

Animal Control Board
Wednesday, January 10, 2024
Virtually

Members Attending: S. Baller, A. Miller, D. Straub, R. Rosato, H. Brown

Others Attending: S. Smith, I. Litvinov, C. Reed

Call to Order

Mr. Rosato called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. He noted that a quorum was present.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Ms. Baller, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve the July 19, 2023 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Reorganization

Motion was made by Mr. Straub, seconded by Ms. Baller, to keep the officers the same for 2024 – Mr. Rosato, chair; Mr. Brown, vice chair. Motion carried unanimously.

Animal Control Agency Report

Ms. Baller stated that Ms. Manwiller is no longer with the ARL. She suggested that her replacement attend meetings in the future.

Mr. Rosato stated that this would be helpful. Ms. Baller stated that she will provide the updated contact information to Ms. Smith.

Ms. Baller provided the following information for Reading for 2023:

- 2,504 admissions
- 877 dispatches
 - 530 animal control
 - 197 cruelty reports
 - 136 RTF
 - 14 wellness inspections

Mr. Reed stated that complaints regarding chickens are increasing. Ms. Baller stated that the ARL has not received any chicken complaints recently. She stated that she will provide the full report via email.

Ms. Miller questioned the number of Code Red / Code Blue complaints. Ms. Baller stated that she will provide this information in the full report.

Old Business

- **936 N 5th St** – more than six dogs / cats

No update

- **438 N 9th St** – keeping chickens

No update

- **318 Pine St** – more than six dogs / cats

No update

- **1048 Mulberry St** – more than six dogs / cats

No update

- **100 Neversink St** – more than six dogs / cats

No update

- **618 Thorn St** – more than six dogs / cats

No update

- **Animal Ordinance amendment** – more than six dogs / cats versus animal point system

Mr. Straub requested an update.

Ms. Baller stated that Mr. Carroll is no longer with the ARL and she has no new information.

Mr. Reed noted the need to confirm the animal permit renewal fees. Ms. Smith stated that she will provide this information to the Board.

Note: the current fees are:

§ 212-103. Animals.

[Amended 10-12-2020 by Ord. No. 66-2020; and 1-11-2021 by Ord. No. 2-2021]

Description	Fee	Ordinance No.	Code Citation
Permit for an exotic animal, domestic agricultural animal or native wildlife animal (per household)	\$100 for the first calendar year \$50 for subsequent years	57-2009	§ 141-215
The fee shall be disbursed \$50 to the designated animal control authority and \$50 to the City to cover the costs of inspections and administration. For subsequent years, the fee shall be \$50 and will be disbursed \$25 to the designated animal control authority and \$25 to the City to cover costs.			

Dangerous, aggressive or vicious dog/animal permit	\$250	57-2009	§ 141-216
Dangerous, aggressive or vicious dog/animal appeal	\$100		§ 141-220
Reclaiming an impounded animal	\$25 per day of impoundment * additional fees may be charged by the Animal Control Agency	57-2009	§ 141-218

There are no fees for six or more dogs / cats permits.

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

Ms. Baller stated that their number of pets is now below the limit.

Mr. Reed stated that the property has passed its two year inspection.

- **1613 N 9th St** – more than 6 dogs / cats

Ms. Baller stated that their number of pets is now below the limit.

- **Pet Store Ban**

Ms. Baller stated that she has discussed the concerns about pet stores with the Dog Warden.

Ms. Miller stated that the pet store at the Berkshire Mall has relocated to Exeter Township. She stated that many residents were upset and started an email campaign to ban pet stores. She stated that past discussions have led to the Board believing that this would be too difficult to manage and beyond the scope of the Board. She also stated that the Mayor was recently seen at the grand opening of a pet store in Reading and this would not be a good thing to do politically.

Ms. Baller stated that the ARL has a great relationship with the Dog Warden. She noted her confidence that the ARL would be notified if there were any alarming situations at either location.

Ms. Miller agreed and expressed the belief that people will report any issues that they see.

Ms. Baller stated that there have been no complaints about either location to date.

- **Feeding outdoor animals**

Ms. Miller noted the need for residents to understand the City's guidelines for outdoor feeding. She stated that this will prevent citations and noted the need for public education.

Mr. Brown stated that in the past, residents were told that if they keep the area clean and clean up after the animals, that outdoor feeding was fine. He noted the need to prevent insects and wild animals from coming into the area. Ms. Baller agreed. She stated that she has not had as many calls about this issue recently.

Ms. Miller suggested posting the requirement on the City's website and social media accounts. She stated that the language is vague and open to interpretation.

Mr. Reed stated that residents would get Quality of Life tickets for this issue. He stated that it would be regarding animal care and clean up.

The ticket language is:

QOL.002 Animal maintenance and waste/feces cleanup. People owning, harboring or keeping an animal within the City of Reading shall not permit any waste matter/feces from the animal to collect and remain on the property so as to cause or create an unhealthy, unsanitary, dangerous or offensive living condition. All waste from animals must be cleaned up on a daily basis.

Mr. Rosato stated that he will share the information with his pet owners.

Ms. Baller questioned the number of complaints the City receives. Mr. Reed stated that it varies but many are repeat calls. He stated that there are 10 – 15 problem areas. He stated that the goal of the ticket program is to get compliance. He stated that the feedings are causing some neighborhoods to be overrun with cats.

Ms. Miller thanked Mr. Reed and stated that she will encourage those feeding outdoor animals to be sure to keep the area clean.

Ms. Smith stated that she will work with the City's Communication Coordinator to get the information posted to the website and social media accounts. She was asked to share the flyer with Board members so that they can share it with their networks.

Mr. Straub suggested that the information also be shared with the Police Department.

Ms. Miller expressed the belief that complaints will increase in the warmer months and suggested education begin now.

Mr. Reed explained the difference between a QoL ticket and a Notice of Violation. He stated that Property Maintenance Inspectors issue a warning before issuing a ticket. He stated that after 10 days a first ticket can be issued; after an additional 10 days a second ticket can be issued. He stated that this practice continues until four tickets have been issued. He stated that after the final 10 days without compliance a Notice of Violation is issued and the case will move into MDJ court if there is still no compliance.

Ms. Smith stated that the intention of the tickets was for items that be quickly corrected so that Property Maintenance did not need to continue to revisit the same property for the same issue.

New Business

- **Providing Education at Community Events**

Ms. Smith stated that Ms. Baller suggested this during her reappointment interview with the Nominations & Appointments Committee of City Council. She suggested that materials be prepared now as events increase during the warmer months.

Ms. Baller stated that she loves this idea. She stated that she will coordinate with the ARL's Communication Coordinator. She stated that the ARL already has information prepared to distribute.

Ms. Miller stated that she also supports this idea. She suggested holding an event related to animal care and to invite all the County animal resources. She stated that this would assist residents understand the services available and where to find those services.

Mr. Reed stated that the City already attends many events. He stated that adding animal information would be helpful.

Ms. Baller stated that she will work with the ARL Communications Coordinator to arrange a collaborative animal event.

Mr. Rosato suggested reconvening before the weather turns warmer. He also noted the outbreaks of Parvo that occurred in the past.

Ms. Miller noted the need to offer more low cost vaccine clinics in Reading. She suggested that the event be hosted in a City facility to be accessible to residents.

Mr. Rosato stated that these clinics are a large undertaking. He noted his belief that medication vendors will donate the vaccines and that they may also sponsor the event.

Ms. Baller stated that the ARL is currently working on its vaccination schedule. She stated that there will be more events held in 2024. She stated that the ARL also has a new mobile unit that can be used in different City neighborhoods. She stated that past events at the DoubleTree were successful. She stated that the ARL understands the transportation barriers for City residents and stated that the mobile unit will expand event locations.

Mr. Straub suggested recruiting college students to assist at the event. Ms. Miller stated that students cannot handle the pets or administer the vaccines.

Ms. Baller stated that this is a priority for the ARL in 2024.

- **1234 N 6th St** – more than 6 dogs / cats

Mr. Reed stated that a permit has not been received. Ms. Baller stated that the property did pass its inspection.

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

Ms. Baller stated that the property has passed its inspection and all the animals have been vaccinated. She noted the need for permit submission.

- **916 Pear St** – exotic animal (quail)

Ms. Baller stated that the animals have been removed.

- **1407 Cotton St** – deplorable conditions

Mr. Reed stated that this property is owner occupied and the City has been unable to gain access. He stated that they City has attempted contact many times but there is no response by the owner.

Ms. Baller stated that the owners have surrendered some of the animals and they are now below the limit.

Other Matters

Mr. Reed stated that a new health inspector is starting and he will bring the inspector to the next meeting to meet the Board.

- **Code Red / Code Blue**

Ms. Miller noted her concern about animals left outside after ARL hours. She questioned who should be called. Ms. Baller stated that residents should call the Police Department. (*Note: please use the non-emergency number – 610-655-6116.*) She stated that the Police Department will enforce the complaints the same way the ARL would. She stated that they will notify the ARL the next day.

Ms. Miller questioned what would happen to the animal. Ms. Baller stated that the Police would handle them similarly as strays. She stated that the City is determining if it will build its own holding facility. She stated that she is unsure if this is complete.

- **ARL Representative Vacancy**

Ms. Baller questioned the process to replace Mr. Carroll on the Board. Ms. Smith stated that the animal control agency gets two representatives on the Board. She stated that the ARL should determine who would join the Board and ask them to complete the BAC application.

Ms. Miller stated that the Board will still have two vacancies. Ms. Smith stated that after the ARL fills its position, the only vacancy on the Board is the veterinarian. She stated that this position has been difficult to fill.

Ms. Baller and Mr. Rosato stated that they will check with their networks to try to fill the position.

Next Meeting

Ms. Smith suggested meeting in early March so that materials are prepared when events begin. She was asked to poll members for their availability.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk