

Animal Control Board
Wednesday, April 29, 2026
Zoom

Members Attending: A. Miller, C. DiLella, D. Straub, J. Folk, A. Cordero

Others Attending: S. Smith, C. Reed, R. Harnish, I. Litvinov, S. Errington

Call to Order

Ms. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. She noted that a quorum was present.

All present introduced themselves.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Straub, seconded by Ms. Miller, to approve the October 30, 2025 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Reorganization

Motion was made by Mr. Straub, seconded by Ms. Cordero, nominating Ms. Miller as Chair. Ms. Miller accepted the nomination.

Motion was made by Ms. Miller, seconded by Mr. Straub, nominating Dr. DiLella as Vice Chair. Dr. DiLella accepted the nomination.

The slate of officers was approved unanimously.

Animal Control Agency Report

Ms. Harnish reviewed the report as follows:

2026 Total Animal Admissions YTD (as of 3/31/2026)

544 TOTAL (all areas)

335 TOTAL (City of Reading alone)

2026 DAP Dispatches YTD (as of 3/31/2026)

TOTAL 136 in all contracted areas/county

31 activities (stray/return to field)

97 cases (humane society police officer for cruelty & neglect complaints) / animal control officer for animal control calls)

TOTAL 64 Reading City Dispatches

34 CASES

2 Six or more dogs/cats

- 7 Code Red/Blue
- 1 Keeping of exotic animals
- 18 Cruelty/Neglect
- 3 Confinement/Control
- 3 Other/Owned/Public
- 30 ACTIVITIES
- 10 Return To Field
- 7 Injured Stray Animals
- 12 Stray Animals
- 13 Other/Owned/Public

Permit Applications

None

Old Business

2316 Berkley Rd – rooster, chickens

Ms. Harnish stated that ARL has not had any complaints about this property since 2024.

Mr. Reed stated that the City also has not had any complaints about this property.

This property will be removed from the agenda.

620 Mulberry St – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Harnish stated that 30 animals were removed from this property in January 2026. She stated that six animals remained, which is below the limit and no permit is needed. She stated that the remaining animals are vaccinated.

Mr. Reed stated that the owner of the property contacted the City on April 1 and indicated that the property is currently vacant and that he is working to remove the odors.

Ms. Miller noted the need to continue to monitor this property for now.

Dr. DiLella questioned if any animals were left behind when the tenant moved out. Mr. Reed stated that there was no report of this occurring. He stated that the property is scheduled to be inspected in June after the owner has an opportunity to restore habitable conditions.

This property will be removed from the agenda.

329 W Douglass St – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Harnish stated that this property is still over the limit. She stated that the animal owners were scheduled to surrender two dogs and one cat but were a no show for their appointment.

Mr. Reed stated that no application to keep more than 6 dogs / cats was received.

Ms. Miller questioned next steps.

Ms. Harnish stated that the ARL can cite the owner for a lack of licenses and vaccines. She stated that there are currently nine animals present.

Mr. Straub questioned if the property was inspected. Ms. Harnish stated that the ARL does not have concerns about the interior conditions. She expressed the belief that the permit application would be approved if it is submitted, after vaccinations are provided.

Ms. Miller questioned if the City could cite the animal owners. Ms. Harnish stated that the City could cite for being over the limit. Mr. Reed explained that the health inspector that handled animal issues has left the City. He stated that the new health inspector is reviewing those files.

Ms. Harnish stated that the no show appointment was only on April 23.

Dr. DiLella questioned coverage by Property Maintenance. Mr. Reed stated that he is the Board's liaison and the health inspectors supervisor. He stated that there are two health inspectors and that they are getting familiar with the open animal cases.

242 Linden St – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Harnish stated that two dogs were surrendered in March. She stated that the remaining animals are licensed and vaccinated. She stated that the property is no longer over the limit.

