the responsibility of the A/R Coordinator to ensure listings of animals have



been removed once the pet has left the shelter. On the A/R Coordinator's days off, it is the responsibility of the Data Entry Officer to make sure all listings stay current.

- Keep "official" GCAWE Facebook page current and manage content during business hours.
  - Although it is stated in the employee handbook that employees are not to visit personal websites during business hours, and Facebook is currently blocked on all GCAWE computers, the Task Force finds it necessary for the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator to be granted exception to this policy to allow for content management of the "official" Facebook page.
- Coordinate vet work that needs to be done for all pre- adopted animals, animals new to the adoption sections, animals going to rescue groups and on transports. Have paperwork ready in a timely manner for rescues/transports.
- Participate in radio and TV interviews focusing on adoptions.
- Assist ASAI (on-site volunteer coordinator) in supervising the planning, organizing and coordinating of special events to promote adoptions. ASAI will work directly with volunteers to delegate tasks.
- Develop and provide informational and educational materials to be offered to adopters.
- Provide follow up assistance to adopters to resolve problems to help lower return rates.
- Facilitate effective communication with kennel staff to ensure staff is aware of any and all pending adoptions, rescues, or holds.
- Attend meetings delegated by shelter director, including functions to promote adoptions; bring animals when appropriate.
- Maintain current data base of rescue organizations with contact info, breed preferences, and Georgia Dept. of Agriculture and 501(c).
- Maintain records in compliance with Georgia Dept. of Agriculture requirements.

<sup>1</sup>DASE Task Force Executive Report and Recommendations

## **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

### **1. SPAY /NEUTER RECOMMENDATION**

Of the more than 25 million dogs and cats born each year in the US, 6-8 million will end up in a shelter, and of these, over 3 million will be euthanized.

These are not the offspring of homeless "street" animals—these are the puppies and kittens of family pets and many are purebreds. In fact, recently, there was literally a line out the door of people waiting to dump their pets at GWACE. Many reasons are given, the most disturbing being that the owner is going on vacation so they can't keep their pet anymore. This reason is given more times than you can imagine.

It is estimated that a mother cat and her kittens can produce 420,000 more cats in just 7 years; a female dog and her puppies can produce 67,000 more dogs in just 6 years. Our best hope for ending the tragic animal overpopulation problem is educating the public about the benefits of spaying and neutering and helping those who are financially unable to spay and neuter with low cost options.



In 2011, 7804 dogs and cats were taken in to GWACE, of these 3809 were picked up by road officers and 3995 were owner turn-ins. Only 1222 of the dogs and cats picked up on the road were reclaimed by their owners. GWACE does not keep records on how many of the dogs and cats taken in are already spayed and neutered; however, the US average is about 10%. The Task Force cannot stress enough the importance of spay/neuter. Neutering of male dogs and cats can prevent certain undesirable sexual behaviors, such as urine marking, male aggression and the urge to roam. Pets will generally get along better if they are neutered.

Surveys include a multitude of reasons animals should be altered, including; as many as 85% of dogs hit by cars are unaltered. Intact male cats living outside have been shown to live on average less than two years. Feline Immunodeficiency Syndrome is spread by bites and consequently, intact cats fight a great deal more than altered cats.

A long-term benefit of spaying and neutering is improved health for both cats and dogs. Spaying females prior to their first heat cycle nearly eliminates the risk of breast cancer and totally prevents uterine infections and uterine cancer. Neutering males prevents testicular cancer and enlargement of the prostate gland, and greatly reduces their risk for perianal tumors.

All of us are affected by animal overpopulation. Millions of tax dollars are spent annually to shelter and care for stray, abandoned and unwanted pets. Much of that money is spent to euthanize these animals when homes cannot be found. Human health is threatened by the danger of transmittable diseases (including rabies), animal bites and attacks. Property may be damaged and livestock killed when pets roam in search of food. Animal waste is proving to be a serious environment hazard, fouling yards and parks. It is only when all of us assume the responsibility for pet overpopulation that we will see any decrease in the problem.

The Task Force feels that Gwinnett County must invest in educating its citizens on the importance of spay/neuter and do more to offer those who are willing to spay and neuter, but are of limited means, the help to do so. Spaying and neutering can greatly reduce the animal overpopulation problem.

## **2. STAFF VETERINARIAN POSITION (FULL-TIME)**

### **Objective**

- To provide the best animal care possible through onsite daily care of shelter animals, reduced euthanasia rates, and reduced shelter disease while reducing bottom line costs

### **Requirements**

- Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree
- Current DEA license
- Knowledge of shelter medicine principles and protocols
- Familiarity with “working dog” medicine to care for county canine officers

### **Duties**

- Manage daily operations of the shelter veterinary services
- Spay/neuter animals prior to adoption and perform vaccinations and microchipping
- Educating staff on humane euthanasia in compliance with shelter euthanasia policy
- Responsible for final decision on euthanasia in cases for injury or illness



- Ensure adequate inventory and proper tracking of medical supplies, medications and all drugs, including DEA regulated substance
- Supervise proper medical record keeping for sheltered animals
- Provide training to officers to include administering medications, providing information on animal disease detection and disease control protocols and procedures
- Perform daily rounds, initiate and follow up on treatment plans
- Examine and develop treatment protocols for sick/injured sheltered animals as well as impounded animals
- Assist staff in animal cruelty and neglect investigations including testifying in court
- Provide leadership by example for veterinary support staff
- Provide on-call assistance to shelter/road personnel in the case of sick or injured animals

**Savings Analysis**

SAVINGS	
Non-emergency vet care	\$ 51,379
Emergency vet care	\$ 1,167
Retainer for DEA license/training	\$ 3,000
Upcharge for euthanasia drugs	\$ 7,185
Spay/neuter fees to adopters	\$ 100,224
Spay/neuter fees to rescues	\$ 15,120
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS</b>	<b>\$ 178,075</b>

**Comments:**

2011: 68,749 actual less 3,000 retainer & 14,370 drug cost  
 2011: 2,334 actual; 50% may not be saved even with FT vet  
 50% of 14,370  
<sup>1</sup> 2011: 1,856 adoptions @ \$60/ea. (x90% to account for senior adoptions, promotions, etc.)  
 2011: 1,008 average \$60 x 25% of rescues (rescue can opt for s/n)

COSTS	
Veterinarian salary	\$ 76,422
Benefits	\$ 25,219
Training	\$ 2,500
Licensing (GA vet, DEA)	\$ 800
<b>TOTAL NEW EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$ 104,941</b>

<sup>2</sup>  
 33% of salary  
 Includes CE credits and training for technician  
 Not every year; can break down to average yearly amount

Net Savings \$ 73,134

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Currently \$ 60 for each adoption is collected in cash and passed directly to SHF. Eliminating the pass-through to a contractor would result in 100% of fees collected remaining with the county.

Since all expenses related to spay/neuter surgeries, with the exception of salaries, are paid by the county, no additional non-salary expense would be incurred for an equal number of surgeries.

Retention of 100% of spay/neuter fee will result in added convenience for the adopter, as one fee can be charged instead of the current adoption fee plus additional spay/neuter fee paid in cash. The net savings resulting from employment of a full-time vet could allow a reduction in total adoption fees, presumably leading to increased number of adoption.



<sup>2</sup> We did not include a veterinary technician in our analysis. The shelter currently employs an Animal Care Specialist whose duties are very similar to the job we would describe; this position can be reassigned to work directly with the veterinarian.

### **3. TEMPERAMENT TESTING/TRAINING**

**The Task Force recommends that a recognized process of Temperament Testing be put into place at the shelter, and that employees receive formal training in animal behavior and temperament testing.**

When done by a trained behaviorist, temperament testing has been shown to reduce the number of animals being euthanized in shelters. Currently at GCAWE, no formalized animal behavior training is in place for the ACO's, and no actual temperament testing is being performed. Animals are euthanized based on subjective observations of ACO's who have never been trained on animal behavior.

One of the Animal Task Force members observed a dog being euthanized because it had been deemed aggressive by an ACO; however, when it was brought into the Euthanasia Room, he was wagging his tail and letting those present pet him. No effort was made to perform an actual temperament test on him, and this obviously friendly dog was unnecessarily euthanized. (ID # 22953, euthanized April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012)

It was also observed that a cat was incorrectly deemed wild and selected for euthanasia. Fortunately, an Animal Task Force member observed the cat in her holding cage and informed the ACO's that the cat did not appear wild. In this case, the ACO's took the advice of the Task Force member and did not euthanize the cat. (ID # 23069, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012) There are other documented instances at GCAWE where cats have come in that, during the initial temperament test were thought to be "wild," but after further review and improvement in temperament, were moved from the "wild" cat room to the adoption side. It's critical to the well-being of these cats that their evaluation be accurate.

The Task Force would like to recommend that unless a dog has presented a very obvious case of human aggression (lunging, actually snapping at a person), it must be temperament tested before being labeled as aggressive. It is also recommended that at least two people be present for the temperament testing, both for safety reasons and validity of the test.

We would also like to note that human aggression and dog aggression are not the same thing. Dog aggression is not a valid reason to label a dog unavailable for adoption. A dog aggressive dog should be offered to authorized rescues or an experienced adopter.

Following are some examples of recognized temperament testing principles of reputable animal behavior experts. This type of training is already available to ACO's; our proposal is to make this training mandatory and to utilize the volunteer resources that have been offered to supplement it.



## **Temperament Testing Support**

**Excerpts From: “Assessing Shelter Dogs and Temperament Testing” Compiled by: Partnership for Animal Welfare, Inc., P.O. Box 1074, Greenbelt, MD 20768**

### **Assessing Dogs at Shelters and Rescues**

Many dogs that are given up to animal shelters have never received training or guidance. Some never had the opportunity of a caring owner. Or the owner cared, but was ignorant about proper training and care of dogs, or had received misguided information. In any case, a multitude of given-up dogs are dismissed as 'problem animals' ... when in reality, the problems can be corrected and avoided by applying current knowledge about canine care and management.

In addition, the stressful environment of a shelter can aggravate and magnify behavior problems, adding to the possibility that a pup or dog might be returned after being adopted.

Many shelter workers and rescue volunteers are now using temperament assessment to learn more about individual dogs. This effort can result in:

- Identifying problems.
- Addressing problems through behavior modification and training sessions. This doesn't happen at all facilities, but it is becoming more prevalent.
- Information that helps shelter and rescue folks make better matches between dogs and potential adopters.
- Knowledge that can be shared with adopters so they can plan to address and avoid problems, increasing the chance of a successful adoption.

Remember, however, that the stress of being in a kennel, losing his former family, and/or possibly enduring recent cruelty, trauma or neglect can negatively influence the outcome of a dog's temperament test. It helps to delay conducting tests until the dog has acclimated to the shelter, which takes at least three days. Depending on the environment of the shelter/kennel, it can take much longer ... and some dogs who could recover normalcy in a calm home just do not adapt to shelter life.

Also, a temperament characteristic that may be undesirable for many adopters might be fully acceptable to others. For example, a dog who shows exceptional tolerance to people grabbing at him or making sudden movements would be ideal for homes with youngsters or for visiting hospitals as a therapy animal. But that does not mean that a less tolerant dog is abnormal or less adoptable, since his other qualities may be appealing to other prospective adopters.

There is controversy about how much weight temperament evaluation should be given in determining adoptability: while some canine authorities contend it is unfair to deny a dog the chance for adoption due to a breed-biased trait or trauma-influenced behavior that may be remedied with basic care, others argue that with the lack of decent homes for dogs, we might as well identify the best candidates for adoption based on their behavior in less-than-optimal conditions, for they are more likely to get and stay adopted.

All living beings have some of what can be construed as behavior problems. All prospective dog owners should be advised that education and patience will be required on their part, no matter which dog they choose. At the same time, shelters and rescues should attempt to gather as much information as possible on each dog, and provide it with potential adopters. Temperament assessment is a valuable tool, but adoption decisions should be based on other factors as well.



## **What Testing Involves**

Some guidelines for temperament testing follow, but be sure to see the links listed below for complete, essential information.

- Information should be gathered prior to testing, such as age, breed/breed mix, sex, sexual status (puppy or sexually mature), reproductive status (intact or neuter/spay), and behavioral traits such as how friendly the dog acts to people, how the dog reacts to other dogs, whether the dog previously had any obedience training, how the dog reportedly behaved towards kids and adults in his prior home, is the dog on any medications, is the dog ill in any way, etc.
- Know whether the dog has exhibited aggression, and what kinds of aggression, so you can plan accordingly.
- The dog should wear a sturdy collar/leash during the testing so that the testers have a means of control.
- You'll be taking some items for testing in addition to collar and leash; for example, toys, ball, food bowl. Disinfect the test items between use, since there could be illness somewhere in the kennel.
- Have two people present at the test for safety's sake as well as for objective observation.
- Ideally, the tester should be a canine behavior specialist trained in temperament testing. And he or she should not be someone familiar to the dog. Strive to act confident (but not overbearing) and neutral. Be aware that getting a totally objective evaluation is extremely difficult, since a dog's reactions will vary to some degree depending on the physical and personality traits of the evaluator. For example, a dog typically senses quickly whether a person is take-charge leader or a more submissive, deferential type. Dogs usually can also assess whether a person seems friendly and approachable, as opposed to threatening or aloof. This affects the responsiveness of the dog.
- Find a controlled, calm environment for the exercises. This is not something to do in the middle of a crowd. Make sure you can use the room without interruption, disruption or distractions (i.e., no loudspeaker announcements, cell phone ringing).
- If the dog shows signs of having not yet adjusted to shelter life, delay testing.
- Record observations about responses immediately after each test exercise.
- A wide variety of testing exercises are conducted. Exercises can include: how long it takes for the dog to pay attention to the evaluator (one test of sociability) ... reaction to being called by the evaluator ... reaction to being approached by the evaluator (friendly? tentative? fearful? neutral?) ... reaction to eye contact, and then being stared at by the evaluator ... responses to being petted in various places of the body (does the dog move closer, pull away, stand still, wag, relax, stiffen) ... reaction to sudden movements (curious? submissive? defensive? aggressive?) ... reaction to certain objects (such as an umbrella or cane ... does the dog panic, does he eventually recover, does he tentatively investigate) ... reaction to a sudden noise ... reaction to unusual tactile stimulation (such as walking on wire) ... reaction to having mouth touched and eventually examined ... reaction to an attempted hug ... reaction to having paws touched (per previous cautions, remember that a shelter dog might have endured injury, and a dog in pain may react defensively -- this is natural and needs to be taken into account) ... reaction to being led on leash ... reaction to being presented a toy and the degree to which the dog attempts to guard the toy ... response to food and any signs of food-guarding ... reaction to being coaxed into a lying-down position (accepting? willing? fearful? struggling?) ... reaction to the evaluator turning away and/or leaving.



Personality traits are also observed and recorded, such as whether the dog is confident or shy ... active, hyperactive or calm ... dependent or independent ... interested in people, things or the environment (some dogs are more interested in things than in people, which is a trait to note) ... tolerant or reactive. Is the dog accepting of physical restraint ... interested in playing (and what kinds of playing; does the dog try to catch, pounce, grab ... his willingness to release objects and interact with the person playing with him) ... given to chase moving targets (object, jogging person ... to gauge prey instinct). This is just an overview; see the links below for details.

- Note: it is good to test a dog's level of arousal to cats, since a dog prone to chasing a cat in play or due to prey drive should not be placed in a home with cats or other small animals. However, do not subject a cat to possible injury or even fear. Some people test the dog by gauging his reaction to a cat in a carrier some distance away.
- Problem reactions would include unprovoked and unwarranted aggression, extreme resource-guarding behavior, difficulty to recover after panicking, and strong avoidance, fear or aggressive tendencies towards things that would be common to everyday environments.
- Realize that time must be allowed for each exercise. For example, even a friendly dog may not approach the evaluator immediately. It may well take 5 or 10 minutes for a friendly dog to feel comfortable in the testing environment before approaching a person.

### **Young Puppy Temperament Assessment**

Much more important than puppy temperament testing is the socialization, education and environment that the owner should provide. However, some folks recommend assessing a puppy's sensitivity to various stimuli, using techniques such as those that follow, to get a general idea of a puppy's temperament.

- Clap your hands: does the puppy look at you? Does he approach readily, in a friendly manner? These are good signs of sociability.
- Make eye contact: does the puppy engage in eye contact? This is a good indicator of a confidence pup. In contrast, be concerned about a pup who will not look at you. This could reflect a temperament problem or a vision disability.
- Call to the puppy: a puppy who ignores attempts to get his attention may have a hearing or temperament problem. Disinterest in interacting with people can indicate a disease as well.
- Praise the dog: it's good if the puppy responds to verbal praise with some welcoming behavior, such as wagging his tail.
- Follow me: after playing with the pup for a while, walk or jog away. If he tries to follow, that's a positive sign. Not following indicates the pup has an independent personality.
- Pet the pup: does he respond in a friendly or accepting manner? Or does he try to dominate you by nipping, growling or jumping at you? Does he reflect independence by trying to escape?
- Play with a toy: roll a safe dog toy, such as a ball, or a crumpled paper ball near the pup. But don't toss the toy at the pup. See if the dog will follow it. Encourage the pup to fetch the toy and to bring it back to you. A dominant-natured pup will fetch the ball, take it away, and resist letting you take it. An independent pup may show no interest in the toy; however, this could also indicate an ill puppy. A submissive pup may be a little fearful of the toy. A highly social pup will bring the toy back to you on his own. Normal behavior would involve the pup getting the toy, chewing on it, but allowing you to take it away. Willingness to retrieve can be an indicator of a dog's interest in training exercises.



- Rollover test: gently take the puppy and roll him onto his back. Gently hold him in place with one hand on his chest for 15 seconds. A dominant or independent pup will tend to resist the whole time. He might yip or try to nip you. A submissive pup does not struggle at all, and may try to lick you in deference. Most puppies will resist for a few seconds and then contentedly accept your handling.

Note: this rollover test is not an alpha roll. Never perform an alpha roll on any dog of any age. It's an old technique told to prove dominion, but eventually found to hamper the human/canine bond in addition to leading to many bite cases.

- Picking up the puppy: lift gently by interlacing your fingers palms up beneath his tummy. Hold him in this elevated position for 30 seconds. Does he struggle actively for release, for a prolonged period, signaling dominance or independence? Or does he quickly acquiesce? How quickly he accepts and relaxes can indicate whether he's relatively submissive or closer to a typical pup. A submissive pup will attempt to lick in deference to your control.
- Touch a paw, then press between the pads gently. The responses you get and how quickly you get them can reflect a pup's tendency towards submission, dominance, independence, or a more normal temperament.
- Noise test: make a sudden noise. See if the pup responds with curious interest, fear, barking, aggression, or ignores it.
- For a detailed puppy evaluation program see the Volhard Puppy Aptitude Test link below. This approach assesses social attraction and social dominance, retrieving, following, restraint, elevation (being lifted), touch sensitivity, sound sensitivity and stability, and ranks pups in degrees as socially attracted, adaptive, submissive, dominant and independent.

#### **Notes about puppy handling and evaluation:**

- Make sure nothing fearful or negative happens during any puppy evaluation or handling sessions.
- Responsiveness indicates that the puppy is probably pretty adaptive and has great ability to bond. A pup who seems very nervous or fearful may not be a good choice for a home with children or with a lot of activity. However, he may respond very well to gentle and consistent training suited to his personality. A dog who tends to be aloof even when faced with stimuli may be of an independent temperament, and might be stubborn when it comes time for training, but that's not always the case. Again, keep in mind that these are generalizations, and puppy adopter will be in the key position to shape the pup's behavior.
- Many behavior experts do not place great emphasis on testing of young puppies; however, some agree that highly aggressive pups often turn out to be dominant and aggressive adults. If you're checking out dogs in a litter, you may want to engage the help of a canine behaviorist.
- It is important to handle puppies frequently and every day. Always handle them gently and speak in a calm, happy manner. Your goals are to teach them to accept being handled, that no harm will come from handling, that it's OK to be examined (this paves the way for acceptance of everything from grooming to vet visits), and to trust you as a benevolent leader. Puppy kindergarten classes are also highly recommended to help provide essential socialization opportunities.



**Excerpts from “*Scaredy Cat or Feral Cat? Accurate evaluations help shelter staff provide optimum care*” by Brenda Griffin, DVM**

**Intake of Cats to the Shelter**

Intake of cats to the shelter Animal shelters are inherently stressful environments, filled with new stimuli, including noises and odors and other stressors that may only be apparent to the animals. Because of their unique biology, cats are particularly prone to experiencing acute stress and fear in novel environments, which readily trigger adrenaline release, preparing the cat for escape or defense. Fearful cats experience racing hearts and dilated pupils; some may be overtly aggressive or “teetering on the edge” of defensive aggression. Such responses compromise cat welfare and staff, and make it difficult to determine the cat’s true temperament.

Handling and restraint of cats of varying ages, personality types, social experiences, and stress levels requires skill, knowledge of normal feline behavior and signaling, finesse, and proper equipment. Most cats respond best to gentle restraint and detest being “overhandled.” Animal shelters should have protocols in place to minimize feline stress, beginning in the field and continuing throughout their stay at the shelter. Cats should be transported in individual carriers or traps that are covered so that the cat is not exposed, allowing her to feel hidden and more secure. Cats instinctively feel more secure when they can perch at a high point, and studies indicate that feline stress responses are significantly reduced when cats are housed in elevated cages compared to floor-level cages; with this in mind, transport carriers containing cats should never be placed on the floor, and cats should be preferentially transferred to the highest available holding cage. From the time of intake, care should also be taken to minimize noise, particularly that of barking dogs.

**Special Considerations for Intake of Feral-Behaving Cats**

Both feral and highly stressed tame cats may have dilated pupils and be stiff, tense, or completely frozen.

They may tuck their feet under them and try to hide in the farthest corner of their enclosure. Some may appear nearly catatonic, while others may strike out defensively if approached, particularly feral tomcats. Once stressed, cats often remain reactive for a prolonged time and may become more reactive if they are stimulated again before they have been allowed a cool-down period. When cats enter the shelter exhibiting signs of marked stress and fear, they should be given strict “chill-out time” to acclimate to the shelter for at least 24 hours.

During this time, cats must have a place to hide and a place to perch; they will feel instinctively safer. Soft bedding should be available for comfort and to help them establish a familiar scent that aids in their acclimation. Their enclosures should be elevated and must be kept covered. After the strict “chill-out” time is over, evaluation should occur daily over the following three to four days. Care should be taken during cleaning procedures to minimize stress, and cats should be allowed to hide while their cages are quietly tidied and replenished as needed. Feral cat dens (available from Animal Care and Equipment Services/ACES) are ideal for this purpose; they can be secured from a distance so the cat is safe inside during cleaning procedures. Cats should be returned to the same cage, and in order to preserve their own comforting scent, only spot cleaning should be performed. If it becomes necessary to house the cat in another location, the den and towel should accompany the cat to ease the transition.



### **Evaluation Process**

The overarching goal of the evaluation process is to allow cats the opportunity to acclimate to the shelter and “show their true colors.” Cats who are identified as “tame” can be moved through normal procedures for holding and adoption. Some timid or shy cats may receive special behavioral assistance—such as assignment to foster care—to help them adapt to the shelter and prepare them for adoption.

### **Physical Features that can Help Distinguish Feral Cats**

- Ear tip: Removal of the tip of one ear (usually the left) is the universal symbol for a sterilized free-roaming/feral cat. However, some cats with tipped ears may be tame rather than truly feral. Thus the presence of an ear tip alone should not be used as a designation: The ear tip only truly means that the cat has been spayed/neutered. It may, however, mean that the cat has a caregiver, and efforts should focus on retuning the cat to the colony. Take caution not to mistake frostbite of the ear for a tipped ear.
- General body condition and other physical features: Feral cats may be any age, size, or color; however, they are usually young (frequently less than 3 years) and are rarely overweight unless they have already been neutered. Prior to TNR, feral cats are most often lean and wiry. Unless they are ear tipped, tipped, feral cats should be assumed to be reproductively intact. Females may be pregnant or lactating, especially between April and October. A large abdomen on a female may indicate pregnancy. If mature, males will have tomcat urine odor, a wide neck, and big jowls. They often have scars on their face and ears, or torn earflaps. In contrast, “freaked out” tame cats may be overweight. Also, they may be older; geriatric cats are sometimes the most stressed cats in the shelter environment. They may be recognized by their lack of facial fat, which gives their faces a more angular appearance and mottled irises (the colored part of the eye) or a bluish color to the lens of the eye. These are subtle changes that may be recognized with experience.

### **Behavioral Features that Can Help Distinguish Feral Cats**

- Behavioral evaluation: After the cat has been allowed time to acclimate, evaluation should begin. Whenever possible, caregivers should be assigned to care for the same cats on a regular basis.

*Task Force Recommendation: Since ACO's are on a rotating basis, all cats under the 24-hour observation period should be checked by day/evening staff at least once per shift. Notes referencing the behavior of each cat should be read, taken into consideration and a detailed account of each cat's temperament under the “24-hour observation period” should be documented by the end of each shift ACO's shift.*

- Obvious feral or fractious behavior: The cat may signal right away that he is teetering on the edge or is highly fearful. Further evaluation is unsafe and will serve to make the cat even more highly reactive. In fact, it could even delay the acclimation process if the cat is not truly feral. There is no need to evaluate further at that time. Return the next day to assess the cat's progress.

*Task Force Recommendation: If fractious behavior is observed, ACO's should make a detailed notation and leave the cat alone, so that the ACO rotating onto the next shift is fully aware of this witnessed behavior. The ACO on the next shift should reassess the cat himself or herself for improved temperament. It is not to be assumed by any ACO at*



*GCAWE that if (1) ACO identifies fractious behavior; the cat is indeed “wild” and does not need further temperament testing if under the” 24-hour observation period.”*

- Obvious tame behavior: Alternatively, the cat may come right up to the front of the cage and solicit attention by rubbing with his body, reaching with his paws or meowing. In this case, you may deem that it is safe to open the cage door and attempt to pet and even pick up the cat. If the cat is indeed easy to handle and tame, he can be transferred to general cat holding.

### **Mixed Responses**

Many cats will respond somewhere in between “feral behaving” and “tame.” If the cat’s pupils relax and do not remain dilated, or if he looks away or his body becomes less tense, these may be signs that he is relaxing. Offer verbal encouragement and be patient. If the cat neither comes to you nor tries to escape or defend himself, you may consider slowly reaching your hand into the cage. Be prepared to retreat should the cat react in an aggressive fashion. You may be able to reach into the cage above the cat’s head and slowly pet the head. If you are unsure if it is safe to reach into the cage, use an Assess-a-Hand. If the cat exhibits any aggressive behavior, discontinue the evaluation for the day and return the next day to evaluate his progress.

If the cat is relaxing, further evaluation can take place in a secure location where the cat can interact with you outside of the cage. If the cat relaxes when you gently touch and pet his head—and you deem it to be safe—you may slowly reach behind his ears, gently grasp the scruff of his neck, and pull him toward you on his side. Then, hold/hug him close to your body, supporting and covering him under your arm, and gently release him in the designated evaluation area. Ideally, you could sit with him on your lap, allowing him to hide in a towel or the nook of your arm. In this case, the cat may be fearful and stiff, but should be nonaggressive. Alternatively, a cat den can be used to transfer the cat calmly to the evaluation area.

As the evaluation continues, you will be able to assess his behavior: Does the cat sit on your lap? Does he respond to gentle massage? Massaging the top of the head in a slow, circular fashion may be calming (this is a known acupressure point). Does the cat warm up to petting, or does the cat remain stiff, frozen, or retreat from your lap? If the cat becomes aggressive, the evaluation should stop for the day. If he becomes highly reactive, he can be given some “chill-out” time in the pen before being transferred back to his holding cage.

If the cat jumps down from your lap, take note of his behavior in the evaluation area. As long as he is nonaggressive, continue to evaluate him. Is he interested in exploring the environment, or does he hide and retreat? Does he solicit attention from you? Make eye contact with you? Purr or meow? How does he respond to your reach and touch? Will he allow you to pet him? Only on the head, or can you stroke his back, too? Will he allow you to pick him up again? Is he fearful and stiff, or does he continue to relax? Try interacting with him with a cat dancer toy. Does he show any interest in play?

### **Be Proactive and Think Prevention**

Understanding the importance of minimizing stress in cats and recognizing and responding to it are keys to maintaining proper behavioral welfare and maximizing the shelter’s life-saving potential. Staff should be trained to evaluate cats beginning at intake and to educate relinquishers about TNR and community cat care and control. For cats determined to be feral, staff should make every effort to offer TNR services or referral to other programs. Staff should be trained to recognize indicators of stress in the cats who are admitted to the shelter.



Cats should be routinely classified at intake according to their behavioral characteristics. Suggested designations include:

- Friendly/bold (tame, outgoing, and solicits attention)
- Friendly/shy (fearful, but tame and accepts attention without becoming aggressive)
- Fearful/shy (shy or fearful, teetering on aggressive; can handle with caution)
- Feral behaving (frozen or overtly aggressive; unsafe to handle)

Staff should monitor cats daily to determine their “true colors” as best as possible and to watch for signs of stress or adjustment to the shelter. They should record their findings daily, noting trends and making adjustments in the care of individual cats and the population as indicated.

Shelters must always strive to provide the best possible care for all animals who enter their doors. This is true whether animals remain in the shelter for hours, days, or months, and regardless of their ultimate disposition. When it comes to scaredy cats and feral cats, best practices call for proactive stress reduction and careful evaluation for all cats, and neuter return for cats determined to be feral. All of these animals deserve the best care possible during their shelter stay.

Scaredy Cat or Feral Cat? Accurate evaluations help shelter staff provide optimum care By Brenda Griffin, D.V.M. *\*Recommendations made by Programs Subcommittee: Gwinnett County Animal Welfare Task Force*

#### **4. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

*We are quickly becoming a Service Nation, with more people volunteering than ever before. Yet, GCAWE is not tapping into this valuable resource. Also, by making the process exceedingly difficult, we are potentially losing many great volunteers.*

Volunteers can provide huge benefits for animal shelters, offering critical assistance to expand the effectiveness of meeting the shelter’s mission. It is extremely important to have an efficient Volunteer Program while matching the volunteer’s talents and abilities to the job; placing volunteers where they feel needed and can make a contribution.

When your volunteer doesn’t feel needed or appreciated, they will go somewhere else to donate their time. For instance, while observing other volunteer programs, one of our Task Force Members met an avid volunteer at DeKalb County Animal Control who is doing a wonderful job helping with the photography. This person lives in Gwinnett County and drives right by our shelter to volunteer her time at DeKalb, where she says that she feels appreciated and like one of the staff.

Many prospective volunteers have been turned off by the arduous application process. The application process can take anywhere from 1-3 months, during which time, volunteers may find other more accessible avenues to volunteer their time. This is topped off by the invasive fingerprinting process that many find extremely unnecessary and cumbersome. The Task Force agrees that potential volunteer candidates should have to pass the background check that is already in place, but having to be fingerprinted to walk a dog is excessive and sends the wrong message. The Task Force recommends the removal of the fingerprinting requirement for future volunteer applicants.



### **Setting Achievable Goals and Lessening Restrictions:**

The Animal Task Force would like to set a progressive active volunteer outreach goal: which would include 50 trained, active volunteers by the end of 2012.

There will always be volunteers eager to help out, but volunteers are limited because their available hours are not conducive with those at the shelter. Keep volunteer hours flexible for those willing to volunteer on weekends and evening hours. There are volunteer tasks which can be completed in the evenings at home. For instance, one may work on educational material for outreach projects or promotional materials on their own time and forward to the ASAI upon completion. During our research into surrounding Animal Control facilities, we were able to verify that other agencies are utilizing their volunteers when the volunteers are available. This must be the standard at GCAWE.

### **Networking shelter animals on Facebook saves lives and doesn't cost a cent:**

With today's fast paced social media there is an entire network we would like to utilize in order to give the animals in our shelter the best possible chance to be reclaimed, adopted or rescued. A Facebook page will exist with or without the consent of the Board of Commissioners; in fact, one is currently being maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers and was created in October of 2011 for the Gwinnett Shelter after people noticed that no progress had been made in getting the webpage updated daily. In a short amount of time, the page has over 4300 supporters within the Facebook community and grows daily. There were 6,867 interactions with the page and over 231,360 people that it reached the third week of June 2012 alone (data available upon request). The Communications Division might have a higher comfort level with the page being operated "in house" with content management. This is why the Task Force is recommending the immediate approval of an "Official" Gwinnett County Animal Control Facebook Page. Maintenance of a Facebook page is an ongoing project that can easily be managed by volunteers with minimal supervision. Until an "Official" page can be approved, Gwinnett Animal Shelter should work with the current Facebook volunteers to maintain updated information on the status of all animals at the shelter.

There are currently thirty-two counties in GA posting their animals on Facebook, including; Athens-Clarke, Cobb, Cherokee, DeKalb, Hall, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Cherokee and many more. There is no reason for a progressive county like Gwinnett to not do the same for the sake of our animals. Networking shelter animals on social media sites, such as Facebook saves lives and it does not cost our taxpayers a cent. It is inconceivable that GCAWE has not been granted access to initiate this life saving measure.

### **Expanding the Volunteer Program:**

#### **1. The Immediate Assignment of an On-Site Volunteer Program Coordinator.**

Currently, there is no on-site staff member at GCAWE to monitor the volunteers and take an active role in coordinating the program. The current Gwinnett Police Volunteer Coordinator is in charge of 17 units and does not have time to focus adequate attention on the Volunteer Program at GCAWE. Nor is this staff member even in the same vicinity to offer support. Without a staff member on-site to manage the volunteer program, there is very little potential for development and growth. Thus, the Task Force is recommending that an ASAI take on the role of the official "On-Site Volunteer Program Coordinator."

While these duties currently fall under the job description of the ASC, we collectively agree these duties are more in alignment with the ASAI job description and recommend



moving this item from ASC to ASAII job description: *“Coordinate volunteer activities and volunteer orientation to train volunteers on what their duties are at the shelter.”* The implementation of the “On-Site Volunteer Program Coordinator” is vital, as we have had several current volunteers comment at Task Force subcommittee meetings regarding their frustrations concerning volunteering at the shelter. They have stated that a great deal of time is spent standing around not knowing what it is they are supposed to be doing. The ASAII would be able to help tremendously with the fundamental process of keeping volunteers coordinated while providing valuable on-site management of our essential volunteers.

## **2. Implementation of two key volunteer leadership positions: Assistant Volunteer Coordinator and Assistant Rescue Coordinator.**

### **a. Assistant Volunteer Coordinator Position:**

Candidate will be selected by the On-Site Volunteer Coordinator after an interview process. AVC is a volunteer leadership position which should be filled by a volunteer willing/able to commit 15-20 hours per week at the Shelter. AVC will report directly to the ASAII and will be responsible for, but not limited to; working on monthly e-newsletter, volunteer recruitment, assisting with on-site phone training, tracking volunteer hours and on-site management of volunteers, and other duties as requested by shelter personnel and approved by management.

Volunteers may be assigned to a “Team” in order to increase group effectiveness, for example:

- **Social Media Team:** taking digital photos and writing stories to update Facebook page.
- **Education Team:** volunteering to work on criteria/educational materials for outreach programs.
- **TNR Team:** Answering phones at help desk and questions at intake regarding TNR, assisting with trapping, transporting cats to spay/neuter clinic, researching barns for adoption/release, handing out TNR literature, recruiting potential TNR volunteers, educating public on benefits of TNR and managed colonies.
- **Special Events/Marketing Team:** to effectively market animals available for adoption, such as:
  - (1) *“What’s in a Name”* Marketing Campaign will include assigning names to all animals during intake process. The public relates more effectively to animals with names as opposed to those who are only identified by their numbers. This program should be supervised by the Adoptions/Rescue Coordinator in order to maintain efficiency.
  - (2) *“More than a Mug Shot”* Marketing campaign will focus on publicizing more adoption friendly photographs of the animals in order to entice potential adopters. Appealing photos can make the difference between life and death. For that reason, we recommend additional photographs be taken by volunteers with the dogs outside, in more natural lighting, with the addition of props. GCAWE staff has instructed volunteers that they are not allowed to take the animals outside for photos, though there is nothing in the SOP that states such.



Other duties that can be delegated to volunteers on a daily basis are:

- **Dog Walkers:** as stated in the SOP, each animal is to be exercised twice a day. Volunteers are encouraged to write the times each animal is walked on the pen card to show visitors animals are receiving adequate exercise.
- **Kennel Cleaning and Cat Socialization:** essential for the health and wellbeing of the animals. Volunteers should be encouraged to handle the cats as much as possible, as long as they are properly sanitizing.
- **Client Services:** Establish an "Animal Help Desk" to be managed by trained volunteers. While the ASA's are very busy on the phones assisting a myriad of callers, there is another type of caller who is also in need of assistance that can monopolize the time of the staff. *"We're all familiar with reasons people bring animals to the shelter or abandon them, what many people don't realize is that many of these situations can be resolved in such a way that will keep animals out of the shelter."* If an ASA determines the caller needs this type of detailed assistance, staff can forward the call over to the Help Desk (if volunteers are available) to assist with these calls. Volunteers can give callers resources which have been approved by the shelter, to help reduce animals being dropped off for reasons such as lack of food, low cost spay/neutering, etc. Sometimes, all the caller needs is a bit of information and moral support. Nevada Humane Society's Animal Help Desk Handbook is available free of charge.

b. Assistant Rescue Coordinator Position:

Candidate will be selected by Adoption/Rescue Coordinator after an interview process. ARC is a volunteer leadership position which should be filled by volunteer willing/able to commit 15-20 hours per week at Shelter. ARC will be responsible for assisting the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator with tasks, including, but not limited to; contacting Rescue Groups, returning phone calls, email correspondence, sending email blasts and assisting the Adoption/Rescue Coordinator with all related tasks.

**Additional Volunteer Program Short-Term Goals/Initiatives:**

The Task Force is recommending a series of goals that can be implemented in a very short period of time (1-3 months) to effectively manage the fragmented Volunteer Program which is currently in place.

- 1.) Mandatory Volunteer Orientation and Handling Training Session to be held each month for all new volunteers. Include a Volunteer Manual for each volunteer to clearly explain rules, guidelines and description(s) of each volunteer position, with mandatory training expectations for specified areas. Have new volunteers sign volunteer contract after reading materials. Volunteers who will have direct contact with the animals will be given an on-site mandatory training regarding animal handling by an experienced ACO or handler.

\*Since March of 2011, there has not been one official Volunteer Orientation.

- 2.) Update GCAWE webpage to include Volunteer Program Overview, with a list of all volunteer opportunities, along with ASAI and AVC's contact information. Include instructions on application process for new volunteers, dates and times of upcoming volunteer orientations.



- 3.) Schedule a “shadow shift” for all new volunteers to be done with an experienced officer or volunteer on their first volunteer shift. This will give volunteers a chance to get acclimated with shelter, staff and most of all, the animals.
- 4.) Make it easy to identify volunteers by getting t-shirts, aprons or name tags. The public are more inclined to approach individuals who are clearly identified. We do not want to lose potential adopters because they are unable locate someone to direct them and/or answer questions.
- 5.) It is important to stay connected with your volunteers or they may very easily fall off the radar. Send a monthly E-Newsletter via email to current volunteers, using easy and free programs such as mailchimp, including upcoming special events and specific volunteer needs. Staying in touch with volunteers on a regular basis keeps them active.  
\*Since March of 2011, there has only been one email sent out to current volunteers regarding specific volunteer needs.
- 6.) Schedule volunteer shifts and track volunteer hours using free online tools such as signupgenius.com. Approved volunteers will have the opportunity to sign up for shifts online and staff can easily track who is coming in each day. When you allow volunteers to show up whenever they want, you can easily have days where several volunteers are not utilized efficiently and other days when there are no volunteers at the shelter at all.
- 7.) Make the shelter a welcoming place. The Task Force would like to encourage the community to visit, even if they are not looking to adopt. The extra attention is good for the animals; the visitors are more likely to tell friends and family, which will create community support. We would like visitors to feel more than a sterile, stark environment while visiting GCAWE. An easy way to change the atmosphere is by allowing volunteers to assist with maintaining bulletin boards. At DeKalb County Animal Control, there is a bulletin board in the intake area with photos of recently adopted animals with their owners, including a bulletin board with photos of their valued volunteers.
- 8.) Be sure to let staff and volunteers know to greet visitors with a smile, make eye contact and offer help with questions. How would you like potential adopters to be greeted when they are searching for their next family member? Provide places for people to sit and interact with the animals. The public should never feel like it is too much trouble for staff or volunteers to allow interaction with an animal. Encourage the public to connect with the animals, i.e., toys near the cat area can be used by volunteers or the public to engage the cats and a designated dog exercise area gives people an easy way to interact with the animals.

### **Volunteer Blanket and Toy Drive Initiative**

Homeless animals in shelters are usually subject to enormous stress as a result of their isolation and confinement to cages. Add to that the profusion of unfamiliar smells, the noise of virtually ceaseless barking, and a steady parade of strangers peering into their cages, and the animals' demeanor can't help but suffer. Even the most well-adjusted animals can have a hard time adjusting to shelter life, and the longer a homeless animal remains at the shelter, the less friendly, outgoing – and adoptable – they tend to seem.<sup>2</sup>

In response, many animal shelters across the country have implemented a Cage Comforter Program in which volunteers make and donate pet blankets and toys for the homeless cats,



kittens and dogs in shelter care. What they've found is that the homemade items not only help shelter animals relax and get comfortable, they also increase their rate of adoption, according to the Compassion Action Institute, which launched and runs the Cage Comforter Program for New York City's Center for Animal Care and Control.<sup>2</sup>

After embracing a Cage Comforter Program, for example, one animal shelter in Pennsylvania didn't have to euthanize any cats for an entire summer – a first-time event. Meanwhile, there are countless stories illustrating the transformation in homeless animals who receive homemade blankets or toys. For example: Mittens was a little black-and-white kitten in a Brooklyn shelter who had been hiding under newspapers in the back of his cage – not a good sign for his adoptability. When he got a comforter, however, he immediately settled down on it at the front of his cage and began treading, making him infinitely more likely to be adopted.<sup>2</sup>

While we may not have the volunteer capacity at GCAWE to make homemade blankets, GCAWE already has an abundance of blankets and comforters that would help tremendously in making our animals more comfortable and adoptable. The Task Force Recommends animals at GCAWE, cats and dogs included, given blankets or comforters which can be washed and reused. There is also an “approved toy” list, including Kong toys which can be used and sterilized. Our volunteers could easily help with blanket and toy drives to gather more blankets and toys when needed.

<sup>1</sup>Available at: [nevadahumanesociety.org/pdf/HowWeDidIt11-08.pdf](http://nevadahumanesociety.org/pdf/HowWeDidIt11-08.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Make Pet Blankets and Toys for Animal Shelters by Katherine Noyes, <http://volunteerguide.org>

## **5. MARKETING OUR PETS**

On average over the past three years, 59% of animals entering Gwinnett County Animal Control have been euthanized there. There are animals that never even make it onto the GCAWE website before their “due out” date which has caused many unnecessary deaths. GCAWE is doing the bare minimum in terms of giving our animals a chance to be adopted, rescued or reclaimed. Nor is there a marketing strategy being utilized to draw potential adopters to the shelter. In order to engage Gwinnett County citizens to come to GCAWE and experience our state-of-the-art facility and see the wonderful animals we have waiting to be adopted, GCAWE must initiate a progressive marketing strategy.

In order to decrease the number of animals entering the shelter and increase the number of animals being adopted, rescued and/or reclaimed, the Task Force recommends the following initiatives:

### Keep the GCAWE Website Consistently Updated:

The GCAWE website should be updated multiple times daily to reflect the coming and going of animals under the shelter's care. Animals entering the shelter should be publicized on the website within 24 hours of their arrival, and should be removed within 24 hours of their departure.

### Utilize Social Media:

Social media is a very powerful tool in today's society. GCAWE must have either an official Facebook page or support one run by authorized volunteers. Over thirty counties in the state of Georgia are promoting their shelter animals on Facebook and Gwinnett County refuses to do so. There is no excuse for not utilizing this free promotional tool that has been proven to save animals' lives. This Facebook page should advertise animals currently available for adoption or



rescue at the shelter as well as animals that have been lost and/or found. The Facebook page should be updated daily. This page should also advertise special adoption and/or educational events at the shelter. (See Appendix G regarding the effectiveness of Facebook which was presented to the Task Force by Walton County Shelter Director Bill Wise.)

Implement Effective Customer Service Strategies:

Task Force Members have witnessed several members of the public walking around GCAWE aimlessly, searching for officers to answer questions and assist in showing them the animals. In one instance, a person from the public came in wanting to look at some of our animals, signed in and sat down in the lobby waiting for direction. Not only was there no one there to greet the woman, but staff ignored the woman for several minutes. When it comes to interacting with the public, Task Force members have noticed that staff do not smile and often appear to have a rude or condescending attitude as if it is an inconvenience for them to be asked questions or to help people. When citizens come to the shelter they should be welcomed and spoken to in a positive, helpful manner. The staff at GCAWE has the opportunity to help promote the animals and provide a welcoming environment for the community at the same time. Even if someone from the public has no intention of adopting an animal when entering the facility, the experience should be a positive one. The Task Force believes word of mouth is powerful and when someone has a negative experience, the animals are ultimately the ones who will suffer.

In the article, “When the Adopters Show Up, Will Your Shelter be Ready,” petfinder conducted a survey to find out what kind of experiences people had at their local animal shelters. In terms of asking questions, the survey found that, “forty percent of the time, their inquiries at shelters went unanswered. And, when that happened, they became three times as likely to view shelter workers as ‘unprofessional’ and shelters as ‘unpleasant.’ “Worse, even among this group of people determined to adopt, lack of response doubled the chance they’d consider adopting. And, if the lack of response was paired with an attitude they found slow or patronizing? It quadrupled it.”<sup>1</sup>

It is recommended by the Task Force that Staff and volunteers undergo Customer Service training through free programs like those offered by PetSmart Charities: <https://petsmartcharities.webex.com/>. One of the most valuable tools at GCAWE should be its human resources, both paid and unpaid. There are many other free resources available to assist with Customer Service training including this document at Maddie’s Fund: [http://www.maddiesfund.org/Resource\\_Library/When Adopters Show Up.html](http://www.maddiesfund.org/Resource_Library/When_Adopters_Show_Up.html)

“What’s in a Name Marketing Campaign”:

People are able to connect on a more personal level with animals at shelters that have been given names, instead of just ID numbers. We are recommending the “What’s in a Name” Marketing campaign, so that all animals are given names at intake. The “What’s in a Name” program should be supervised by the Adoptions/Rescue Coordinator. See the Volunteer Recommendation for a more in-depth description of this program.

“More than a Mug Shot Campaign”:

The “More than a Mug Shot” campaign focuses on taking more quality photos of the animals, outside, in better lighting and with props. (See the Volunteer Recommendation for a more in-depth description of this program.) Volunteers can be trained in photography which will aid in this process and help save more lives with better photos. Bill Wise, Director of Walton County Animal Control teaches classes on shelter photography and has been kind enough to volunteer to teach the officers/volunteers at GCAWE how to better photograph the animals. GCAWE has a

wonderful lake on the property that would be a great setting for photographing the animals. (See Appendix G from Mr. Wise' presentation to the Task Force about taking the animals outside for more effective photos.)



**Kennel Cards: An Effective Promotional Tool:**

Since dogs who appear to be housebroken and are not relieving themselves in their pen are to be walked at least twice daily, as stated in 4-10 D of the S.O.P., observations made by kennel staff and volunteers during these walks should be added to all animals kennel cards to give potential adopters more insight to their behavior. Adding words like 'sweet,' 'calm,' 'loves to play ball,' 'walks well on a lead' are all positives that help to personalize the animals and facilitate their adoption. Currently, laminated cards are hung from kennel windows to say when adoptions are pending or animals are not available. Decorative cards with special characteristics of animals could be added as well. The "More than a Mug Shot" photo can be utilized on the cage card. (See Appendix D for Kennel Card Examples)

**Ways to Advertise to Gwinnett County Residents for Free:**

A variety of Gwinnett County media should be utilized to educate the public on animal issues such as the importance of spay/neuter and proper vaccination, public awareness of rabies and disease prevention, etc. Existing Gwinnett County media should be utilized: TV Gwinnett, What's New on TV Gwinnett, News for Neighborhoods, Eye on Gwinnett TV show, the Gwinnett Connection, etc. These are all free ways to connect with community and draw attention to GCAWE and the animals. Billboard space in key locations should be utilized to educate the public on the importance of spay/neuter, vaccination, adopting from the shelter and other related topics.

**Adoption and Promotional Events:**

Adoption events should be held at the shelter throughout the year. These events can be Holiday or otherwise focused. For example: Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Meow (for cats), Black Friday (for animals that are primarily black as they have been proven less popular to adopt), etc. Not only do these events bring Gwinnett County out to the shelter, but it is an opportunity to gain positive media attention.

**Highlighting Animals Who May Need Additional Publicity:**

Another proven marketing strategy is giving staff or volunteers the option in participating in either "staff favorite" or "volunteer favorite." This is yet another way to highlight an animal that may be potentially overlooked. Since the staff and volunteers have spent more time with the animal they are better equipped at realizing the dog's or cat's fabulous disposition and wonderful manners. The bulletin board at the entrance to the kennel is perfect for this opportunity.

Educating the Public about Responsible Pet Ownership:

Educational events at the shelter could be held including topics such as basic animal first aid and responsible pet ownership, the importance of spay/neuter, also the basics of animal laws in Gwinnett.

Well Behaved Cats and Dogs Market Themselves:

Well-behaved, happy dogs and cats will market themselves. In order to do this, the animals need two essential things: stimuli to keep them busy and a blanket to help them feel warm and safe. Toys keep dogs from barking out of constant boredom and blankets can change the temperament of a cat or dog inside a shelter, making them more comfortable and therefore adoptable. Non-profit organizations such as “Operation Blankets of Love” hold blanket and toy drives all over the country for homeless and shelter animals. Blankets are easily washable and readily available at GCAWE. Kong toys can be sterilized after use and are on the “approved toy list” for people to donate.

There is a donation box located in the lobby at GCAWE; many people donate food, treats, newspaper, dog beds, blankets and toys. Many of these items, including bedding, toys and treats sit in boxes and are rarely given to the animals at GCAWE because they are not on the “approved list.” Although treats are sometimes sent home with adopted animals, the Task Force recommends a more concerted effort be made to collect “approved toys” the animals actually can play with and then be sterilized, rather than continuing to collect unused toys and treats sitting around collecting dust, as photographed by one of our Task Force Members. Giving the animals the stimuli they need will help them be much more marketable to the public.



**Budget for Marketing:** All items mentioned above, except for the billboards, can be implemented at NO cost to the county. Negotiations with billboard companies can be made to limit their cost. Other items can be collected through donations and/or made by volunteers.

<sup>1</sup>When the Adopters Show Up, Will Your Shelter Be Ready? Maddie's Fund Resource Library 2009:  
[http://www.maddiesfund.org/Resource\\_Library/When\\_Adopters\\_Show\\_Up.html](http://www.maddiesfund.org/Resource_Library/When_Adopters_Show_Up.html)

## **6. DATA MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement has recently gained media attention from outlets reporting serious failures in timely posting of animals in the shelter to the county's website. Shelter management has not responded to the issues, resulting in animals having no chance of adoption, rescue or reclaim. Many animals are not able to be viewed by the public, their photos never appearing on the GCAWE webpage before euthanasia is scheduled. The Task Force is recommending that photos of all animals be taken and posted within 24 hours of intake, and removed promptly when animals leave the building. This would include animals not



deemed available for adoption, as they may be someone's pet and have an owner looking to reclaim them.

Management claims to be addressing the problem of incorrect data - a supervisor was even quoted on video on a local news channel stating that the problem is being addressed – and yet days go by without updated information appearing on the GCAWE website. The head of Gwinnett County's Communications Department, consulted on maintenance of the webpage, confirmed that it is the responsibility of GCAWE to keep their webpage information current. In order to ascertain what data management problems currently exist, one of our Task Force Members spent an entire shift with the acting ACOII in charge of data management. During this observation period, there were several troublesome instances which were witnessed, not relating to data management. (See Appendix F for a full description of events observed by our Animal Task Force Member.)

The officer in charge of keeping this information current – the “data management” officer - also is responsible for many duties that in no way relate to data management. These other tasks actually take up the majority of his time in lieu of updating the GCAWE webpage. These tasks include: cleaning neglect pens, euthanizing wild cats, taking almost all photos of animals in the shelter (which can be up to 50-70 photos after returning from his two days off), editing photos and resizing images, responding to all emails/inquiries about lost and found cats/dogs, creating lost and found forms, training officers to use the database system, creating training manuals for the staff, updating all rabies postings, addressing all IT issues at the shelter, designing the updated GCAWE page, euthanizing other animals as assigned, and additional duties as described in the ACOII job description and as assigned.

Because of the number of unrelated tasks assigned, the officer stated to our Task Force Member that he was two weeks behind on replying to lost and found inquires online. Since most animals that come through GCAWE barely get the minimum five day holding period, and most certainly never get weeks, this delay is clearly unacceptable; the shelter could potentially be euthanizing animals that citizens have lost and are in the process of looking for. This officer explained he has made suggestions to supervisors which would help him perform his duties more efficiently and stated that supervisors (past and present) have failed to listen. (A list of these suggestions is included in Appendix F).

These critical items must be remedied immediately:

- **Cross Training:** The officer in charge of data management used to have help managing the website from an officer that was recently reassigned to field operations. There should be 1-2 officers who are cross trained in keeping the shelter buddy database updated and knowledgeable in downloading photos/removing photos from the website in order to keep the website current during times when the primary officer is unavailable, i.e., days off, sick days, and vacation.
- **Photographing the Animals:** It takes an ample amount of time to take photos of shelter animals that will aid in getting them adopted or rescued. The officer in charge of data management is also required to take all of the photos of the animals. This officer stated that when he returns to work after his two days off, there can be anywhere from 50-70 animals to photograph. He has recommended that all officers be given cameras to assist with the task of photographing the animals in the field. In the shelter, while officers at intake have been reprimanded for not taking photos, these officers still refuse to help



with this critical life-saving measure. In addition to requiring photos at intake, additional “adoption friendly” photos can and should be taken by trained volunteers (this is included in our Marketing and Volunteer Program Recommendations).

- **Correcting Inaccurate Data:** The officer in charge of data management has stated he is routinely having to double check the work of officers, who do not keep their notes current, i.e., there are several animals listed at the vet who are not there. Officers will move animals within the facility (from pen to pen) without putting it in the notes and subsequently, the data management officer has to comb the facility looking for them. Also, officers will put animals in the Shelter Buddy system without checking to see if that animal is already entered, which causes confusion and is very problematic in keeping the system accurate/current. The Task Force recommends better oversight of officers to ensure that their assigned duties are completed in a reliable, efficient manner.
- **Petfinder Problem:** Petfinder.com is a valuable resource for placing pets into homes, and normally is automatically synchronized with the Shelter Buddy system. However, many of the photos the data management officer is uploading are failing to synch with Petfinder. This problem has been ongoing for over a year and has yet to be resolved. This officer believes the problem is with Petfinder and not the Shelter Buddy system, but no one from GCAWE has contacted the Gwinnett County Communications Division to assist with this interfacing problem. So essentially, nothing has been done to resolve this issue. Many other shelters use Petfinder, so there must be a solution. It’s important for this technical issue to be resolved in order to widen the scope of visibility for shelter animals.

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. ANIMAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Programs Committee of the Gwinnett Animal Task Force endorses the bylaw revisions submitted by the current Animal Advisory Committee and offers some minor enhancements, highlighted on the attached document.

It is our belief that requiring this committee to report directly to the Board of Commissioners will greatly improve its effectiveness. The GAAC will forward only those recommendations that have been approved by majority vote. The Board of Commissioners will retain the responsibility to make final decisions on all recommendations submitted.

We suggest minor changes to the proposed members of the committee itself, agreeing with the AAC that an 11-member committee is optimal and leaving in representatives of the rescue community. We are hopeful that the resulting committee will give serious consideration to appointing advisors (Article VIII, Section 8) with knowledge of currently apropos issues such as specific dog breeds, i.e. “pit bulls,” and feral cats.

It is also critical that this committee provide an oversight function to ensure compliance with the recommendations submitted by this Task Force and approved by the Board of Commissioners.



**ANIMAL ADVISORY COUNCIL - CODE OF ETHICS**

*(Proposed – Task Force Recommendations are in bold type face and underlined)*

As a member of the Gwinnett Animal Advisory Council (GAAC) representing all the citizens in the county, I shall constantly strive:

To devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of the GAAC, so that I may render effective and credible service;

To work with my fellow GAAC members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arises during vigorous debates of points at issue;

To base my personal decision upon all available facts in each situation; to vote my honest conviction in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind; thereafter, to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the council;

To remember at all times that, as a member of the GAAC, I have no legal authority other than that given in the bylaws; and to conduct my relationships with the county staff, local citizenry, and all others on the basis of this fact; and to refrain from communicating any confidential information to any outside source;

To resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as an GAAC member to benefit either myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the county;

To bear in mind under all circumstances that the primary function of the GAAC is to act as an advisory group to the Board of Commissioners; and that the administration of animal control and the conduct of the county business shall be left to Gwinnett County Animal Control, the Gwinnett County Police Department, the Board of Commissioners, as well as employed management and professional and support staff;

To welcome and encourage cooperation by citizens and organizations in the county; and

To provide, in a spirit of teamwork and a commitment to animal welfare, the most effective GAAC service possible to Gwinnett County.

**BYLAWS**

**Article I. Name**

The name of this council shall be the Gwinnett Animal Advisory Council, (GAAC) as created by the Board of Commissioners by resolution on \_\_\_\_\_20\_.

**Article II. Purpose**

The GAAC shall be an advisory council for the purpose of studying, making recommendations, **ensuring compliance with directives issued by the Board of Commissioners**, and offering professional advice to Gwinnett County Animal Control and the Board of Commissioners on animal welfare and other animal-related issues in Gwinnett County.



### **Article III. Objectives**

The objectives of the GAAC shall be:

To provide a channel for dialogue between citizens and the Board of Commissioners;

To bring about cooperation and coordination of resources to maximize animal welfare.

### **Article IV. Limitations**

#### **Section 1.**

The GAAC shall have no power to enter into contracts of any nature nor to spend public funds.

#### **Section 2.**

In the absence of written consent, no council member shall be required to provide any sum of money, property, or service other than services described herein to the GAAC.

#### **Section 3.**

The GAAC shall have no power to bind any member or any citizen to any debt, liability, or obligation in the absence of any express written authorization from the party to be bound.

#### **Section 4.**

The exclusive authority of the GAAC is to gather information and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. The GAAC has no independent authority to act on any of its recommendations. Decisions on whether or how to act on any recommendations submitted by the GAAC belong exclusively to the Board of Commissioners, Chief of Police, Animal Control Manager, and/or County staff.

#### **Section 5.**

GAAC members are not County employees and have no authority to hold themselves out as such.

#### **Section 6.**

The GAAC shall have no power beyond those expressly set forth in these bylaws.

### **Article V. Membership**

#### **Section 1.**

The GAAC shall be composed of eleven (11) members, as follows:

One member representing the **licensed dog or cat breeding community**;

One member representing **the feline rescue community in** Gwinnett County;

One member representing livestock animals;



One member representing **the canine rescue community in** Gwinnett County;  
One member representing the Gwinnett Municipal Association;  
One member representing the Gwinnett County Veterinary Medical Association;  
One member representing each **of the four** commission district;  
And One member representing the Commission Chairman.

Initially, each designated organization/interest shall submit their recommendation for appointment in writing to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

All persons recommended must be residents of Gwinnett County. Only Gwinnett County residents are eligible for appointment to the GAAC.

The Board of Commissioners may reject any recommendation submitted and request the organization/interest concerned to recommend another member for appointment.

Following the initial appointments, by November 1 of any year preceding the expiration of a member's term, the Commissioner, or organization/interest represented by that member shall submit in writing to the Board of Commissioners the name of a new recommendation for appointment or a written request to renew the current member's term.

## **Section 2. Term of Office**

Initially, all members will be new to the council. Therefore, to stagger membership terms, the odd numbered district representatives, the Gwinnett County Veterinary Medical Association member, the **Breeding community** member and the Livestock member will serve one year terms and the other members will serve two year terms. Thereafter, members shall each serve staggered two year terms so that the council will always have both experienced and new members.

The term of those serving in office when these by-laws are enacted will be terminated upon the new appointments.

## **Section 3. Compensation**

Members selected will serve in non-paying volunteer positions.

## **Section 4. Voting Rights**

Each member shall be entitled to one vote and may cast that vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the GAAC. Proxy voting and absentee ballots shall not be permitted and advisory members do not vote.

## **Section 5. Termination of Membership**

If a member ceases to be a resident of Gwinnett County, that person shall no longer hold membership in the GAAC. The GAAC, by affirmative vote of two-thirds of all members, may also recommend (with reason or cause) the



suspension or expulsion of a member to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners.

**Section 6. Transfer of Membership**

Membership in the GAAC is neither transferable nor assignable.

**Section 7. Resignation/Vacancy**

Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners. Any vacancy created on the council may be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term through the same selection procedure as specified in Sections 1 and 2.

**Section 8. Absences**

It is the responsibility of each member to inform the chairman when and for what reason a member will be absent from a meeting. In the event that a member is absent from more than 50% of meetings held in a calendar year, then that individual shall be replaced. It shall be the responsibility of the chairman to inform the Commission of such need for replacement.

**Article VI. Officers**

**Section 1.**

The GAAC shall have the following officers:

- A. Chairperson;
- B. Secretary (to set agenda and keep group records);
- C. Parliamentarian
- D. Vice-chairman

Gwinnett County government may provide a staff assistant to keep records for the county and to assist in setting the agenda.

**Section 2.**

The officers of the GAAC shall be elected annually and may serve no more than two consecutive terms on the same office. Election shall be by a majority vote of all members of the GAAC. The term of office for each officer shall begin immediately upon election. An officer shall serve until relieved of his or her duties as provided by Section I-5029 of Code of Ordinances, Gwinnett County, Georgia or until he or she voluntarily steps down. In the event of an extended absence of either officer, the GAAC may appoint a temporary Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Secretary to fill the office until the return of the absent officer or until the expiration of his or her term of office, whichever comes first.

**Article VII. Duties of Officers**

**Section 1. Chairperson**

- A. Preside at all meetings of the GAAC.
- B. Sign all letters, reports, and other GAAC communications.
- C. Perform all duties incidental to the office of Chairperson and other duties as may be prescribed by the GAAC.



## **Section 2. Secretary**

- A. Act as custodian of any council records not maintained by the staff assistant provided by the county.
- B. Coordinate agenda items, records management, and recommendation submissions with the staff assistant provided by the county.
- C. Keep a register of the addresses and telephone numbers of the council members.
- D. Compile an agenda at least 48 hours prior to the regular meeting and submit for additions, deletions, and/or approval by the Chairperson or by the GAAC.
- E. Coordinate correspondence for Chairperson's signature on behalf of the council members.
- F. In general, perform all duties incidental to the office of Secretary and other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson or by the GAAC.

## **Section 3. Parliamentarian**

Ensure meetings are conducted in an orderly manner per Roberts Rules of Order and the Georgia Open Meetings Act.

## **Section 4. Vice-Chairman**

The Vice-Chairman shall act as the Chairman in his or her absence. When acting as Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall have the same powers, duties, and privileges as the Chairman. The Vice-Chairman shall ensure meetings are conducted in an orderly manner per Roberts Rules of Order and the Georgia Open Meetings Act.

# **Article VIII. Meetings**

## **Section 1.**

The GAAC shall meet regularly **at least twice** per quarter-year. **Meeting cancellations should be made up within 30 days of cancellation.**

## **Section 2.**

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by a majority vote of the GAAC.

## **Section 3.**

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the GAAC members, and a majority vote of those present constituting a quorum shall be sufficient to decide all matters which come before the GAAC.

## **Section 4. Conduct of Meetings**

All regular and special meetings of the GAAC shall be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order or in accordance with an appropriate adaptation thereof.

## **Section 5. Agenda**

The Chairman shall determine the meeting agenda. Members of the Gwinnett Animal Advisory Council may request the addition of agenda items by contacting either the Chairman or the Director at least three (3) calendar days prior to a meeting. All matters to be considered and/or acted upon by the Gwinnett Animal Advisory Council shall appear on the agenda.



### **Section 6. Meetings Open to the Public**

Regular and special meetings of the GAAC shall be open to the public as required by the Georgia Open Meetings Act. Notification of meetings and cancellations is to be posted on the Gwinnett County website seven (7) calendar days preceding the meeting date. The agenda shall be given to the Director of Animal Control who will have it posted on the Gwinnett County website.

### **Section 7. Recommendations**

The AAC shall only submit recommendations which have been approved by a majority vote of the GAAC. All recommendations for action must be submitted in writing to the Board of Commissioners.

### **Section 8. Committees**

**The chairman may appoint, with concurrence of the GAAC, various standing and temporary committees and advisors to further proposals of the GAAC. Such committees may include members of the staff of various county departments as well as residents and business owners of the county whose background and knowledge may be of benefit to the GAAC in accomplishing its goals.**

**The purpose of these advisors or committees shall be to make recommendations and investigations as needed to the GAAC as instructed pertaining to matters or classes of matters within its purview. The Chairman or Vice-Chairman shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.**

## **Article IX. Amendments to the Bylaws**

Pursuant to the Resolution creating the GAAC, these bylaws may only be amended by resolution of the Board of Commissioners. Any requests to amend the bylaws must be submitted in writing, signed by the Chairperson, and addressed to the County Administrator.

## **2. RESTRUCTURING RECOMMENDATION: A CRITICAL LIFE SAVING INITIATIVE**

The Animal Task Force has identified numerous areas for improvement and made recommendations for implementing much needed best practices to increase efficiencies, quality of care for animals and dramatically increase lifesaving.

During the course of the Task Force evaluation, however, it became evident that any future progress at animal control and services is complicated by Gwinnett Police Department procedures that impact the shelter's ability to effectively respond to the demands of caring for live animals and enforcing county animal control ordinances.

Current management under the Gwinnett Police Department has failed to put saving lives at the top of its mission. Staff accountability, effective life-saving programs, and good relations with the community are lacking currently. The management team, directly led by a Police Department representative until very recently, has shown so little interest in shelter operations that standard operating procedures have been allowed to become woefully out of date.



Running a successful animal services operation requires both governmental oversight in providing animal services that protect the community and a professionally staffed shelter to provide housing and treatment for the animals in its care while promoting animal welfare policies that promote responsible pet ownership.

Therefore, the Task Force believes it to be in the best interest of County operations for shelter management to be removed from the jurisdiction of the Police Department. While this is a transition that will obviously require study in order to be properly performed, this division has been performed successfully in many jurisdictions, including locally in both Fulton and Walton Counties. We are aware that many budgetary and structural issues will need to be addressed as well.

Stated briefly, the proposed structure is as follows:

- The Police Department would retain oversight of Animal Control operations, including road patrols, code enforcement, and overseeing animal cruelty, neglect and court cases.
- Animals admitted to the shelter would become the responsibility of Sheltering Operations, including strays waiting for owner reclaims and all other animals made available for adoption or rescue.
- While Animal Control operations will continue to report to the Police Department, we see two options for Sheltering Operations: (1) reporting directly to the County Administrator or (2) total outsourcing to an independent organization. Either way, Shelter Operations will be better equipped to enlist a professional team of animal care specialists and to prioritize animal care, while leaving enforcement to the experts in the Police Department.

One area in particular that has caused much recent discussion and would be made easier by removing Sheltering Operations from the Police Department is the approval and management of volunteers. Not having volunteers in an official Police capacity will eliminate the cumbersome requirements of background checks, fingerprinting, and the requirement that they conform to department policies.

In summary, Gwinnett needs a shelter management model that not only meets the expectations of the community but also puts into place programs that will reduce the cost of animal control services while putting an end to the killing of healthy dogs and cats that the shelter is supposed to protect.

With the creation of the Animal Task Force, our County leaders have demonstrated a commitment to making Gwinnett a model for progressive animal services. This will only happen when the appropriate management is in place, and that management must include civilian-led experts in community animal care.

### **3. MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS NEEDING REVIEW AT GCAWE**

#### **Exercise and Care**

In the seven hours our Task Force member spent at GCAWE on Monday 4/2/12, she did not witness even one dog being walked, nor were any staff members interacting with the animals. While 4-6 inmates were observed cleaning pens that are in open view to the public in the



morning, when escorted to the back (not open to the public) at the end of the day, almost all of the dogs were sitting in pens with urine and feces. Walks should be recorded on a kennel card kept on the dogs kennel to ensure dogs are getting enough exercise to make their stay more comfortable. Other characteristics regarding the personality and temperament of the dog should be added as well as a picture so if the dog is out exercising, potential adopters will know what it looks like. (See Appendix D for an example of recommended Kennel Cards)

S.O.P. 4-10 D, clearly states that, "Attention will be made to those dogs that are not "relieving" themselves in their cages. Dogs that appear to be housebroken will be walked at least two times a day. If time permits, more walks will be provided."

Not only are the animals not receiving the minimal exercise cited in this particular Standard Operating Procedure, the Task Force recommends that S.O.P. 4-10 D be immediately changed to ensure all dogs which are healthy enough to be walked receive daily exercise.

Recommend change S.O.P. 4-10 D by The Animal Welfare Task Force:

Attention will be made to those dogs not relieving themselves in their cages. Dogs that appear to be housebroken will be walked at least two times a day. If time permits, more walks will be provided. Additionally, all healthy dogs should receive adequate exercise daily; these dogs will be walked at least one time a day or permitted play time in an outside pen. If time permits, more walks will be provided. Every time a dog is walked or given playtime, it should be documented on the Kennel Card. Staff Supervisors are responsible for ensuring dogs are receiving adequate exercise daily.

Volunteers, inmates and officers may all be involved in exercising the dogs. Should extra help be needed, Sheriff Conway has offered ample inmate manpower to help with needs in the kennel at GCAWE to ensure animals are receiving the best care possible.

*"Studies determined that shelter animals given blankets and comforters relax, feel happy, safe, secure and warm. Being comfortable in a more home-like setting increases their chances of being adopted."* Operation Blankets of Love. (See Appendix H for an Operation Blankets of Love Letter of Support)

Animals should be given blankets and toys that can be sanitized or thrown away when that animal leaves to make them more comfortable. Many blankets, towels, dog beds, etc., have been donated by the public, but they are not used. Cost should not be as issue as the inmates do the laundry and the shelter already has industrial washing machines. The reason given by management for not offering blankets to dogs is the possibility that they may be ingested, but we believe the comforting element of having something to snuggle far outweighs the risk of an occasional ingestion; particularly since employees are always around to observe the dogs' behavior and can remove items when they see this behavior.



I would be concerned about dogs developing pressure sores from laying on hard, barren surfaces for extended periods. I would expect both dogs and cats to experience psychological stress as a result of living in a barren environment that did not provide any opportunities for choice, including resting surfaces. They may act withdrawn or hide in “inappropriate,” unpleasing places like their litter pan.<sup>1</sup> If there is not a sufficient number of comfortable rest places, the animals will use their litter trays for this purpose (Deluca and Kranda, 1992; Rochlitz, 1997b).



### **Adoption Procedures**

Dogs that are chosen by a rescue group have “Not Available” orange cards put on them (same cards as for aggressive dogs) and their info is pulled from the window. They often sit there for days or even a week or more waiting for the rescue, during which time adopters may end up being interested in them but can't consider adopting them because they are labeled “Not Available”. Adoption should be the ultimate goal; adopters should receive priority over rescue. Alternatively, these dogs could be moved to the back to allow space for other dogs that may be killed due to lack of space in the adoption area.

People are only permitted to interact with 2 dogs that they are interested in adopting in order to limit disease. While there should be a reasonable limit, more than two should certainly be allowed during the selection process. There are lots of sanitizers around the kennel for them to use in between each dog to help with the spread of disease from their hands.

People may not interact with a dog unless the entire family residing in the household is there and they are serious about adopting. We recommend some flexibility to this policy.

While current policy does not allow more than one “hold” to be placed on an animal at a time, the Task Force strongly recommends there be a list devised for potential adopters. For example, if there is a list of three potential adopters, GCAWE can move onto the second and or the third on the list if the initial potential adopter fails to pick up the animal after the hold time expires. The Task Force has been told by shelter staff that approximately 60% of the time potential adopters who place holds on animals, never even show up to adopt the animal. Provisions must be made in case this happens. It is extremely unfair to the animal if there are multiple interested parties.

Not everyone who reclaims a dog is offered the option to spay/neuter and microchip for \$60 (or \$30 for senior or Gwinnett County employee) instead of paying the impound/boarding fees. This should be offered every time, as altering and microchipping can prevent future problems for the shelter.



### **Equipment**

The data management officer mentioned he has observed more and more microchipped animals coming into GCAWE by officers in the field. He stated he believes there are two reasons for this: (1) improper use of the scanner by moving it too quickly over the animal's body and (2) not all scanners are functioning properly. The Task Force recommends scanners be checked on a daily basis at GCAWE and in the field; with random equipment checks performed by Supervisors.

### **Field Operations**

One of our Animal Task Force Member did a ride along with a Field Officer and learned that there is a great distance for them to cover and not all calls can be answered, especially if a Field Officer is needed at a crime scene or an eviction where animals are involved. They often have to sit and wait for the property to be cleared before they can remove the animal prohibiting them from going on any other calls.

Gwinnett County is very large, covering approximately 437 square miles with anywhere from a minimum of two and maximum of 5 Officers to cover this great distance on any given day. In contrast, DeKalb County Animal Services has only 267 square miles and has a maximum of 5 Officers to cover their County, and the DeKalb Animal Task Force determined there were not enough field officers to adequately cover the number of incoming calls. DeKalb had approximately 23,327 calls in 2010 while Gwinnett had 26,255 calls in 2011 and yet they have the same number of officers despite the fact that Gwinnett is nearly double the size of DeKalb in square mileage.

It is not realistic for Gwinnett Officers to be able to cover the vast amount of square miles with the same number of Officers that was deemed inadequate for DeKalb which has much less square mileage. The Task Force recommends taking officers from the Kennel and putting them on the road. GCAWE should have 4-5 officers on the road at all times to properly respond to critical calls and have more time to ascertain animals in the field; animals which may be returned to their owners and may never have to come to GCAWE in the first place.



To offset the loss of man power in the kennel, Sheriff Butch Conway has offered inmate manpower to work at GCAWE in the kennels and to handle the same duties that the current inmates from the Department of Corrections handle. Sheriff Conway committed to providing GCAWE with the same inmates as long as they were housed at his jail, meaning GCAWE would not have the issue with different inmates each day. This helps maintain the integrity of the disease prevention measures currently in place.



### **Petco Adoption Partners**

The Petco Program marks the first time shelter animals have been routinely sent off-site to increase exposure to the public. The adoption fee for fully vetted cats is \$30. This is a wonderful, innovative program put in place by GCAWE.

Currently, the Petco Program sends adoptable cats to a single store on Pleasant Hill Road in Duluth, where they are showcased in the front of the store where customers make their purchases. There are four cat cages, fully carpeted, with a perch for the cats to lie on. GCAWE sends an ACO to the Petco daily to clean the cages and check the status of the cats.

Since January 2, 2012, twenty-four cats have been adopted from this Petco location. One of our Task Force Members went to this store and personally checked the placement of the cats, the cages, and spoke with Management about the program. The manager said cats that are sent over from GCAWE are adopted very quickly and also stated she would like to see more cats sent to the store for adoption.

The Petco Program is a wonderful initiative, although the program is extremely underutilized. Our Task Force Member went to Petco on a busy Saturday, where three out of the four cages sat empty, while over 30 cats were sitting at GCAWE waiting for adoption. If the four cages at Petco stay at capacity, there is the potential for adopting over 100 cats per month through the Petco Program.

While the Petco Program has saved the lives of seventeen cats in the past four months, 360 cats at GCAWE lost their lives; 53 in January, 84 in February, 104 in March and 119 in April. GCAWE must be more proactive in utilizing the Petco Program, which has the potential of saving many more lives. It also gives GCAWE the opportunity to showcase a highly innovative program that is one of the first of its kind in the country.

### **Petco Adoption Partners Satellite Adoption Center: Long-Term Goal:**

Karen Meader, Petco National Adoption Program Manager recently contacted the Task Force to discuss the potential of a Satellite Adoption Center to help enhance adoption rates at GCAWE. The Duluth Petco store is scheduled for a remodel in September of 2012. The remodel will include the addition of a 1,000 square foot Satellite Adoption Center. The center will open in October of 2012. Petco would like to have cats, dogs, puppies and kittens available for daily adoption. Additional animals such as rabbits, ferrets, small companion animals and reptiles can also be displayed for adoption as they are available at Gwinnett County Animal Care. Ms. Meader explained these adoption centers have been highly successful (see chart below) and there are many options for the design of the center. "Many sites have a free roaming cat room with a stationary cat habitat to place those cats that need to be separated. Dogs could have two t-kennels or one room depending on how you would like to showcase the dogs. We could also build a puppy and kitten room if you do not plan to have rabbits at the store."

The Task Force believes the Petco Satellite Adoption Center may be a wonderful opportunity to partner within the community and provide the additional exposure the animals at GCAWE so greatly need. The Task Force encourages the new Shelter Director to research this program.



<b>Broward Humane Society Adoption Results: 10-01-2011 until 3-06-2012</b>
-Dade County Petco: Did 278 adoptions so far. There were 106 adoptions over last year, full adoption center with cats and dogs
-Boca Raton Petco: Did 543 adoptions so far. There were 94 adoptions over last year, full adoption center with cats and dogs
-Hallandale Petco: Did 100 adoptions. Stationary Adoption Habitat with cats only
<b>Michigan Humane Society: 01-01-2012 to 04-30-2012</b>
-Sterling Heights Petco: Did 182 adoptions including cats, dogs, rabbits and guinea pigs
<b>Humane Society of Silicon Valley: 2011 Year End Results</b>
-Saratoga Petco: Did 642 adoptions, a 20% increase over 2010.
-Sunnyvale Petco: Did 527 adoptions
<b>Petco Adoption Centers work with:</b> Arizona Animal Welfare League, Broward Humane Society, Michigan Humane Society, Pact Humane Society and Humane Society of Silicon Valley

### Public Funding in Model Communities

Community	Human Pop.	Animal Control Budget	Animals Handled Annually	Euthanasia Rate	Budget Per Capita
Tompkins County, NY	101,564	\$1,250,000	2,177	6%	\$12.31
Washoe County, NV	421,407	\$4,800,000	14,802	6%	\$11.39
Albemarle County, VA	99,150	\$900,000	3,727	8%	\$9.08
Travis County, TX	1,024,266	\$6,531,436	22,475	26%	\$6.38
Gwinnett County, GA	805,321	\$2,307,123	9600	59%	\$2.86

### Fees Retained at GCAWE

Gwinnett County has a much lower budget per capita than our neighboring county of DeKalb as well as many model communities throughout the United States who have drastically lowered their rate of euthanasia. Times are tight and budgets are tighter, but the Task Force feels that revenue can be increased at GCAWE, specifically by causing revenue collected to remain with this department. Currently, monies collected for adoptions, reclaims, and other fees are diverted into the county's General Fund; we propose that this income be used to directly benefit the animals in the shelter. Additionally, we have provided data showing a net savings of \$73,134 by hiring a full-time veterinarian, as opposed to the county's current practice of utilizing contractors and private services to provide spay/neuter and veterinary services. This savings could be used for marketing campaigns to increase exposure, public awareness, adoptions, and other innovative programs designed to improve the lives of animals in our care.

<sup>1</sup> Scientific Support for Comfortable Bedding for Shelter Animals by Catherine McManus VMD, MPH, DACVPM, February 2012.



## **TNR AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **OVERVIEW**

A TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) Ad Hoc Committee was formed to address the particular issues involved with feral cats. This committee met three times and researched the handling of feral cats at GCAWE including other areas relevant to feral or “wild” animals affecting the community and GCAWE. The Ad Hoc Committee researched successful TNR Programs nationwide including the highly effectual Feral Freedom Program in DeKalb County. The committee has seen ample evidence that TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) is the only viable and humane solution for ferals. In the short term, GCAWE can be provided with materials to educate the public about options other than euthanasia as scientific evidence has proven that eradication will never reduce the number of free roaming and/or feral cats; long-term, we would like to see a program similar to DeKalb’s Feral Freedom instituted at GCAWE.

There are an estimated 46,650 free-roaming cats in Gwinnett County, Georgia. The ongoing debate over the most effective way to decrease colony populations calls for new politics. Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) is a method used to humanely curb community cat populations with proven results.<sup>1</sup> TNR is the only proven cost effective solution in dealing with free roaming cats; eradication will never be successful, as it is costly to taxpayers and does nothing to lower the number of free roaming cats within our community.

With an average litter of four kittens born every six months, Gwinnett County could witness as many as 11,633 free roaming kittens born and survive each year.<sup>2</sup> Removing community cats through trap and kill tactics only creates a vacant niche to be filled by other stray and community cats, most of whom would still be intact and therefore capable of producing yet more kittens.<sup>3</sup>

Strategies for saving feral cats are different from those for saving healthy and treatable pets. Ferals need community –based programs that humanely reduce their numbers while allowing them to live out their lives side-by-side with the rest of us. Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) is not only humane; it is the most cost effective way to reduce the number of homeless cats. Programs built around TNR reduce births, save lives, and support community efforts to compassionately care for cats.<sup>4</sup>

A feral cat program can have a dramatic impact on the number of cats entering a community’s shelters, and on the number of cats euthanized. In San Diego, for example, cat impounds and euthanasias at county shelters decreased by over 40% after the Feral Cat Coalition began offering free spay/neuter clinics for ferals. And, in San Francisco, cat impounds at the city shelter have declined 28% and cat euthanasias 73% thanks in large part to the SF/SPCA’s feral cat assistance program.<sup>4</sup>

Organizations on even the smallest budget can start a feral cat program. It’s as simple as a feral cat caregiver support group, volunteers, and humane traps. As your program grows, you can expand.<sup>4</sup>

The Task Force recommends partnering with a local non-profit advocacy group to promote TNR. Monies saved by not housing and euthanizing feral cats can be used for marketing



materials to educate the public about the policy. Actual trapping, supplies, and spay/neuter will be paid for by our TNR Coalition Partners through grants and other private sources.

## **SHORT-TERM GOALS:**

### **1. Keep Feral Cats Out of the Shelter**

- Stop accepting trapped feral cats and stop trapping feral cats: Feral cats are not socialized to people, and are therefore unadoptable. Since animals that are not candidates for adoption are killed in animal control shelters, do not even take in feral cats. Feral cats simply do not belong there. Avoid being the custodian of a cat you cannot service.<sup>5</sup> (Gwinnett County has a head start here: our officers stopped picking up cats in January 2011.)
- Recognize eartipping: An eartip means the cat has been spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and is part of a feral cat colony. The Task Force recommends that all eartipped cats be returned immediately to their original location.<sup>5</sup>
- Facility protocol for unear tipped feral cats should focus on Trap, Neuter, and Return. Take those cats to be spayed or neutered, and then return them to their outdoor home—their colony's habitat. Maintaining excellent records, detailing the location the cats originally came from, will make it easier to return the cats.<sup>5</sup>

## **Recommendation:**

The Task Force recommends a Staff Liaison trained in issues pertaining to feral cats. Planned PETHood is willing to extensively train and cross train selected staff, free of charge, in the areas of feral cats, TNR, temperament and public relations. The Staff Liaison will have a proactive role in educating the public about alternatives to kill tactics for those who bring in feral cats they have trapped.

Recommended Alternatives to costly eradication at GCAWE:

- 1) Educating the public about removing cats from their property; this will only attract new cats, especially if there is a feeding source. Instead of paying the \$25.00 owner surrender fee; the cat may be spayed/neutered at low cost spay/neuter clinic, such as Planned PETHood, for the same price. Volunteers should be available to transport cats to and from the spay/neuter clinic for clients who may not be able to do so.
- 2) For public who are insistent on cats not returning to the location where they were trapped, a low cost spay/neuter fee should be suggested, instead of the \$25.00 owner surrender fee; and TNR coalition members should be contacted for placement of cats into a barn program.

### **2. Build People Power**

- Having a staff member/volunteer responsible for feral cat protocols and information within the organization is a great way to jump-start a TNR program. This person would be responsible for educating the rest of the organization on protocols, including how to respond to the public regarding feral cats.<sup>6</sup>



- If your staff is uneducated about feral cats and the issues pertaining to them, they could potentially be making the problem worse instead of affecting positive change within in the community. One of our Task Force members completed a quality control telephone call to GCAWE to see how knowledgeable the staff answering the phone was regarding feral cats and some of the options for them. (Please see appendix C for the documented Quality Care Control Phone Call.) It became very apparent to the Task Force that GCAWE has some work to do in the area of training their employees properly concerning feral Cats.

### **Recommendation:**

While GCAWE Staff are busy with variable tasks and duties; The Task Force recommends the creation of a Volunteer Feral Cat Liaison Position to be selected by the on-site Volunteer Coordinator to assist with educating the public and working with GCAWE volunteers in the following areas:

- Educate and train volunteers and public on TNR protocol and trapping techniques
- Develop and maintain relationships with community cat volunteers and members within feral cat coalition
- Determine target areas for TNR based on phone calls from the public
- Keep critical data current with:
  - Name/address/ZIP CODE
  - Number of cats in colony
  - Call time/date
- Educate and train volunteers and public on how to manage a colony
- Educate volunteers in the GCAWE volunteer program how to:
  - Answer phone questions regarding TNR
  - Answer questions when people come into shelter with/without trapped cat
- Management of materials-handouts
- Knowledge of ways to work with management on private property/authorization form for TNR
- Research potential barn program clients
- Assist with monthly TNR training classes at GCAWE provided by TNR Coalition Partners
- Present TNR portion at new volunteer orientation once a month
- Evaluate the success of the TNR program through statistical analysis

All TNR volunteers will be given liability waivers by on-site GCAWE Volunteer Coordinator during training or at Volunteer Orientation. Waivers will cover TNR and transport of cats to and from GCAWE. Liability waiver is being created by Gwinnett County Legal Department.

### **3. Educate the Public about Outdoor Cats**

- The majority of callers reporting outdoor cats to animal control are looking for help, not exterminators. Callers can't ask for services that they don't know exist. Share educational materials and information in your shelter and online about feral cats and their inability to be adopted as well as Trap, Neuter, Return.<sup>5</sup>
- Educate the public about your programs and other local resources for stray and feral cats such as low-cost or subsidized spay and neuter clinics and Tran, Neuter, Return



programs. Let them know about humane deterrents to keep cats away from places where they are not welcome.

**Recommendation:**

- Let trained volunteers assist with calls and answer question when people come into the shelter with or without a trapped cat (See Help Desk Section in Volunteer Recommendation)
- Allow trained volunteers to promote TNR; during day to day operations, at special events, at monthly TNR training classes at GCAWE and within the community.
- Link the GCAWE website to Feral Cat Coalition Partners; giving public access to resources readily available
- (See Marketing Strategies Recommendation for a full list of outlets to Market TNR in Gwinnett County)

**LONG-TERM GOAL IN GWINNETT COUNTY: FERAL FREEDOM**

When Best Friends approached Rebecca Guinn, director of LifeLine Animal Project, and Kathy Mooneyham, director of DeKalb County Animal Services and Enforcement, about starting a Feral Freedom program in DeKalb County, both women jumped at the chance to save the lives of community cats.

Community cats who are picked up by DeKalb County Animal Services officers are taken directly to the LifeLine facility in Avondale Estates which is only two miles from the shelter. Individuals who bring stray or feral cats to the shelter are given directions to LifeLine and asked to take the cats to that facility.

**Why DeKalb County, Georgia?**

The need for community cat assistance in metro Atlanta is significant. According to the LifeLine website, “an estimated 30,000 feral cats each year end up in Atlanta’s shelters, where the only option is euthanasia. The taxpayer cost in the Atlanta area to trap and euthanize these cats is more than \$4 million annually.” LifeLine has an existing program dedicated to humanely controlling feral cat colonies. Utilizing the LifeLine Spay/ Neuter Clinics, Atlanta has sterilized more than 13,000 feral cats through TNR.

Feral Freedom is all about saving lives of community cats by reducing the number of cats euthanized in shelters. And saving lives is exactly what Kathy and Rebecca are doing. In the first two months of the program over 300 community cats have been fixed. This translates to a reduction in the feline kill rate from 78 to 26 percent at DeKalb County Animal Services.





The key to the success of Feral Freedom is to get the community's support of the program.

Rebecca says thus far the local community has been accepting of Feral Freedom and there have been few complaints about the program. She hopes that the community support will increase in the future as residents realize the amount of taxpayer dollars that is being saved because the county is no longer responsible for trapping and euthanizing feral cats.

### **Recommendation:**

With the documented success DeKalb County Animal Services and Enforcement has had with the Feral Freedom Project, the Task Force is excited a local low cost spay and neuter clinic in Gwinnett County has the potential to be selected to receive grant funding in 2013 from Best Friends Animal Society to institute the Feral Freedom Project. Currently, GCAWE has an (80%) euthanasia rate for cats; most of which are deemed to be feral or "wild," with no other alternative than to be killed. With statistics such as these, it is greatly apparent there is a considerable need for a program with proven results such as the Feral Freedom Project. The Task Force highly recommends the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners further review, seriously consider and diligently pursue this tremendous opportunity.

<sup>1</sup>Best Friends Animal Society: Trap, Neuter and Return Cost Savings Calculator, at: <http://network.bestfriends.org>

<sup>2</sup>Levine, Jay, F Felicia B Nutter, Michael K. Stoskopf, Reproductive Capacity of Free-Roaming Domestic Cats and Kitten Survival Rate, *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, Vol 225, No. 9, November 1, 2004.

<sup>3</sup>Best Friends Animal Society estimate for Animal Control, at: <http://network.bestfriends.org>

<sup>4</sup>How to start a feral cat program by Leslie Wilson, 2001

<sup>5</sup>Feline Friendly Practices for Shelters/Alley Cat Allies, at: <http://alleycat.org>

<sup>6</sup>How to Build an Organizational Trap-Neuter-Release Program, at: <http://alleycat.org>



# **PARTNERSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Gwinnett County Animal Issues Task Force Partnerships Subcommittee was tasked with identifying and creating strategies which promote key intra/inter-governmental relationships to promote the health and well-being of companion animals. We met a total of four times to discuss our ideas and how to present them. The subcommittee was made up of three people who were very involved in animal rescue and one elected official. At one of our meetings we welcomed Sgt. Christina Schiralli who is the volunteer coordinator for the Gwinnett County Police Department. The sources we used to develop our recommendations are listed in each section.

### **Short-term or Immediate Goals:**

- 1.) GCAWE should foster strong and ongoing relationships with as many Rescue groups as possible. Placement of animals, especially strays and turn-ins without vaccination records, should be the number one priority before considering euthanasia. No fees should be charge to rescue groups to take animals for adoption unless to recover spay/neuter or vaccine fees.
- 2.) GCAWE should consistently provide every new pet owner the Science Diet adoption materials including the DVD, Training Your Adopted Dog, The Guide for Lifelong Health and My Picture of Health Journal.
- 3.) GCAWE should explore partnerships with local advertisers. Many may offer PSA ad space to promote our services. Billboard companies should be approached to inquire about a small message included on any "your ad here" space.

### **Long-term Goals:**

- 1.) GCAWE should establish and maintain contact with the local AVMA or other veterinary association to foster dialogue and relationships with a wider source of Veterinarians in the county. Opportunities should be offered for Vets to volunteer at the shelter, as well as for vaccination and spay/neuter services. We recommend establishing an intern program with nearby veterinary schools for both DVM's and Techs (UGA, Gwinnett Tech, Athens Tech.). We should also encourage the use of bulletin boards in veterinary offices to notify the public of any programs GCAWE may be putting on.
- 2.) GCAWE should partner with Gwinnett County Schools to let the public know about the services offered at the Animal Welfare Center. Educational materials and services should be provided so that children learn to be responsible pet owners. Advertisements could be placed in a small section any of any newsletter.  
<http://www.animalhumanesociety.org/services/schools/classroomvisits>



- 3.) GCAWE should partner with Gwinnett TV and develop either an ad or show offering the animals currently up for adoption. Educational seminars featuring the importance of spay/neuter or basic animal care should also be broadcast.
- 4.) GCAWE should explore partnerships with local HOAs. We may be able to get space in newsletters for pet of the month or educational articles.
- 5.) GCAWE should definitely partner with Human Services in the County. This would be a good way to identify candidates for low or no cost vaccination and spay/neuter services. Vets may be more willing to back a low cost program if it is limited to those in true need. Perhaps a card included with any statements given to their clients offering our services or a small panel ad reminding them that there is help for their pet too. Also cruelty to animals can be an indicator of other cruelty in homes.  
<http://www.onehealthinitiative.com/publications/One%20Health%20-%20description%20of%20NLC2.pdf>
- 6.) GCAWE should partner with Meals on Wheels. This partnership can identify both people in need of assistance with their animals and potential adopters for animals in the shelter. Volunteers for Meals on Wheels can locate people who may need assistance with food or veterinary services and animal welfare can then direct them to low or no cost providers in the area. There are also instances where people are giving their food to their animals. GCAWE could then direct them to low or no cost assistance. Meals on Wheels might even be able to deliver the animal food too.

<http://www.myfoxtampabay.com/dpp/news/local/hillsborough/meals-on-wheels-pets-112111>



# **STRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **OVERVIEW**

The Structure Subcommittee was charged with making recommendations on the structure of the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit, and the structure of the Animal Advisory Council. We present the following recommendations:

### **Animal Advisory Council**

The Animal Advisory Council as it is currently organized does not appear to be an effective organization. Council members, while nominally appointed by the Board of Commissioners, are nominated by the various advisory groups. In addition, the process of having to send all communications through Animal Control limits the ability of the Council to communicate with the BOC.

In their proposed rewrite of the AAC's bylaws, there is an effort to solve some of these problems. The BOC would have the opportunity to appoint members to the Council, and the requirement that recommendations go 'up the chain' to the BOC is eliminated. This would be an improvement. However, the Structure Subcommittee does not believe that the proposed changes are the proper remedy.

We believe that the AAC should become more like the other advisory boards formed by the Commissioners, such as the Tree Advisory Committee, the Gwinnett Transit Advisory Board and others. These boards serve as an interface between the BOC, relevant staff and the public.

The current Council's composition and a majority of the proposed Council's composition under the new bylaws are composed of members of various animal advocate groups. It is the Structure Committee's opinion that this composition limits the ability of regular citizens to make their voice heard with respect to animal issues.

We therefore recommend that the Animal Advisory Council should consist of five members, with each Commissioner having one appointment to the Council. Appointments should be at the discretion of each Commissioner. The Council should continue to meet at least once quarterly. Members of the AAC should have the ability to communicate with both the BOC and the staff at the Animal Welfare Center as needed to determine issues and concerns that should be discussed at their meetings. Concerns and issues brought up by the public, staff or BOC members should be investigated, and findings sent to the BOC for further consideration.

We further discussed the role the various animal groups should have, given that they would no longer have a formal voice inside the AAC. These groups are largely privately funded, and operate independently of the activities of the Animal Welfare Center. We recognize that these groups play an important role in promoting the welfare of animals in the county.

We recommend that members of these groups should consider forming a separate advocacy council to promote their interests and spread their message. This separate council would not be an official county board, and would have no formal relationship with the county or the Animal Welfare Center. In this sense, it would operate similarly to the way the Gwinnett Coalition of Health and Human Services does by providing a central voice and 'go-to' group for human



services efforts in the county, the way Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful advocates for environmental issues, or the way ArtWorks Gwinnett promotes arts and culture. The council could give animal advocates a stronger voice in advocating private efforts and financial contributions on behalf of animal welfare. By incorporating as a 501-C3 nonprofit group, it could accept charitable donations from citizens and others concerned about animal welfare. The council could express its opinions to the Animal Advisory Council and/or the Board of Commissioners. At some point, and if funding allowed, a unified council could apply and receive a grant from the county to further its efforts in promoting animal welfare.

### **Rescue Coordinator**

We considered the role of the Rescue Coordinator at the Animal Welfare Center. In addition to working with animal rescue groups, the Rescue Coordinator spends part of his time working with the animals, helping with customer service, and performing other duties in the shelter.

If the Rescue Coordinator's position was redefined such that the position was no longer responsible for doing anything other than working with rescue groups, then other shelter employees would have to do the work the coordinator currently performs. This would result either in the need for additional staff to cover the load, or reduced customer service / less attention to the animals at the shelter.

For that reason, we are not considering such a change, unless the Board of Commissioners was willing to increase the budget going to Animal Welfare.

### **On-Staff Veterinarian**

We examined pages from a PowerPoint presentation given to us by Lt. Respass which show cost savings that could be achieved by bringing a veterinarian on staff at the Animal Welfare Center. While hiring a veterinarian and a vet tech would increase expenses, the expense of paying for outside vet services would go away. Additional revenue would be raised by charging shelter customers for spay/neuter services.

We believe that bringing in an on-staff vet would not be appropriate. Most of the savings in total expenses would be achieved by offering spay-neuter services currently being performed by private vets in the county. We also note that there are a number of low-cost spay-neuter clinics operating in the county that serve customers with less ability to pay, and that many vets donate some of their services to provide low-cost alternatives to those in need.

### **Placement of the Animal Welfare Unit in the County Infrastructure**

The Animal Welfare Unit is currently a division of the County's police department. The Shelter Director (currently Dan Bruno) is a sworn police officer. The justification for placing Animal Welfare under the Police Department is that the unit is able to enforce the county's animal laws. The Structure Committee sees no need to change this arrangement. Given the size of the unit within the overall county organization, it will need to remain a subdivision of one of the county's main departments, and its director will have to report to a senior department director, rather than directly to the Board of Commissioners.

Because of some unique circumstances, the county is currently trying to fill the position of shelter director. In seeking the individual to fill this role, the county should favor experience in working at other animal shelters, and working with the public and rescue groups over past police experience. If being a sworn police officer is a prerequisite for holding the position of shelter director, the county should consider changing this requirement.



## **POLICY COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO STRUCTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

We, the Policy Committee of the Gwinnett County Animal Issues Task Force, would like to make known several areas in which we disagree with the Structure Committee's proposed recommendations.

### **3.) Animal Advisory Council:**

The proposed by-law revisions submitted by the current Animal Advisory Council are well researched and thought out. Two recommendations that would provide immediate improvement in effectiveness are a.) having the council report directly to the County Board of Commissioners and b.) imposing term limits on Council members. Adoption of these changes would ensure a.) better communication of ideas to the Board and b.) a steady stream of new ideas.

Also, while eleven may not be the optimal number of members for the Council, restricting the membership of rescue and other animal service groups would not be in the interest of shelter services. We would maintain that the Board be able to appoint whomsoever they see as best able to serve the needs of the community.

- 1. Rescue Coordinator:** It is the opinion of this committee that the position of Rescue Coordinator cannot be effectively filled in a part time manner. The job description should not be so narrowly defined as to limit their activities to working only with rescue groups, but so as to enable this position to work so that all adoptable animals are placed in homes. This would include making sure all available in house adoption processes are optimized as well as working with outside groups to place animals. If the new management is willing to think like a business, they can make the necessary adjustments to fill the gaps with either current staff or volunteers.
- 2. On Staff Veterinarian:** It should be noted that at no time have we considered using the shelter as an outlet for spay-neuter services for the public and we certainly do not recommend it. However, it should also be noted that both Lt. Respass and the Program Committee have provided well researched and thought out cases in which an on staff Veterinarian could both save money and provide better care for the animals. We have the facilities to provide health services to the animals, we should be able to maximize their use.
- 3. Placement of the GCAWE in the County Infrastructure:** GCAWE is charged with providing two very distinct services. Enforcement of codes and community services are truly best provided by a department such as the Police Department. However, we feel that animal care, shelter and placement are best removed from the strict policies and guidelines that the department must adhere to with regard to employment, volunteers and marketing. The ability of the new director of the shelter to manage this unit as a business whose success is gauged not by profit but by lives saved or improved should not be impeded by a military like chain of command. This idea is not new and has been adopted by several cities and counties and was recommended by the DeKalb County Animal Services Task Force last year.



## **PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO STRUCTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

We, the Partnership Committee of the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare Task Force, would like to make known several areas in which we disagree with the Structure Subcommittee's recommendations:

- 1.) **Animal Advisory Council:** We feel that the by-laws proposed by the current Animal Advisory Council would solve the current issues. Allowing the council to report directly to the Board of Commissioners would ensure better communication between the AAC and BOC.

Restricting the membership of rescue and other animal service groups would not be in the best interest of GCAWE. The AAC should consist of a diverse cross section of professionals, rescues and citizens.

- 2.) **Rescue Coordinator:** This must be full time position. The Rescue Coordinator's main duties should be to work with outside groups to place animals and to facilitate adoptions. This cannot be effectively done if this person is also responsible for duties such as cleaning kennels, etc. Current staff, volunteers and inmates could be used to handle these areas.
- 3.) **On Staff Veterinarian:** The hiring of a staff Veterinarian would both save the county money and provide better care for the animals. As stated by the Programs & Policy Sub-Committees, we are not suggesting that GCAWE offer public spay/neuter services.
- 4.) **Restructure of GCAWE:** Enforcement of codes and community services should continue to be provided by Police Department. The purpose of the shelter should be to save lives, and this cannot be accomplished if it is being run like the Police Department. Therefore, we feel that animal care, shelter and placement would be better served under the County Administrator.



## APPENDIX A

### Best Friends Animal Society Trap, Neuter and Return Cost Savings Calculator

Supporting TNR Programs For Community Cats  
 Could Save Taxpayers in Gwinnett, Georgia Millions of Dollars



#### Estimated Cat Population of Gwinnett, Georgia

Estimated Number of Cats	84,820
Estimated Number of Free-Roaming Cats	46,650

#### Estimated Costs Associated With Discount Packaged Alteration and Return Per Cat

Additional Care for Sick/Injured	\$20
Packaged TNR Procedure	\$25

Estimated Cost of Discount Packaged TNR in Gwinnett, Georgia	\$45
--	------

#### Estimated Costs Associated With Feline Eradication Per Cat

Sheltering	\$40
Food/Supplies	\$30
Eradication/Euthanization	\$30

Estimated Cost of Eradication in Gwinnett, Georgia Per Cat	\$100
--	-------

Estimated Savings for Taxpayers in Gwinnett, Georgia Through TNR (Cost of Eradication x Number of Free-Roaming Cats - Cost of TNR x Number of Free-Roaming Cats)	\$2,565,750*
---	--------------

John Dunham and Associates: New York

***\*Note from the Task Force: Savings are actually greater per our suggestion, because the "Discount Packaged TNR" would be performed by the public or by the county's TNR Coalition Partners at no cost to the county. If the county chose to participate in funding the TNR effort, savings are as shown.***



## Appendix B

### WALTON COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL ADOPTION APPLICATION

Animal Name and ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Adopter's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived at the above address? \_\_\_\_\_

Circle all of the following reasons for adopting this pet:

Family Pet    Child's Pet    Watchdog    Companion    Breeding    Hunting Dog  
Guard Dog    For Business    Barn Cat    Companion for Other Pet

Gift for: \_\_\_\_\_

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Where are you Employed? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you 18 years of age or over?    yes    no

Circle your type of residence:    House    Apartment    Condo    Mobile Home    Duplex    Townhouse

Do you own or rent your residence? \_\_\_\_\_

If you rent, does your lease allow pets? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your landlord's name/company? \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord's Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

How many people live at your residence? \_\_\_\_\_

How are they related to you? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the ages of any children in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

Do all these people know that you plan to adopt a pet? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever adopted a pet from the Walton County Animal Control?    yes    no

If yes, when? Where is that pet now? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever turned in an animal to any Animal Control Shelter?    yes    no

If yes, why? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been warned or cited for a violation of Animal Control Laws?    yes    no

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_



**List Past and Present Pets you have owned:**

Name	Breed	Where is that pet now? (still own, deceased, etc.; explain)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Do your current pets live indoors or outdoors? \_\_\_\_\_

Are their vaccinations up to date? yes no Are they spayed or neutered? yes no

What is the name of your Veterinarian or Veterinary Clinic? \_\_\_\_\_

**Concerning the Pet you wish to adopt:**

How long will the pet be left alone during a day? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will be the primary caretaker of your pet? \_\_\_\_\_

What procedures will you use for housebreaking? \_\_\_\_\_

How will you handle destructive behavior (chewing, clawing, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to have your new pet spayed or neutered? yes no

Are you willing to have your new pet spayed/neutered if required? yes no

Will your new pet live inside or outside? \_\_\_\_\_

Where will your new pet sleep? \_\_\_\_\_

How will your dog/cat be kept? (Circle all that apply) Indoors fenced yard Chain Pen

Is any portion of your yard completely fenced? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a doghouse? \_\_\_\_\_

If kept on a chain, for how long each day? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you plan to do with your pet when you go on vacation? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have to move, what would you do with the animal? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you allow an authorized representative of the Walton County Animal Control to inspect the animal and premises where the animal is being kept? yes no

Food, veterinary, and other costs are usually greater than \$1,000 per year. Are you willing and able to meet these costs? yes no

Are you willing to go to the expense and trouble of taking your new pet to a veterinarian for full preventative and medical care **AT LEAST** once a year? yes no

Has a dog died on your premises of distemper, parvo, or unknown causes in the last 3 months? yes no



Has a cat died on your premises of distemper, leukemia, or unknown causes in the last 3 months? yes  
no

**By signing below, I certify that the information I have given is true and that any misrepresentation of facts may result in the denial of this application for adoption.**

---

**Signature**

---

**Today's Date**

---

Approved    Not Approved

Applicant was advised to call/return on: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:



## Appendix C

### **Quality Control Test#2**

**Topic: Feral Cats In My Area, What Are My Options:**

**Location: Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement**

**Date: 1/27/12**

**Time: 2:30PM**

**Conducted by: Tati Romeo**

**Telephone Operator: Sharane**

**Synopsis:** There are several cats living near my place of residence in the Kroger Shopping Center.

**It looks as though someone is feeding them, what can I do to help them?**

*Response: There is nothing we can do, it is completely up to the property owner.*

**Can I not trap them myself w/out permission of the property owner?**

*Response: No*

**What if the property owner gives me permission to remove them in order to have them neutered? Can I bring them to you?**

*Response: Yes, but they will just be put to sleep. These cats are wild/feral. They are probably sick and full of disease.*

**Can you help me feed them, do you have a food bank?**

*Response: No we don't.*

**Do you have a trap bank, could you loan me a trap?**

*Response: No, we do not have any traps for that. But, you can get one pretty cheap at Wal-Mart, Home Depot or Lowes.*

**Are there any organizations that may be able to help me?**

*Response: You may want to go online and look up the term feral cats, you can go to [spotsociety.org](http://spotsociety.org) and it will give you a list of rescue groups. I think there is a group called Sterile Feral who may be able to help w/ low cost spay/neutering and assist with trapping.*



## Appendix D

### Sample Kennel Cards

I'VE GOT THE FOOD.  
NOW ALL I NEED IS A HOME.

PEN # 119 INTERNAL # 24279

ARRIVED HERE ON 5, 19 2012

ADOPTABLE ON 5, 25 2012

BREED: Pit

APPROXIMATE AGE: 2 YEARS \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS

SEX: MALE \_\_\_\_\_ I AM NEUTERED \_\_\_\_\_  
FEMALE  I AM SPAYED \_\_\_\_\_

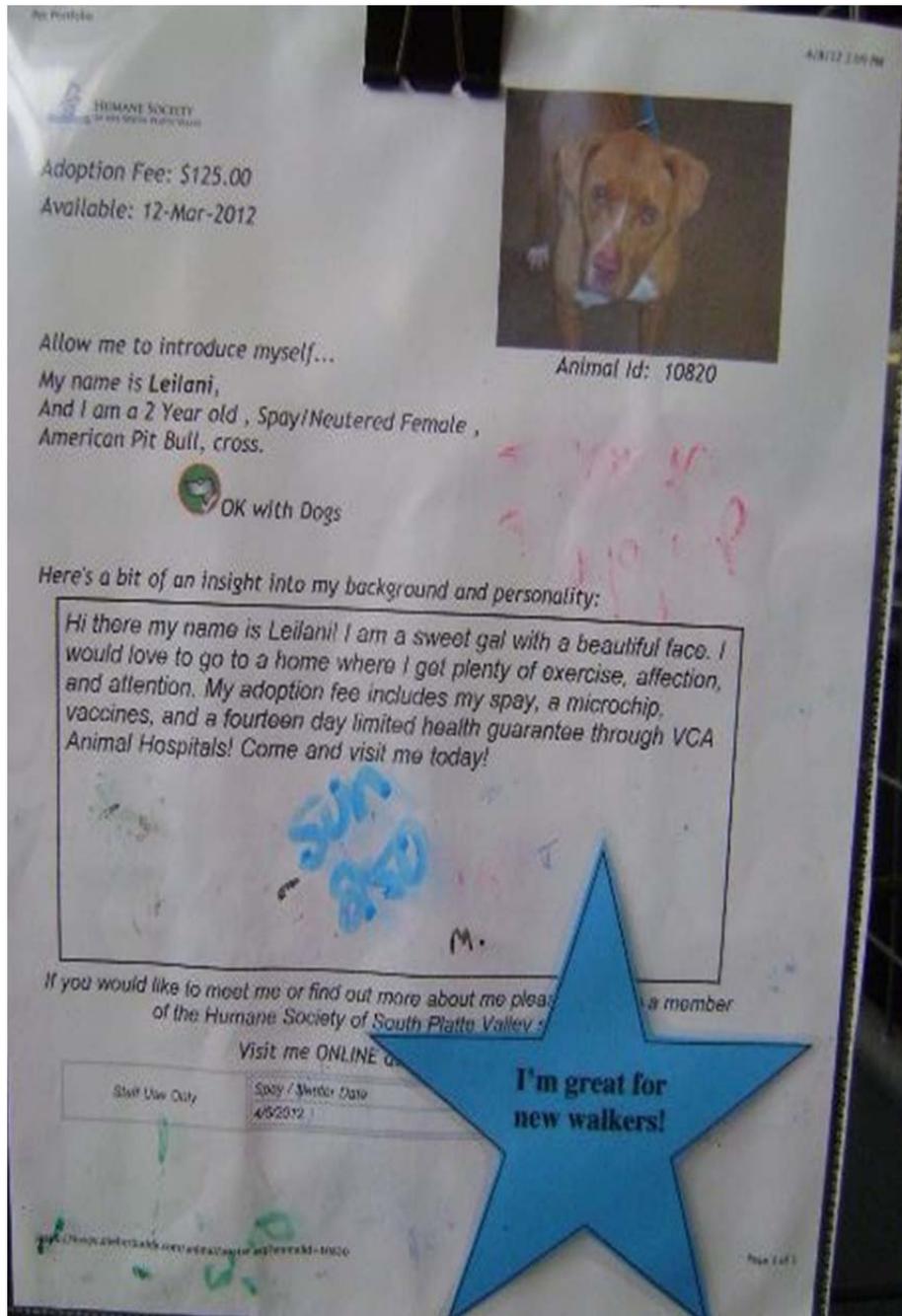
I CAN GO HOME TODAY YES \_\_\_\_\_

I HAVE SPECIAL ADOPTION REQUIREMENTS  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ or NO \_\_\_\_\_



Vets' #1 Choice to Feed Their Own Pets

**GCAWE Kennel Card**



**Humane Society of South Platte Littleton, CO Kennel Card**



## **Appendix E**

### **Scientific Support for Comfortable Bedding for Shelter Animals**

**February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**By Catherine McManus VMD, MPH, DACVPM**

**Shelter Medicine Resident**

**Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program**

**College of Veterinary Medicine**

**University of Florida**

Per the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care, "a soft resting place should be made available for all animals to provide comfort and prevent pressure sores from developing." This statement is based on two references:

1. Crouse SJ et al., Soft Surfaces: a factor in feline psychological well-being. *Contemp Top Lab Admin Sci* 1995, 34(6). p.94-7.
2. Section 5.1.2 of the Companion Cats Code of Welfare from the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee states the following:

"Cats need sleeping quarters that are comfortable and have suitable washable bedding."  
<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/files/regs/animal-welfare/req/codes/companion-cats/companion-cats.pdf>

I would be concerned about dogs developing pressure sores from laying on hard, barren surfaces for extended periods. I would expect both dogs and cats to experience psychological stress as a result of living in a barren environment that did not provide any opportunities for choice, including resting surfaces. They may act withdrawn or hide in "inappropriate," unpleasing places like their litter pan.

In Irene Rochlitz's *Comfortable Quarters for Cats in Research*, she states: "Cats who sleep on soft surfaces have longer periods of deep sleep than those who sleep on hard surfaces, suggesting that they feel more secure (Crouse et al., 1995). Cats prefer polyester fleece to cotton-looped towel, woven rush-matting, or corrugated cardboard as bedding material (Hawthorne et al., 1995). If there is not a sufficient number of comfortable rest places, the animals will use their litter trays for this purpose (Deluca and Kranda, 1992; Rochlitz, 1997b).

Juvenile animals, senior animals, debilitated animals, animals that have recently been anesthetized and small, short haired dogs may have a more difficult time staying thermo regulated on a barren concrete or metal floor. The physiological stress of maintaining homeostasis in that environment is an unnecessary burden that will affect the animals' behavior and compromise their immune system. In a high stress shelter environment neither of these consequences is beneficial.

Finally, I think the public enjoy seeing the animals on bedding. I think it makes the public "believe" that the shelter staff is concerned about the animals in their care, and it may help a potential adopter imagine that animal in a more "home-like" setting.



## **Appendix F**

**Shadow Shift/Officer M. Cain#1705**  
**April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012 GCAWE 9:15am-4pm**  
**Gwinnett County Animal Welfare Task Force**  
**Shadow Shift: by Not-for-Profit Cat Rescue Task Force Member**

Below are incidents I witnessed, observations I made and information I gathered at GCAWE on April 2nd, 2012 while doing a shadow shift with Officer Michael Cain.

Officer Cain has been employed with GCAWE for approx. (12) years. He was initially trained by Officer Welch at the previous shelter on High Hope Road. Officer Cain was an ACOI for (2) years and has been an ACOII for the past (10) years. Cain has been doing IT/data entry for the past (5) years. I asked Officer Cain for a copy of his job description, he stated he does not have a current job description that identifies all of his additional duties, subsequent to that of an ACOII. I documented all the duties I witnessed or that Officer Cain explained were part of his job description.

### **Morning Duties:**

**Clean neglect pens**  
**Handling feral/non-feral cats that have been caught in traps**  
**Evaluating behavior of cats in “wild cat” room**  
**Euthanizing “wild” cats unable to be handled**

Officer Cain had already cleaned the neglect pens when I arrived at 9:15AM. He gave me a brief general overview of his job description, which includes: cleans neglect pens, euthanizes wild cats, takes almost all photos of animals in the shelter, uses photo editor to clean up photos, i.e., removes catchpoles, inmates, staff, wounds to the animals, etc., resizes all images to make (2) sets of photos (shelter buddy and GCAWE webpage require two different size photos), replies to all emails/inquiries about lost and found cats/dogs, creates lost and found forms for binder located at sign in desk, trains officers to use shelter buddy system, created the shelter buddy manual for the staff, does rabies postings, works the on-call overnight shift for one month, plus regular work hours, on a rotating basis (the last time he had to work the on-call overnight shift was January), currently working on (3) additional training manuals for GCAWE, addresses all IT issues at the shelter, worked with the Communications Dept. to design the updated A/C page, completes in care inventory at the end of each shift, prints out website log once a day, euthanizes other animals as assigned, additional duties as described in the ACOII job description, plus various other duties as assigned, i.e., supervisors asked Cain if he would assist in transporting inmates to and from the shelter and he told them he did not have the time.

Officer Cain explained he has made suggestions to supervisors which would help him perform his duties more efficiently and stated that supervisors (past and present) have failed to listen. I asked Officer Cain for a list of his suggestions, they are as follows:

- Current list of officers schedules online so staff can see who is/is not working
- Bulletin Board to be placed in “wild cat” room, so Cain can post current photos of missing cats, which officers can then refer to.



- Blinds for “wild cat” room, to keep people from looking in and stressing cats even more.
- Cameras for all officers, so that field officers can take photos in the field. This would enable Cain to keep website more current.

### Wild Cat Room/Euthanasia

After explaining his duties, Cain stated there were (2) “wild” cats that had to be euthanized. I asked Officer Cain how often he performed this duty and he stated usually (5) days a week. Upon entering the wild cat room, there were four orange carded “wild” cats in steel cages on the left side of the room. Cain stated he was still in the process of observing (2) of them, who came in as a pair and believed they were not feral. I watched as Officer Cain picked up each cat and moved them to non-orange carded cages. He stated they were not quite ready to go out on the adoption floor, but their temperament was improving and could be moved soon. He did not give me an ETA as to when this would happen. I asked Cain how much time “wild” cats are given and he stated most officers only give “wild” cats 24-hours, but he gives questionable cats up to (6) days if he continues to see improvement in temperament. Cain also looks for signs that felines are clean, declawed spayed/neutered and ear tipping.

Cain showed me the other (2) cats in orange carded cages and stated they had to be euthanized. Cain stated he had to wait for a supervisor to sign off on this and we waited for Officer Johnson to sign off. While we were waiting for the paperwork, I observed both cats. Cat#1 (id#23069) was very relaxed in the cage and sitting directly in the middle of the cage with her front paws curled. Cat#2 (id# 23039) was crouched in the back of the cage, with his pupils completely dilated. It is my opinion, in working with feral cats; cat#1 (id#23069) was not feral, while cat#2 (id#23039) seemed feral. Cain received paperwork approving the euthanasia of both cats. Officer Cain opened the cage door and approached cat#1(id#23069) a white and chocolate female (who entered the shelter on 3/31). Officer Cain used a catchpole, slipped the noose around her neck and she did not move, he picked her up by the neck and she was suspended in the air, her limp body dangled for 4-5 seconds, then he placed her in the cat carrier on the floor. It was after I observed this that I told the (3) ACO's in the room; Cain, Chatham and Hanson, I did not believe this cat to be feral and asked if I were to find a rescue to immediately take the cat, would it be a problem and none of the officers verbally opposed. It was then that Cain stated he thought the female was pregnant and I asked if a vet tech could take a look at her before I left at 4pm. This cat looked very sickly to me. I asked Cain why he thought cat#1 (id#23069) was “wild” and he stated she hissed at him. Officer Cain moved her again (via catchpole) to the other side, where the non-orange card cages were, and she was given a litter box, food and water.

Officer Cain opened the cage of cat#2 (id#23039), who entered the shelter on 3/30, and using a catchpole, slipped the noose around the cat's neck. The cat reacted in an extremely wild, aggravated state within the cage and after a few seconds Officer Cain removed the cat. The cat was suspended in the air and flailing around, Officer Cain never touched the cat and proceeded to put it in a cat carrier which was placed on the floor. Before we left the room, I walked over to look at cat#1(id#23069) and observed her sitting right by the opening of the cage and she began meowing. She did not hiss or move away from me and it was extremely apparent to me this cat was not feral.

We proceeded to take cat#2 (id#23039) to the euthanasia room and the cat carrier was placed on the floor in front of a metal table used to set animal(s) on during euthanasia. There were (3) ACO's in the room; Chatham, Cain and Hanson. Officer Cain opened the cat carrier and used the same method of transporting the cat- secured the noose around the neck of the cat, pulled it out



with the catchpole and sat the cat on the table. The cat was checked for a microchip, but none were located. Officer Hanson asked if she should perform the euthanasia and Officer Chatham said she could. I asked Hanson if she had ever performed an IP (intraperitoneal) on a cat before and she said, "No." Hanson went over to the cabinet to get the IP solution (Sodium Pentobarbital) and I could not see who actually put the solution in the syringe, as Officer Chatham and she were standing with their backs to me. When Chatham and Hanson walked back to where I was standing, which was in close proximity to the cat, Hanson had the syringe. Again, Officer Hanson asked Officer Chatham if he was sure she could do the IP and he said, "Yes." Cain picked the cat up, using the catchpole and suspended the cat over the table, grabbed the cat's feet and placed them on the table. The cat was trying to flail around, but was unable to move. Officer Hanson positioned the syringe where she thought it should be administered, which is the peritoneal cavity. She repositioned the needle at least (3) times before she actually administered the IP injection. She asked at least (2) times if she was in the right area prior to giving the IP injection. After Officers Cain and Chatham told her to go ahead, she administered the Sodium Pentobarbital. The cat was suspended the entire time while the IP method was used. The cat was placed on his side while I looked for exaggerated activities of stage-I and -II anesthesia (e.g., vocalizing, flopping, sneezing, licking, running, and paddling) and noticed the cat licking, moving slightly, with dilated pupils. Officer Cain continued to stroke the cat for up to two minutes. I did not see any movement after this period and the cat seemed unresponsive.

I asked what method was used to ensure the cat's heart had stopped beating and observed as Officer Cain conduct the IC method of sticking a syringe in the heart in order to see if the heart had stopped. Officer Cain waited for the syringe to stop moving. I asked if ACO's ever use a stethoscope to ensure the heart has stopped before bagging the animal and Officer Chatham said "No." I watched as Officer Cain placed the cat in a large black trash bag, let the air out of it, tied the top portion in a knot and placed the bag in the freezer. Officer Chatham explained the incinerator is only used 2-3 times per week, depending on how many animals they have in order to cut down on expense. He also pointed out a smaller freezer where animals are stored for necropsy in animal abuse/neglect cases. End of observation.

#### Cat id#23069 Died at the Shelter

Upon returning from the euthanasia room, Officer Cain started walking me through his daily tasks related to data entry when Officer Toller came in the room and said she had some good and bad news regarding the pregnant cat id#23069, I was planning to take to rescue. She stated they gave the cat a "combo test" (feline leukemia, FIV) and it was negative. Toller then stated the cat was pregnant with four kittens, two were alive and two were deceased, and the cat was extremely dehydrated. Officer Toller told me she would keep me updated on the status of the cat. Ten to fifteen minutes later Officer Weldon came in the room to tell me cat id#23069 had died. I asked where the cat was and why it had died and he said he did not know. I asked to go and see for myself and Weldon seemed annoyed, but pointed out which room the cat was in. I knocked on the door where they had been performing spay/neuters and could see the cat lying on the table. Virginia Keller came to the door and I asked what happened. She said they tried to do everything they could, but the cat was so dehydrated, "her blood was like water" and "she collapsed on the table" while they were trying to give her IV fluids. I asked about her temperament and Ms. Keller stated the cat was "very sweet." When I told Ms. Keller she was in the wild room and going to be euthanized, Ms. Keller looked puzzled and said, "This cat was not feral." Ms. Keller stated they were going to perform a necropsy on the cat.



I requested final disposition of cat id#23069, which states:

“12:54PM-Dr. Jenny Kopp did a radiograph of the friendly sick feline. She is late term pregnant with the fetuses compromised due to health of mom cat.”

“2:00PM-The feline was pronounced dead due to illness complicated by pregnancy.”

### Lack of Structure and Support from Management

Throughout the day, I could feel Officer Cain’s frustration with his current position. It seemed apparent that Cain was overwhelmed with a growing list of tasks, very little support from management and a lack of structure within GCAWE which prohibited Officer Cain from being effective in his job. He said he is frustrated that he has been in the same position for (10) years and yet to be promoted to ACOIII, while performing duties of others in the same role, like training staff. He said he has gone to supervisors to make recommendations about how to make his job more efficient and they have not listened to him. I encouraged Officer Cain to give me a list of his suggestions, so the Task Force could take a look at them and maybe make some recommendations that would help. Officer Cain also stated some of the other officers have complained that he does not do enough. It was very obvious in working with Officer Cain throughout the day, if management would show more support and accountability for those who are not doing their job; Officer Cain would be able to manage his job more effectively. With all of Officer Cain’s extraneous duties, he did not start updating the website until 2PM, his shift ended at 4PM.

### For Example:

- Officer Cain used to have help managing the website. Officer Kovac was his “shelter buddy teammate” but Kovac was told (by management) she is not allowed help him anymore and has since been put on road assignment. I spoke with Officer Kovac and she mentioned she wishes she had time to help with the website.
- It takes an ample amount of time to take photos of shelter animals that will aid in getting them adopted or rescued. Officer Cain is required to take all of the photos of the animals. Officer Cain stated that after his (2) days off and returns to work, there can be anywhere from 50-70 animals to photograph. Officer Cain stated that Officer Chatham has reprimanded officers for not helping with photos, but Cain stated that officers continue not to photograph the animals.
- Officer Cain stated he is routinely having to go back behind officers who do not keep their notes current, i.e., there are several listed at the vet who are not there. Officers will move animals within the facility (from pen to pen) without putting it in the notes and Cain has to comb the facility looking for them. And, officers will put animals in the shelter buddy system without checking to see if that animal is already in the system which causes confusion and is very problematic in keeping the system accurate/current.
- Petfinder can be a valuable resource, which is automatically synchronized with the shelter buddy system, but many of the photos Officer Cain is uploading are failing to synch with Petfinder. This problem has been ongoing for over a year and has yet to be resolved. Cain stated he has proof that the problem is with Petfinder and not the shelter buddy system. However, Cain did not mention anyone from the county Commination’s Dept. looking into the problem or anyone investigating the situation. This type of



lackadaisical and complacent attitude is costing animals their lives.

### Noted Scanner Problems in the Field

Officer Cain mentioned he has observed more and more microchipped animals coming into GCAWE by officers in the field. He stated he believes there are (2) reasons for this: if an officer moves the scanner too quickly, it will not register there is microchip present. Cain stated he has tried telling other officers that moving the scanner slowly over the cat or dog's body makes a huge difference. He also stated that not all scanners are functioning properly. Cain stated he knows of an incident where a scanner was taken off the road because after it was checked, was not functioning at all. It is imperative that all scanners be checked on a regular basis. The Task Force will be recommending this procedure be placed into the new SOP's with random equipment checks to be done by Supervisors. We cannot afford to bring animals into GCAWE while there is a chance they may be returned in the field.

### Lack of Adequate Exercise and Care

Animals at GCAWE deserve adequate care and exercise. In the seven hours I spent at GCAWE on 4/2/12, without taking a lunch break, I did not observe (1) dog being walked. In the morning, there were 4-6 inmates cleaning pens that are in open view to the public, but I did not notice anyone cleaning in the afternoon. As Officer Cain and I were walking around gathering updates, locating animals that had been moved within the facility without notation and taking photographs, I did not see (1) staff member interacting with the animals or walking the animals. There was only (1) volunteer there the entire day and she was answering phones. Officer Cain and I walked through the pens in the back (not open to the public) at the end of the shift; almost all of the animals were sitting in pens with urine and feces. I did ask Officer Cain if it would be okay to give a dog I noticed visible shaking in (1) of the neglect pens a blanket. Only after asking did Cain get the dog a blanket. I did not see dogs or cats with blankets or toys within the facility, but noticed plenty blankets sitting in the laundry room.

### Observed Euthanasia of Two Pit Bulls

A supervisor informed Officer Cain he needed to euthanize (2) pit bulls before lunch. It was already after 1PM, so Cain took a thirty minute lunch break. When Cain returned from lunch, he collected the paperwork which had already been signed by a supervisor which had (2) pit bulls selected for euthanasia. Cain checked the photos, id#'s and information in the database to make sure all info was up-to-date and accurate on the dogs selected for euthanasia. I asked him if he did this before every euthanasia and he said, "Yes" although I did not see him do it before witnessing the "wild" cat being euthanized. Cain and I went to the euthanasia room, where Officers Hanson and Moutray met us. Officer Hanson went to get dog#1 (id#22953) out of his pen and I asked Cain why these dogs were selected (their due out dates were both 3/31). Cain stated that dog#1(id#22953) was aggressive and dog#2 (id#22937) was being euthanized due to lack of space. I observed several open pens earlier in the day, in fact it looked like GCAWE was not even at "half capacity," but did not feel it appropriate to question this decision, although I did ask Cain if he knew the number of pens that must stay open as "reserve" and he said he did not.

Dog#1(id#22953) was brought into the room by Officer Hanson and did not seem to be aggressive at all. The dog was wagging his tail, the dog let Officer Hanson scan his entire body for a microchip (none were found), let Officer Hanson lift him on the scale and even let Hanson



pat him. There was no indication of any type of temperament or behavioral problem that I witnessed from this dog. I observed Hanson putting the solution in the syringe as Moutray stood next to her watching. Moutray lifted the dog onto the euthanasia table and restrained the dog as Cain gave the dog an intravenous (IV) injection. The dog seemed to lose consciousness very quickly (within 3-4) seconds and was turned on his back and then on his side. The dog was then placed on the middle of the floor; Cain let Hanson do the IC method of sticking a syringe in the heart to look for a heartbeat. The syringe palpated briefly and then stopped. Cain got a black trash bag and sat it next to the dog. He did not cover the dog; the dog was in plain view lying dead in the middle of the floor.

Cain instructed Officer Hanson to go and get dog#2 (id#22937) from his pen. While Hanson left to get the dog, I asked Officer Moutray a few questions; he stated he's been employed at GCAWE for (10) years and currently working at intake. He mentioned it not being very pleasant at intake because he sees so many people surrender their dogs. I asked what the protocol was for owner surrenders in terms of vet records and Moutray stated that as of May of last year, GCAWE stopped accepting owner surrenders without proof of vaccines. I then asked if (2) officers are always present when a canine is euthanized and he said, "Yes" (1) to do the injection and (1) to restrain the dog. I asked if (2) officers are always present when felines are euthanized and he said, "No" not usually. I asked Officer Moutray if he has even witnessed the IP method (on cats) take more than a few minutes and he stated it can take longer for heavier cats. Moutray stated it has taken up to 20 minutes before and more than (1) IP injection. Lastly, I asked Officer Moutray about the training that ACO's receive regarding euthanasia. He stated officers receive hands on training by other Officers and then Dr. Wallace comes in to check and see if the officer has been efficiently trained in the area of euthanasia.

Dog#2 (id#22937) was walked into the room by Officer Hanson while dog#1(id#22953) continued to lay dead in the middle of the floor. I watched as dog#2 (id#22937) was walked into the room and immediately saw dog#1 (id#22953) lying there dead. It was at this time that dog#2 (id#22937) tried to resist coming into the room. Dog#2 (id#22937) was pulled into the room by Officer Hanson and the dog immediately started shaking. I watched as he was checked for a microchip by Hanson, none were found. I watched as he was weighed and Hanson put the solution into the syringe as Moutray stood next to her observing. Moutray lifted the dog and set it on the euthanasia table and restrained the dog while Officer Cain gave the dog an intravenous (IV) injection. The dog seemed to lose consciousness very quickly (within 3-4) seconds and was turned on his back and then on his side. The dog then emptied his bladder on the table. The dog was then placed in the middle of the floor; next to dog#1 and Cain let Hanson do the IC method of sticking a syringe in the heart to look for a heartbeat. The syringe palpated briefly and then stopped. Cain put both dogs in separate trash bags, let the air out of each bag and tied the top portion of each bag in a knot. Both bags were placed in the freezer. End of observation.



# Appendix G

## Walton County Animal Control PowerPoint Slides By William Wise

# STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

- Rescue friendly
- Email blasts
- Going online
- Vaccinations/deworm
- Heartworm testing
- Improving Photos



**WaltonPets.net**  
Highlighting the animals for adoption at the Walton County Animal Control Shelter

**ADOPTING IS TRULY SAVING A LIFE!**  
WaltonPets.net features some of the dogs and cats available for adoption at the Walton County Animal Control Shelter in Monroe, Georgia. We are a government-run animal control facility. Because we are an open-intake "pound" for strays and owner surrenders, we are unfortunately not a "no-kill" shelter. But with your help, our goal is to be as "low-kill" as possible! When you adopt or rescue from our facility, you truly are saving a dog or cat from being put to sleep.

**ALL ADOPTIONS ARE ONLY \$40!** Adoptions include:

- a really great life-long companion
- first vaccination (dogs DHPP, cats FVRCP)
- deworming for roundworms and hookworms
- a voucher for \$10 towards a rabies vaccination at participating veterinarians
- Home Again microchip upon request
- Discounted spay/neuter
- Coupon for a free bag of dog/cat food from Bess Brothers County Store.

More information, adoption application, shelter hours and location can be found on the [Adoption Info Page](#).

**WE LOVE RESCUE GROUPS!**  
We love... (and we regret that) we **NOT** help from rescue groups! We have a very simple, no-fee, "show-up-and-adopt" policy for rescue groups licensed by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. For more information on becoming a rescue partner, see our [Rescue Info Page](#).

**SHELTER CLOSED FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, APRIL 6 & 7 FOR GOOD FRIDAY/EASTER HOLIDAY. NORMAL HOURS RESUME MONDAY, APRIL 9**

Looking for information on Walton County Animal Control services?  
[www.WaltonCountyAnimalControl.com](http://www.WaltonCountyAnimalControl.com)

Looking for info on Surrendering a Pet?

**Walton County Animal Control**  
Office (770) 267-1322 Fax (770) 267-4033  
1411 S. Madison Ave. Monroe, Ga. 30685



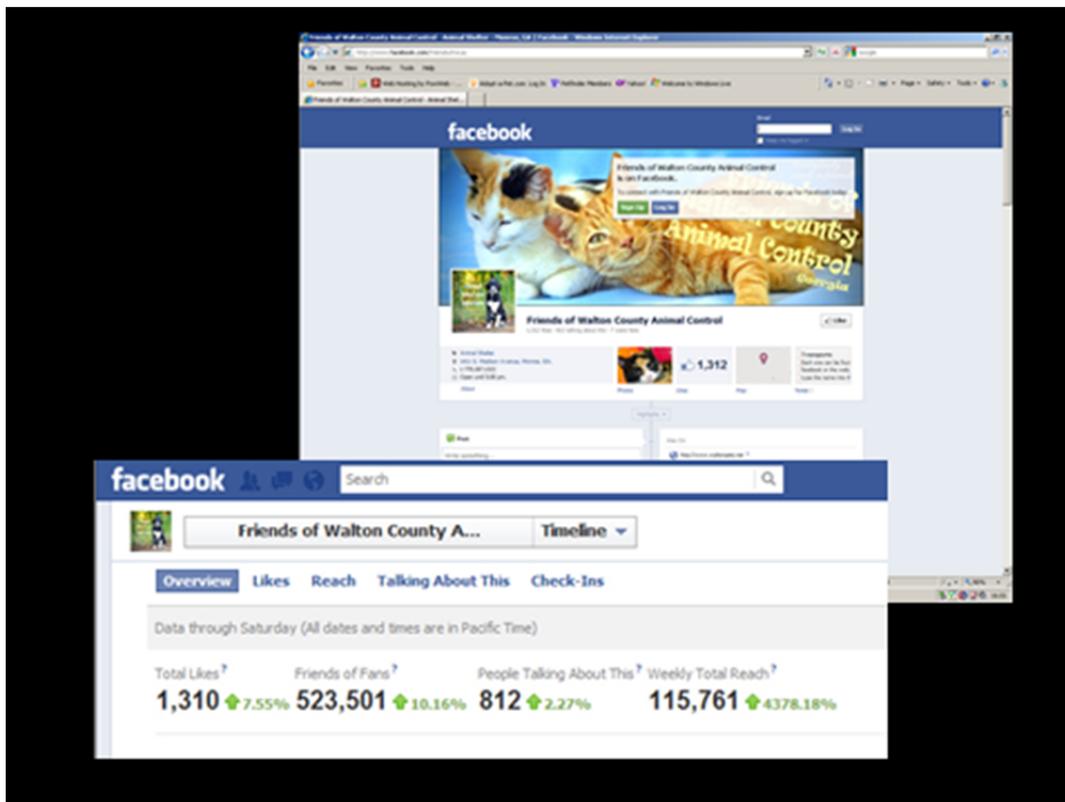


## First Photos



## Take Them Outside!







# Appendix H

## Operation Blankets of Love Letter of Support

### ventura county

#### ANIMAL SERVICES

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February 10, 2012

Fileen Smulson  
Founder and President  
Operation Blankets of Love  
11862 Balboa Blvd., #187  
Granada Hills, CA 91344

Thank you for your efforts to provide blankets to shelter animals – it is an extremely loving gesture.

Clean, well sanitized blankets can make a significant difference to the health, well being, and adoptability of shelter animals.

Blankets provide the opportunity for warmth, insulation, retreat and nesting. The attendant physical and psychological benefits improve the animal's ability to adapt to the shelter environment, reduce the stress they incur, and increase the chance that the animal will stay healthy and present well to potential adopting parties.

I support your efforts

Craig P. Koerner, DMV  
Department of Animal Services

600 Aviation Drive  
Camarillo, CA 93010  
Phone: (805) 388-4341 Fax: (805) 388-4383

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