

Animal Control Board
Thursday, October 30, 2025
3rd Floor Conference Room / Hybrid

Members Attending: A. Miller, C. DiLella, D. Straub, S. Baller - virtually

Others Attending: S. Smith – in person; C. Reed, R. Harnish, I. Litvinov, M. Lynch, BCTV – virtually

Call to Order

Ms. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. She noted that a quorum was present.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Straub, seconded by Ms. Baller, to approve the April 9, 2025 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Animal Control Agency Report

Ms. Baller reviewed the report as follows:

2025 Total Animal Admissions YTD (as of 10/30/25)

- 2297 TOTAL (all areas)
- 1424 TOTAL (City of Reading alone)

2025 DAP Dispatches YTD (as of 10/30/25)

- TOTAL 569 in all contracted areas/county
 - 207 activities (stray/rtf)
 - 362 cases (hspo/aco)
- TOTAL 360 Reading City Dispatches
 - 181 CASES
 - 8 Six or more dogs/cats
 - 18 Code Red/Blue
 - 10 Keeping of exotic animals
 - 114 Cruelty/Neglect
 - 16 Confinement/Control
 - 15 Other/Owned/Public
 - 179 ACTIVITIES
 - 54 RTF
 - 21 Injured Stray Animals
 - 102 Stray Animals
 - 2 Other/Owned/Public

Permit Applications

None

Old Business

- **Animal Education**

Ms. Miller stated that the flyers had been distributed. She thanked Board members for their comments during the review process and thanked staff for their work.

Mr. Straub agreed that this was great work.

- **2311 River Rd** (legal address **2321 River Rd**) – chickens

Ms. Baller stated that ARL has not received any additional complaints and considers this case closed. Mr. Reed agreed.

This property will be removed from the agenda.

- **2316 Berkley Rd** – rooster, chickens

Ms. Baller stated that the ARL has not received any additional complaints about this address. She stated that ARL body camera footage was reviewed but that the chickens are not visible.

Mr. Straub questioned whether a drone could be used to see the rear of the property. Ms. Baller stated that the ARL does not use this method. Mr. Reed stated that governmental agencies cannot use drones as this could be viewed as an invasion of privacy.

Ms. Miller questioned if a Zoning application was received. Mr. Reed stated that no Zoning application was received. He stated that generally Zoning staff tells these applicants that the application will be denied and they would need to appeal to the Zoning Hearing Board. He stated that no one wants to pay the appeal fees and so there is no follow up.

Ms. Miller stated that at the last meeting Ms. Herbert indicated that she would be issuing a notice of violation. She suggested that this property continue to be monitored.

Mr. Reed stated that he will review the file but that there is no evidence of chickens at this time.

- **1023 Greenwich St** – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Baller stated that the tenant who owned the dogs / cats has moved.

This property will be removed from the agenda.

- **Animal Ordinance Amendment**

Ms. Miller stated that members have received a copy of the amendment. She stated that this language now matches the PA Dog Law more closely.

Ms. Baller agreed and stated that an owner still has the ability to appeal the aggressive dog designation to the Animal Control Board. She stated that the owner has 14 days to file the appeal.

New Business

- **620 Mulberry St** – more than 6 dogs / cats

Mr. Reed stated that Ms. Herbert was able to get a limited inspection done before noticing a large amount of fleas in the property. She stated that 18 cats and 8 dogs were witnessed in the limited area. A reinspection is scheduled for November 7 and he invited the ARL to accompany City staff.

Mr. Reed stated that this is a tenant and the property owner has approved the inspection but the tenant denies access.

Ms. Baller questioned if the resident was told about animal ownership expectations. Mr. Reed stated that Ms. Herbert did discuss surrendering some animals but that there has been no additional follow up.

Ms. Baller stated that ARL will accompany City inspectors for the reinspection.

Mr. Straub questioned if the property owner had any responsibility in these infestations. Mr. Reed stated that if citations are issued by the City, they are against the property owner. He noted the problems when there is an absentee landlord delays and moves cases into the legal system. Ms. Harnish stated that ARL citations are against the animal owner.

Ms. Miller questioned if this was an out of state property owner. Mr. Reed stated that it is not out of state but that it is also not local.

Ms. Lynch disconnected from the meeting at this time.

Ms. Miller questioned if there were any new complaints about this property. Mr. Reed stated that the situation has been reported to the ARL and that the City was not able to gain full access to the property. He stated that he will continue to schedule follow up inspections.

Ms. Miller noted the need to keep this property on the agenda.

Ms. Baller stated that this resident had cooperated with the ARL in the past and had surrendered animals at that time. She stated that there was improvement but additional contacts had no response. She stated that ARL had not received complaints about this address.

Mr. Straub questioned if this was a row home. Ms. Baller stated that it is.

Mr. Straub noted how these types of situations affect connected neighbors with vermin and insects. He noted his wish that more could be done to alleviate these situations.

Ms. Harnish stated that citations can be issued for sanitation issues.

- **329 W Douglass St** – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Harnish stated that there are 11 cats at this property. She stated that the property passed inspection but that there is no evidence of their having their rabies vaccines. She stated that she forwarded this property to the City.

Mr. Reed stated that the City has no record of this case. Ms. Harnish stated that she will provide the ARL report.

Ms. Harnish questioned if it would be helpful to submit body camera footage. Mr. Reed stated that this will assist with the issuance of citations but that the ARL would then need to appear as a witness.

Mr. Straub questioned if ARL and City inspectors can view properties from neighboring homes if there is no cooperation from the resident. Ms. Baller stated that this can be done but that many people don't like that to be done because the complainant then retaliates.

Mr. Straub noted the increased use of home security cameras and questioned if that could be reviewed for evidence. Ms. Baller stated that this can be used for evidence if the camera owner is willing to testify.

Mr. Reed noted that many times residents will send complaints to the City rather than speaking directly with their neighbors.

- **242 Linden St** – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Harnish stated that there is no evidence of rabies vaccines and she is unsure if any of the animals were rehomed. She stated that this resident is primarily Spanish-speaking. She stated that the animal owner was given one week to provide evidence of vaccines.

Mr. Reed stated that the City has had no recent complaints about this property.

Ms. Harnish stated that the resident had two dogs which had a litter of puppies. All the puppies were kept. She noted her concern that this would become a breeding operation.

Ms. Baller stated that the residents were also over the limit in the past but surrendered animals to the ARL and had been in compliance until recently. She stated that she will check the body camera footage for this property.

Ms. Harnish stated that ARL did not enter the property and only held a conversation.

Mr. Reed noted the need for evidence to justify a citation.

Mr. Litvinov interjected and noted the need for the City to follow Sunshine Act advertising rules and questioned why these properties were not listed on the agenda. He stated that this is a public meeting and some of the information being shared may be private. He noted the need for the public to know which items would be discussed at meetings.

Ms. Baller apologized and stated that addresses will be shared before meetings in the future.

- **1136 Perkiomen Ave** – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Harnish stated that this property has passed inspection and the animals have licenses and vaccinations.

Mr. Reed questioned whether ARL provides the application to keep more than 6 dogs / cats to residents or if people are referred to the City to apply. Ms. Harnish stated that the application is given. She stated that in this case, the resident indicated that he is sheltering the animals temporarily. She stated that ARL is concerned because the resident advertises to pet sit and to assist with breeding at this location. She stated that this would cause an unknown number of animals in and out of the property frequently.

Mr. Reed stated that he will follow up with Zoning as this may be an unpermitted home occupation.

Ms. Miller requested that properties which need to be discussed at meetings be emailed to Ms. Smith. Ms. Baller agreed. Ms. Smith noted the need to have agenda information one week prior to meetings. Mr. Litvinov agreed. *(Note: this applies to any discussion topic if known prior to the meeting.)*

Other Matters

- **Advertising of Animal Services Available to the Public**

Mr. Straub questioned whether there is regular advertising of low cost or free services when events are held.

Ms. Miller stated that the educational flyers contain information for organizations who host these types of events. She stated that these groups also provide information on social media when they hold spay / neuter events and vaccines clinics.

Mr. Straub questioned if the flyers are provided when ARL or City inspectors visit properties. Ms. Baller stated that the ARL provides information about ARL events. She stated that they also provide information about other clinics throughout the County. She stated that they also work with animal owners to spay the animals they are keeping when some others are surrendered.

Ms. Miller suggested that the City's flyers also be distributed to educate residents about animal ownership responsibilities. Ms. Baller agreed. Ms. Harnish stated that staff is very knowledgeable and can share much information.

- **Increased Number of Stray Dogs**

Dr. DiLella noted that when people cannot place an animal in a shelter because there are no spaces available, they often bring them to her office. She questioned how to find spaces elsewhere.

Ms. Baller stated that if the animal is from within the City, the ARL is obligated to shelter them.

Dr. DiLella stated that her office borders the City and it is not always clear where the animal was found. Ms. Baller stated that if the animal was found in another municipality which also contracts with the ARL, the ARL must accept them. She stated that if the municipality does not contract with ARL, the municipality should be contacted to see where the animal should be taken.

Dr. DiLella questioned how to shelter the animals while the ARL is closed. Ms. Baller stated that Reading police should be contacted after hours. She stated that Reading is working on after hours animal housing and noted the City's hope to have that operational by the end of 2025. She stated that outside the City, the specific municipality needs to be contacted for other options.

Dr. DiLella questioned if ARL had a list of municipalities that they contract with and their contact information. Ms. Baller stated that ARL staff has this information and she will share it with Dr. DiLella.

Dr. DiLella thanked Ms. Baller and stated that this information would be very helpful.

Mr. Straub noted the frequent social media posts of lost pets. Ms. Miller stated that these organizations are separate from the ARL. Ms. Baller agreed but stated that these posts are very helpful to the ARL.

Next Meeting

Ms. Miller suggested meeting in six months unless there is a need to meet sooner. She requested Ms. Smith poll members to meet in early April.

Adjournment

Mr. Straub moved, seconded by Ms. Baller, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk