

FRANKLIN COUNTY SPECIAL MEETING: COMMISSIONERS & THE HUMANE SOCIETY
MEMORANDUM & MINUTES
MAY 6th, 2011 @ 7:00 PM
COMMISSIONERS/COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING ROOM 203

Those Present: County Commissioners: Thomas Wilson Tom Linkel Scott McDonough
County Auditor: Erica Hudson
Commissioners Secretary: Carol Westerman

Thomas Wilson opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

POLICIES AT FRANKLIN COUNTY SMALL ANIMAL CONTROL (SAC) - Those that spoke include: Tammy Lainhart, Dawn Moore, Kristen Hobbs, Paula Brock, Sylvia Merkel, Kathleen Orbison, Heather Bryant, Haroline Ison, Eva Heyob, Nina Muchillo, Courtney Crawford, Alicia Frinchinson, Stanley Monroe, Richard Cunningham, Linda Wissel, Diane Corner, Emily Ash, and Dave Merkel. The discussion began with what liabilities the County could face, internal controls at the pound, and whether or not the job description entailed all of the duties required to fulfill the position adequately. It was suggested that based on constituents' opinions the County wants more of a humane pound. Kristen Hobbs and Dawn Moore are both Franklin County residents but are employed and volunteer at the Decatur County pound and they provided a very detailed outline for the operations at that pound which is ran like a business and suggested that they could work with Franklin County to utilize and incorporate those functions into FC SAC. Some of the ideas recommended for Franklin County include but are not limited to; a Free Software to track and document all of the functions and progress of SAC, incorporate an Animal Control Board that would report to the Commissioners, SAC should function only during business hours unless there is an emergency, and only a select few Key people determined and logged by the Commissioners. It was commented that the problem is irresponsible owners and innocent animals. Many residents wanted the Commissioners to assure progress at SAC by continuing to practice as little euthanasia as possible thus operating a pro life and humane pound. It was stated several times that the volunteers are the backbone of SAC in Franklin County. Many suggested that those that work, volunteer, and have key access should be bonded thorough the county and that the SAC Officer should be deputized. Several individuals wanted the public to be aware that the Humane Society and the Pound/SAC are two separate entities that work closely. Sylvia Merkel stated that the Humane Society does not have a shelter for their animals and that the logging and sign in sheets have been documented for the past 2 ½ years. Thomas Wilson asked if the Humane Society would be interested in leasing the pound for a dollar annually. There were many concerns with that suggestion and the fact that the Humane Society and SAC are two separate entities. It was also then a concern by many that the Commissioners now wanted a profit center. Many stated that donations and volunteers have operated SAC and that it should be easy to see that there were no problems with the functions of SAC. It was also suggested that becoming a more progressive county is wanted as a whole and could have been an easy improvement through public awareness and education as well as ongoing training for those involved. Privatizing was mentioned once again and this would mean that whoever was in control at that point would have total control. Heather Bryant was a concerned citizen stating that her home has been victim to an animal drop-off and just in the past three years she has taken in 22 animals, she also stated that if it weren't for the Humane Society she never could have kept or maintained the animals. Scott McDonough stated that the County has no intentions to discontinue working with the Humane Society or the Volunteers. It was suggested that there needs to be an Ordinance in place where a \$500 dollar fine would be charged for anyone caught abandoning animals and also repeat offenders should be fined and included. Many felt that the biggest problem with the lack of animal control comes from people dropping off unwanted litters. Thomas Wilson stated that with only 2 Deputies on duty and the lack of being able to enforce Ordinances this would not be as realistic as deputizing the SAC Officer and enforcing through the Chain of Command. It was suggested that the Commissioners need to be careful with what they are doing because the SAC Officer has County Insurance and we had a similar problem not so long ago; EMS Secretary. Many felt that irresponsible owners were also a bigger part of the picture and that micro chipping could be required anytime an animal is adopted so the County can begin to monitor owners if an animal comes in and that those irresponsible owners that become repeat offenders should have to pay a fine that increase per offense and to sign a form of acknowledgment/release. It was also a major concern that at this point supplies and donations are drying up and that neither the County nor the Commissioners are prepared for such a situation. Alicia Frinchinson suggested that the Commissioners look into NACO (National Animal Control Officer) Certification which costs \$536 she also stated that the contract/release form has the Ordinances listed on them in Decatur County. Stanley Monroe stated that a micro chip is \$3.60 however the scanner is \$600; the scanner is donated to shelters/animals rescue facilities. Richard Cunningham apologized to the Commissioners and Humane Society for any inconvenience that all of this has caused; he also suggested that an online option for owners to track if their animal has been found (through the micro chip) would allow quicker retrieval. He was also concerned with the medications that are kept at the pound being that animal and human medications are far too similar. Linda Wissel stated that she had an emergency because on her way to the meeting a dog had been abandoned on 52 and so she picked it up and it appears to have mange due to the smell and condition of the dog, she stated that she would have called Louie; she said she couldn't take it home because it would infect her animals and she doesn't have the resources to care for it. Diane Corner was in tears as she explained a situation that occurred to her in 2009 and 2010. She stated that she runs a daycare center out of her home and also raised and showed very expensive rabbits in 4H. The rabbits were registered through Indianapolis and total invested was \$5,000. Diane stated that she moved to Franklin County from Kentucky and that she did not know Louie until her terrible incident first occurred in 2009. She said that two large dogs attacked and ate her rabbits causing over \$900 in damage. Louie was there at 7 AM and assisted her and followed through the entire process and she didn't think she would have made it through without him. The neighbors identified the owner however Mr. Wilhelm made Louie release the dogs to the owner because there were no previous records of attacks or violence. The owners did pay but now Diane cannot let the children go out to play. The same incident occurred in 2010 with two different dogs and nothing has ever been done; Diane no longer raises rabbits for 4H. This is an ongoing problem and ultimately the County is going to be liable for irresponsible owners. Scott McDonough mentioned that Louie had more control and authority when he was under the Sheriff's Department. It was stated that many feel that irresponsible pet owners that are mad at Louie are to blame and that this is where the Commissioners received the information which is what caused Louie's termination. Scott McDonough assured that this is simply not the case and Louie's termination was based on facts as well as multiple discussions with Deputies that had problems with Louie. Scott also stated that any employee performance issue will lead to a dysfunctional government and the Chain of Command must be followed. Scott then informed the crowd that we are here to discuss policy and not Louie. Dave Merkel was very upset and stated that he feels that the Commissioners mind was already made up about Louie at the beginning of the year. He feels that this Deputy was lying about Louie because Louie has been the SAC Officer for 15 years and if he were a bad employee now he would have been a bad employee within the first 5 years. Decatur County has 5 on duty that are paid a salary from revenues created by running the facility like a business. Dave was also upset that the Commissioners have a Secretary and Louie did not; he stated that he volunteers frequently and has yet to see any of them at the pound. He stated that this is simply political and that the Commissioners are on a power trip. In conclusion Scott McDonough is going to meet with the Humane Society on Monday, May 9th at 7PM at the pound for a one on one discussion to see where they go from here. Tom Linkel stated that identifying the Key people is vital and will be done immediately. Scott McDonough felt that starting out with 2 would be relevant. They are also going to meet

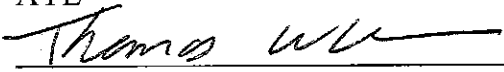
with Decatur County again to incorporate their suggestions; the Humane Society will be involved. The Commissioners are going to check into the Counties insurance. Scott McDonough also made it very clear that only a few donations have been processed and documented properly as of 2011 and that this is required per State to be done through the Auditor's Office.

ADJOURN- MOTION- Scott McDonough motioned to adjourn. Thomas Wilson 2nd. Tom Linkel, AIF. MC.

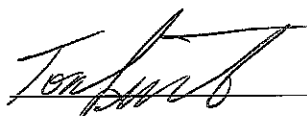
Others Present:	Gary Frost	Kathleen Robison	Emily Ash	Tyler Hensley
Joanne Suttong	Diane Schuck	Janice Gartenman	Eva Heyob	Heather Bryant
Brett Hughes	Stacey Mays	Nina Muccillo	Paula Brock	Linda Wissell
Sara Duffy	Teresa Miller	Kate Greene	David Merkel	Dawn Moore
Kristen Hobbs	Allisha Christianson	Corey Crawford	Cheryl Combs	Donna Krauszer
Peggy Spencer	Linda Davis	Dale Davis	Lester Monroe	Judy Monroe
Martha Monroe	Stanley Monroe	Wayne Monroe	Angela Combs	Fred Combs
Ruby Combs	Julie Brown	Wilma Meyer	Justin Moore	Z.S.
Mary Lou Hertel	Katie Merkel	Sylvia Merkel	Heather Bryant	Amber Everman
Matthew Clements	Linda Hall	Robert Braun	Rebecca Ruckman	

Note: Those names listed are spelled as correctly as possible due to the legibility on the sign in sheet.

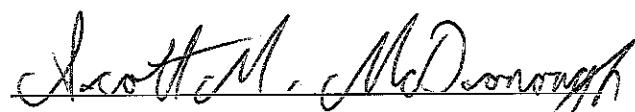
AYE



Thomas Wilson



Tom Linkel



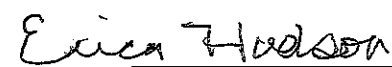
Scott McDonough

NAY

Thomas Wilson

Tom Linkel

Scott McDonough

ATTEST: 

Erica Hudson, Franklin County Auditor