Ms. Miller questioned if there was follow up regarding additional litters of puppies. Ms. Harnish stated that some puppies were rehomed and the rest were surrendered to the ARL. She stated that the two remaining dogs are scheduled to be spayed / neutered in June. She stated that if the owners are a no show for this appointment, ARL will follow up.

1136 Perkiomen Ave – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Harnish stated that ARL's last visit was in October 2025. She stated that there are nine dogs and that the animal owner is still promoting breeding services. She stated that ARL continues to monitor his Facebook account. She stated that this appears to be his business.

Ms. Miller stated that Mr. Reed was going to report this unlicensed business to Zoning and questioned if that was done. Mr. Reed stated that he reported the issue but does not see any updates in the property files. He stated that he will follow up with Zoning.

New Business

539 Maple St – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Harnish stated that the ARL visited this property today. She stated that the animal owners are now within the limit but she has structural concerns about the property. She stated that she only saw the interior briefly but that there are issues with the floor and ceiling. She stated that the front door doesn't appear to lock and stated that these are safety concerns.

Mr. Reed stated that this property is owner occupied so it does not get routine interior inspections. He stated that the City can address any maintenance issues that are visible on the exterior.

Ms. Harnish described the conditions of the front steps and front door.

Dr. DiLella questioned if any odors were noted from the exterior. Ms. Harnish stated that she did not detect odors on this visit but that she had detected them during prior visits. She stated that there are fewer animals present but that it is still over the limit. She stated that the owners are very private about their home.

Mr. Reed stated that he can address the steps, door, and any other visible exterior issues.

Ms. Miller expressed the belief that there are safety concerns. Mr. Reed agreed and stated that he would send an inspector to this location.

Increased Number of Feral Cats

Mr. Straub noted the increased number of feral cats in his neighborhood. He questioned programs that are available to assist.

Ms. Miller stated that the Community Cats Facebook group advertises events. She stated that the ARL, Humane Society, and No Nonsense Neutering have TNR programs. She stated that Mr. Straub should contact these groups and reminded all that it is kitten season.

Mr. Straub stated that he is physically unable to assist as he did in the past. He stated that he will contact these groups and do what he can.

Ms. Miller stated that the groups' volunteers are responsive. She stated that it takes a village to make an impact.

Breeding Location within Homeless Encampment

Dr. DiLella stated that she provided information to the City about a homeless encampment breeding puppies. Ms. Smith stated that it is taking place in the area around S. 9th St and Canal St.

Mr. Reed stated that he visited the area. He stated that the encampment is behind the power plant near building ruins at the river. He stated that this is a heavily wooded area and expressed the belief that it was not safe to enter the encampment alone. He noted the need to work with ARL and Police at this location.

Mr. Straub questioned who owns the property. Mr. Reed stated that it is a combination of the State, the City, and Norfolk Southern.

Ms. Harnish stated that Mr. Reed has provided this information to ARL. She agreed that ARL and the City need to work together at this location.

Mr. Reed stated that you must walk into the area. He stated that there are also dogs running loose which is a separate issue. He stated that the dogs seemed to be cared for and were friendly.

Ms. Harnish stated that it is not illegal for the homeless population to have dogs or to breed them. She stated that these are not optimal conditions but that this is fine if the animals are cared for. She expressed the belief that many times the breeding is not intentional due to their not being spayed / neutered and living in close proximity.

Dr. DiLella stated that she had two separate reports that the puppies are being sold.

Ms. Harnish stated that this is also not illegal. She stated that the issue would go to the Dog Warden if the breeding reached 26 puppies per year and would require the need for a kennel license.

Mr. Reed stated that a kennel would require a Zoning permit but that the City is partial owner of the land. He stated that he is concerned about the location of the encampment.

Ms. Harnish stated that ARL will visit the area to witness the conditions before determining next steps.

Ms. Miller noted the need for licenses, vaccines, and basic care for the animals. Ms. Harnish agreed.

Next Meeting

Ms. Miller suggested meeting in three months. She stated that there are several properties requiring follow up. She requested that Ms. Smith poll members to meet in June.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk