

St. Clair County Animal Services

Minutes for Meeting

Conference Room: 6:00 P.M.

February 23rd, 2026

Members Present: Robert Trentman
Scott Greenwald, Asst. Chairman
Mike O’Donnell
Lonnie Mosley
G.W. Scott, Jr.
Robert Wilhelm
Harry Hollingsworth

Others Present: _____

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mr. Trentman.

Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Stand for the Pledge of Allegiance
Roll call and a quorum declared present.

Public Comment:

Mr. Trentman: Public comment time. Please keep your comments or questions to about 2 minutes and direct them to this chair. There are a lot of people here, so we need to stay at about 2 minutes and if you have anything direct them to me. Who’s first? And if you wouldn’t mind stating your name and where you are from so it’s a little bit easier for us to keep track.

Jennifer Schilling: My name is Jennifer Schilling and this is my husband, Kirk. I am here today to shed some light on the rumors circulating on Facebook. While most or all of you do not know my husband and I, we are very prominent in the community, mostly behind the scenes. We run Glo Bingo for Tribout’s and help raise millions of dollars for local nonprofits throughout 1/2 of Illinois. Many of which are also rescues: Helping Strays, Belleville Humane Society, and we have one coming up for the Advocates. We also have fostered over 400 dogs, mostly medical and feral. In my limited time that I have tonight to speak to you, I do have reference letters, if you would pass one of those around, that speak upon our knowledge and expertise. I’m not sure

where the concept came from that a facility is to be 100 spotless at all times. We are taking in neglected, stray, and abused animals. Some fear pee & poop as soon as you look at them. Others have never lived in a home. Much like children learning to potty train, these pups need training too. However, unlike a child peeing in their pants, cleaning up the mess, regrouping and moving on, we offer no grace to these dogs for the same and blame the caretakers if there is a mess in the kennel. You may remember Adira that came into AC this past Fall missing half her leg and bones sticking out. We fostered her after her leg and tail amputation. We also discovered she is one of the best dogs to ever come through our house, and that says a lot. However, 6 months later we are still working on potty training and think that might be the reason she was dumped because someone definitely command trained her. She goes out almost every 1-2 hours when we are working from home, yet she will have accidents. She is also a notorious 3am pooper. Had she been at AC, I promise, anytime you would walk past her kennel you would find a mess. Again, no one's fault, she just isn't there yet after living on the streets and abandoned houses. In addition to that, the blood we cleaned up during recovery from surgery and the drainage that needed to happen would have also made for a great representation of neglect. It was part of the process that happens after every major surgery. That's why they put in drain tubes and don't stitch any incision completely. Again, we are no different after surgery, yet we blame caretakers for natural body healing. We have had many feral dogs that have come through. One in particular was bleeding so horribly from mange and had bitten two people at the rescue upon intake, a vet and the person trying to get her out of the vehicle. She was a baby at 3 months old and absolutely terrified. She needed medicated baths regularly. I'm sure you can understand how well that would work for us and not at a shelter. The rescue contacted us to take this specific girl out of the 3 siblings. We couldn't touch her for 6 weeks. She used potty pads in her room, though usually shredding them and peeing on the floor, and we lived life on Rosie's demands and requirements. Her progress started on the demand of outside potty trips but only in the dark. It was summertime. That meant 9-10pm until 5am. Had she been at the rescue facility, pee & poop plus blood from her mange would have been the norm. However, she wasn't at an AC facility and got the time to figure out life and go on to be a loving family dog. I could talk for days about dogs that don't fit what society has deemed kennel facilities should reflect at any time a person walks in. All this to say, no one takes this job for the easy paycheck and fluff work environment. It's hard, it's messy, its bodily fluids, anger for what someone has done to them, and confusion as to why and how to make it better, compassion and reward when they take their next journey toward a family. It takes its toll on caregivers, mentally & physically. Yet they show up day in and day out to make it the best they can for the animals with the resources that they have. To think it should be different is not living in reality. Now if you witness someone beating a dog, not feeding the daily requirement for food whether that is calories, allergies, high protein, low fat, not providing required medications, then absolutely raise your voice then until someone listens. I've taken in plenty of those as well. And at the end of the day, scream from the rooftops for change on laws for owners that fail their dogs. An owner with aggressive dogs that get brought in, hold them accountable. This is not an AC problem and never will be. The workers all deserve to go home at night without being attacked. Whatever that looks like, it's for everyone's safety. If the owner can't control them, strangers in a high anxiety, AC environment certainly can't either. If the current protocol isn't sufficient, improve it while providing more safety for the staff. I'm excited to see the changes coming at the new building and hopefully the constraints this building has on caretaking have been addressed for the future building. At the end of the day, you can only do what you have the resources for. Animal welfare is not usually high on the list for resources for a government facility, including fully staffing 24/7 to properly care for a full facility and the issues that arise

after normal business hours. If you are open to further improvements and ideas, my husband and I would be more than happy to meet with the committee to share what we have learned along the way. I think these letters that I am leaving you will more than show that we have the experience and competence to make enhancements in animal welfare.

Mr. Trentman: Thank you. Next, lets try to keep it to two minutes so everyone gets the chance that wants to speak, ok?

Carol Lesko: I'm Carol Lesko, Belleville. I am the past president of Belleville Area Humane Society, and I just want to know who is the veterinarian on staff at Animal Control.

Ashley: Dr Stanley Niemann from Freeburg Animal Hospital.

Carol Lesko: Dr who?

Ashley: Dr Stanley Niemann with Freeburg Animal Hospital.

Carol Lesko: How often does the doctor visit there?

Ashley: Every time that we have a clear bite that needs to be done, every time that we have a rabies vaccine that needs to be given. If we cannot get him to the facility due to his hours of operation, then we transport to him.

Carol Lesko: What about follow up for him? Follow up after the surgeries or whatever.

Ashley: As much as we possibly can, but we also have a medical coordinator who is a...

Carol Lesko: Who is the medical coordinator?

Ashley: Kamryn Szymanski. She is an employee of mine.

Mr. Trentman: Ok.

Ashley: We have a contracted vet, and when we move into the new building, we will have a full-time vet on staff. So, we will have someone who is there at all points in times.

Carol Lesko: To oversee the care of the animals and the health.

Ashley: Yes.

Mr. Trentman: Thank you. Next.

Claire Weygandt: I can read Robins email and then I can read myself. Can I do it for two people? Robin wasn't able to be here. Ok. This email is from November 2025, where she was reaching out to Chairman Mark Kern. I am reaching out to you about serious concerns with the operations at St Clair County Animal Control. I began volunteering there at the beginning of September 2025, taking several days off work to help and to better understand how the facility operates. My goal was simply to support the animals in the community and give back to St Clair County where I was born and raised. I am writing to you with severe concerns regarding the operations at St Clair County Animal Control. I will admit that sending this email is not easy as the issues involved are sensitive, but I have a responsibility to speak up because I strongly believe in doing what is right for the animals, the staff and our community. During my time volunteering I observed several areas where improvements can be made to benefit both the animals and the staff. I offered some recommendations related to operational processes, adoption procedures, communication and social media outreach. All aimed at live outcome and

community engagement. The Director, Ashley Jett, made it clear that my recommendations were not welcome and it became evident that we did not see eye to eye on how the facility should operate. Because of that, I do not feel comfortable continuing to volunteer under the current conditions. I also want to make it clear that I did not seek out information or attempt to involve myself in internal matters. Multiple employees came to me voluntarily to express serious concerns about the care and management of the animals at the facility. These employees specifically stated that they are afraid to report issues to their management team, including the director, due to fear of retaliation or losing their jobs. They have described being told to “do what they are told and not ask questions” creating an environment where employees feel powerless to advocate for the animals in their care. Many of these employees are dedicated individuals who care about their work and the welfare of the animals, but they feel trapped between wanting to help and fearing the consequences of speaking out. Their voices deserve to be heard, because if these committed employees leave out of frustration or fear, it will only lead to worsen the already difficult treatment for the animals. The concerns raised were situations where animals could receive simple, low-cost care and preventative treatments such as being tested and placed on doxycycline for the heartworm positive dogs to improve comfort and outcomes. These measures are often not being implemented leading to unnecessary suffering and income cases leading to euthanasia when conditions worsen. Other rescues often used to assist with such expenses when funding is limited, but that collaboration does not appear to be happening anymore. In addition, I have learned of ongoing challenges with working relationships between St Clair County Animal Control and other rescues or shelters. Several shelters or organizations have expressed reluctance to pull animals from Animal Control due to difficulties with working with the Director, whether this is due to communication barriers or procedural inflexibility, the result is that animals remain at the facility longer without medical attention or transfer opportunities. Meanwhile, rescues such as the Belleville Area Humane Society, which does not take in strays, appear to be sourcing animals from elsewhere leaving our counties animals with limited options for placement. While I understand that Animal Control operates under tight budgetary and governmental restrictions, those restraints cannot justify an environment where staff are in fear, fear of retaliation or where the animals will go without the basic humane care. Even if current practices technically meet minimum requirements, they do not meet the moral or community’s standard of care and that the residents of St Clair County expect. At this point I am unsure what the next proper steps should be, but I felt that it was my responsibility to bring these concerns to your attention. I am not seeking to create conflict or assume any formal role in this matter. My only goal is to ensure that the animals, staff, and residents of St Clair County are better served through transparency, collaboration, and reform. I respectfully request that these concerns be reviewed whether through an internal evaluation, outside audit, or other appropriate means. I also ask that confidentiality and protection from retaliation be ensured for myself, and for the employees who have come forward in good faith. I do know that you are a man that’s spread thin, wearing many hats in your position, but I also know that you have a true passion for these animals and would like to know what is truly going on. Thank you for your time and commitment to our community. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss or provide additional information needed.

Mr. Trentman: Thank you. We will go back around after we let everybody have a chance. Who else? Anybody else got anything to say, now is your time?

Kurt Swanson: My name is Kurt Swanson. I have been involved in rescue for over a decade. I deal with the St Clair County Police Department, the Belleville Police Department, and I deal

with Animal Control weekly, if not several times a week. I was one of the ones leading the charge 10-12 years ago when we were trying to get Animal Control to be no-kill and I would be the first one leading the charge right now if I thought that any of these things could be changed now. I think a lot of the issues will be changed when we have a new facility. I just felt like if I wouldn't be the first one up here complaining, I would be the first one defending what I think is a good job. I am up there 2-3 times per week; I've been in the front, I've been in the back, I've seen no sign of neglect whatsoever. I mean the bite hold could be different, but it will be at the new facility. Right now, they are doing the best that they can with what they have. I don't know anything about the heartworm cases and stuff like that but as far as I can see, I think they are doing a fantastic job, and I just wanted to speak my peace.

Mr. Trentman: Thanks, who else?

Amber: I just want to know how much proof you have that any of this is going on? Sorry, I feel for you guys, and I absolutely want to stand up for you but where is the proof that this abuse is happening? That's where I'm concerned about.

?: Who has seen the videos circulating.

Amber: I have. And they are not any worse at what I have seen at a vet office.

?: And this so-called case of like the guts spilt out.

Mr. Trentman: Can you say your name and where you are from please.

Lindsey: My name is Lindsey and I am from Belleville.

Mr. Trentman: Ok, thank you.

Lindsey: I'm sorry. Just a couple questions. Some people didn't want to speak out or come because they were afraid to. Some had questions as why people were being walked out who were trying to make reports and things like that, so I just... I have my phone pointed at the floor, but it is recording so that I can share it with the person that had these concerns. I think those might have been the only questions I did have.

Mr. Trentman: Thanks for the questions. Alright, we have a lot of people here. Who else.

?: She asked a question and you didn't answer.

Ashley: I will answer these questions in my response.

Mr. Trentman: This is public comment – its not a back and forth.

?: Ok.

Mr. Trentman: Do you have something to say?

?: Well, I mean, what are you gaining by the new facility?

Ashley: A fear fee shelter.

?: Are you going to be able to house more? Are you going to be able to do more?

Ashley: Well, we are creating a new shelter to be self-sustainable because we obviously do not have the ability too transfer out as many animals as possible.

?: I mean the old shelter is horrible. I mean....the floods and everything that you guys wet through. It was really horrible. If you really paid attention, it was horrible and you guys did an amazing job of getting those dogs the hell out of there. Let me tell you that right now.

Ashley: Thank you.

?: You have my respect for that. I'm just saying that the new facility, a vet on call, that's great. That's awesome, but we are also standing to where we can take in more.

Ashley: The current layout and the budget that we have to build a new facility, to add on more kennels as opposed to add on a full facility, a full clinic, we had to do some finagling there. We have about the same amount of kennels that we do for dogs, but our intent is that since we have a vet who is going to be on staff, instead of doing 4 surgeries that we do weekly at this point, we can do four times that amount of surgeries each week and be able to adopt out animals instead of having to rely on rescue organizations because obviously everyone is seeing the struggle of what is happening in the animal welfare industry. There are dogs everywhere – they are everywhere. This is not the same environment that we seen 10 years ago.

Chairman Kern: This facility was, we hired an architect to design a facility, so that when animals go there, they come out more adoptable than they would be at a facility like what we have now. Heated floors and the ability to put an animal in a separate area while the kennel is being cleaned. A number of things, and then a separate room for veterinary services. These are types of things that we never had the opportunity to do before.

?: And geographically you are much better off.

Ashley: Yes, and we have the option to expand.

?: Heavy rains, you guys are going to be much better off.

Chairman Kern: We are also a, the save rate – that Animal Services last year was –

Ashley: 93%

Chairman Kern: 93%, they are doing a lot of things correctly because that's an amazing statistic. And I think that we are the only animal services facility within the county and the state that

Ashley: Has a no kill resolution. We are the only ones in the State of Illinois. As a municipal shelter.

Tim Price: Tim Price, Belleville. As part owner, of a dog kennel myself, in order to staff it and keep it the way we expect it to be kept, my daughter lives onsite – she is there 24/7. It is not feasible for any government agency. You are going to have times where something happens and no one is there, number 1. Number 2, as a state employee myself, anyone who works for a government agency and is afraid of retaliation, my employees who speak up are more protected than the ones who don't. That's just a fallacy. You speak up against something; you are so protected that I can't touch them.

Mr. Trentman: Thanks. Alright, anyone else.

Connie Reichert: Hi, my name is Connie Reichert, and I am former board member from Belleville Humane Society for many years. It has been brought to my attention, and I am concerned about the treatment of animals. I have been told that employees are mistreating the animals. Did

anyone read the article from the Collinsville Post? That troubled me and I feel that a new facility or whatever – these animals should be treated at all times, no matter how out of control they are with kindness. It doesn't seem like that is happening. I have been told that animals are being hit, animals are being neglected and I just – that's my main concern. The employees – if this is happening, that's not acceptable. Animal cruelty is unacceptable all the time. So that's why I am here. We are concerned about that.

Mr. Trentman: Thank you. No questions. This is not a back and forth. I am just trying to give everyone a chance to speak. Who else, who else wants to talk.

?: Did the abuse just start, like did people just start noticing this. Like a new thing or has this been happening for the past 10 years. That's where I am curious at. People that I know that work at this facility have been there for years. So, why is this a new thing popping up right now.

Mr. Trentman: Thank you.

?: And also if you spay/neuter and be a better community member, it wouldn't be full like that.

Mr. Trentman: If anyone was abusing animals like that, they wouldn't be working down there. Who else do we have?

Michelle: I have been volunteering at Animal Control doing photos for the last, little over 2 years. I took over for Sheila who took photos before and working with Ashley to help make this area no-kill. I haven't seen anything outright myself when I have been there every Friday. For the most part, a lot of – you hear stories and stuff with the article that everyone is talking about – I'll be honest, it sounded as though it was partly AI written. From my experience with the spays and everything even before working here, I've been in rescue for a long time. That's not how it works on that article, a lot of it isn't. But from what I have seen, from when there is an issue – the employees and Ashley have always looked at it, like after the spays. I started seeing everyone put the dogs in spay outfits and have cones on them and we actually sat down and had a conversation about a cleaner, about using rescue and finding a different cleaner that was Rescue but different name so that it was easier because funding is short in a city shelter. I do medical foster for them. I've done a few. One kitten had a really horrible outcome, and I called Ashley up in absolute tears and she helped me through it all. I had another medical foster, Elmer, who I ended up adopting, and they helped me take him to the vet, Dr. Niemann. I went many times, and they helped me figure everything out. He went to a foster to adopt which ended up not working out and we did end up adopting him in the end because he was getting kennel stressed a little it when we took him, so we ended up keeping him longer term. The foster to adopts, sometimes when they go out, they come back – they do struggle a little bit. I did notice that he was starting to and we ended up adopting him. What I am saying is, that the process is hard on them. Everyone there, employees and Ashley, I have seen, just do amazing things for the animals every time. I have seen injuries, but they have been accounted for and dogs of all kinds of personalities come in, and I have seen them handle them pretty well. I obviously only see them on the week days and stuff but from what I have seen I have had nothing suspicious.

?: So where is the video that everybody is referring to of the abuse? The social media videos of the abuse that circulating.

Mr. Trentman: Anybody else.

?: So, what's on the video?

Mr. Trentman: Alright, I get 2 minutes too. Bob Trentman, I am from Belleville. I stopped in this morning. I wanted to see the facility after a weekend. I talked to Ashley a little bit and then Eddie took me through the facility. The workers were back in there cleaning out the cages. There was some poop on the floor, I am not going to lie to you, but they were cleaning it up, I expect that. You know. Dogs were jumping and they wanted to get out because I get out. I guarantee you that if those dogs could speak, and cats – there ain't no way that none of them dogs want to be in there ok. So, they all looked healthy. I even went through the bite section, and they are more aggressive in there, but they were getting their cages cleaned out when I was in there this morning. So, I believe Ashley, and Dawn, and Eddie and the rest of the staff are working hard down there. I haven't seen any abuse of any kind on the animals down there and if I hear about any, I am going to go to the Chairman, and we are going to take care of that. Ok, I also want to tell you another little story. So, when we were flooded out a few years ago, which was terrible. As the waters coming up Ashley called me and was like Bob the waters coming up the street. We heard all this rain was coming – Hanks Excavating donated 2 or 3 trailer loads of sandbags and we sandbagged the facility the best we could. I orchestrated that part. As it reached the sandbags, our facility flooded. So, at that time we are thinking what are we going to do now. So, I went into the corridor section, where they keep a lot of their stock, we had to actually pull that door open to get to the dogs. By that time, we had let 6" of water into the facility. The door slammed shut and while I'm in there taking stock and looking around, the water was almost to the window. Soo, what are we going to do. We kind of busted the front door open, which I knew was going to flood the building, and it did. So, it flooded the building and all these rescuers came in, and we started pulling animals out. The first animal was a black and white pitbull, and he must have been the bite case because he grabbed onto my arm pretty good and we even got him out. People take this job seriously down there and I cant wait to get to higher ground. This fear free shelter is going to be great but bottom line is, animals out is what we need because there is a big supply of animals always coming in and we need rescues to pull and adopt/foster and things of that nature. We can house a hundred – two hundred animals at the new facility and it wouldn't matter. We can only move out so many at a time and we have to be able to figure out how to get these animals out and keep them from coming in in the first place. But I trust Ashley and Eddie, and Dawn and the rest of the staff. I trust Chairman Kern to do the right thing, and we are going to get through this. We are a no kill shelter now and we weren't 10 years ago. And a 93% save rate is pretty darn good. There are going to be bumps in the road, and we are not saying we are perfect because we are not, but we work hard at it, and we are going to keep working hard at it and I cannot wait to get to the new facility. Anybody else?

Claire: Ok, to speak to Michele about the cleaner. We are not allowed to use it, Michelle. Fabuloso is being used and its toxic to animals.

Amber: Is there proof to that?

Claire: Is there proof of that?

Ashley: No, that we are using it. That's what she is asking. We do use Fabuloso in our drains. That is ok per the Department of Ag, we are allowed to use it in the trenches and the drains to help eliminate some of the stench and the cost. We use Wysi-wash. We do not use rescue. Our protocol is Wysi-wash which is a chlorine-based cleaning solution. It is used in multiple rescue organizations and multiple different places around the world. There are basically two of them:

rescue or wysi-wash. We chose Wysi-Wash. It's affordable for us and that's what we use. It's in our protocol.

Bob: As of this time I am closing public comment. Everyone got a chance to speak.

Claire: I did not get a chance to speak. I read Robins.

Bob: Alright.

Claire: I am going to go chronologically and I'll read fast. June 12th at a staff meeting. We were told during the staff meeting that we cannot ever question Eddie because he is above us all and that anything that he says to do must be done immediately. And I know you turned around and looked at me, but I am not making this up.

Chairman Kern: So, are you?

Claire: I'm Claire Weygandt.

Chairman Kern: And you work...

Claire: I do not work there anymore.

Chairman Kern: But you just said that you were told, oh used to work there.

Claire: I did. This directive discouraged discussion, clarification or raising any concerns and set the tone for a culture that questioning leadership is not acceptable. On July 31st, Ashley came in and be-raided us telling us that we did not know how to clean properly. During this interaction she rolled her eyes, smirked and gave a derogatory sigh when I explained that I have asthma and will not use fabuloso due to respiratory sensitivity. She wanted the fabuloso sprayed on the walls. This is not talking about in the drains, she had a spray bottle of fabuloso and said that she wanted the walls of the kennels with. Due to respiratory sensitivity, I have asthma, the reaction felt dismissive of legitimate medical concerns. Ashley has referred to me as a disgruntle ex-employee to a friend of hers. That friend then publicly stated my name on a social media post. This is extremely unprofessional for upper management to say that and characterize an employee in that manner to an outside individual when it results in public identification and reputational harm. I do have broader communications than leadership concerns. When new employees start, there is never a formal introduction or communications with the existing staff. Employees do not know who is staff, who is a volunteer, who just happens to be there because no announcements are made. The lack of communication contributes to the confusion and weak team cohesion. Ashley has also made the comment about birthday decorations that she decorates for everyone's birthdays. That's not true. It doesn't affect the way that we work but however know that if you are going to say that you decorate you should decorate for everybody when someone had a birthday just a couple weeks later and it was not decorated for. On December 20th, I sent a message at 9:05am regarding Zara, a full grown female German Shepherd, that her spay was coming open. The spay was not stitched, the spay did not have any internal stitches either, it just popped open. So, at 9:05 I sent a message and it was basically dismissed and was told to put a cone on her. The cone was not the problem; she was not licking it. This resulted in me, along with 2 other staff members having to restrain that dog for 45 minutes while we waited till the warden got there to euthanize. As we had to restrain her and ha her intestines and everything spilled across the entire hallway, we had to hold her down while she was screaming. Not a word from anybody in management. That was on a Saturday, not a word. Nobody in management ever said sorry for the trauma that you have just gone

through or anything. And then on Monday, I was walking another dog, and I noticed a drop of blood, and it started to bleed more. I called for help and said this is happening, and then I was chastised for raising my voice because this dog was coming open again, and then I was mopping up the blood that was left over and someone asked me what had happened and I had a raised voice again and said Greta is coming open and Ashley came back out and said Claire, you don't need to tell the whole world. Ok. I finished mopping, and then I went into the kennels to do something that I needed to do and this included a guillotine that was stuck and I had to get it to work. Then Ashley came in again and said, be-raided me again and asked me why I was making so much noise because I was just trying to close the guillotine, so that was December 20th and December 22nd. January 6th, an event attendance. Ok so the meeting that we had, staff.

Mr. Trentman: We really have to start moving on here.

Claire: Ok.

Mr. Trentman: Ok we get it.

Claire: I am not here for the animal abuse. I am here that someone needs oversight on how to manage what is right. Someone with those skills needs to show management how to act like a manager and speak professionally to your employees. Eye rolling....

Amber: Unfortunately, when stuff like this happens again, I've been in the vet med world for 20 years and when you are, I don't know what happened because I wasn't there but stressful environments like that when a dog is bleeding out, words come out of my mouth that probably shouldn't. But I am trying to take care of that dog or that cat or whatever it is so unfortunately things might come out that shouldn't happen. I mean sorry.

?: One of my points.

Glenn Arney: I just had a couple questions real quick. Glenn Arney, and my only question was – we seen the video coming around, the pictures going around. Is the county going to compile these and actually do an investigation on this or are we just going to dismiss it. That's the only reason I came was to make sure that it is actually going to be looked into and its not going to be dismissed as social media (inaudible)

Destiny: My name is Destiny and I am a current employee at animal control. These videos that are circulating the internet. I have been working in the pet industry for the last decade. I know I look young, but I started as soon as I turned 18. What a lot of people on the outside fail to realize looking in is that kennel environments are very stressful for dogs. A thing called happy tail happens, you know when dogs are wagging their tail and it hits a surface so many times, it breaks open – it's bound to happen. Not too much can be done for that besides wrapping it and putting on a cone and hoping that they don't mess with it. A lot of these videos that were circulating were unfortunately bite-case dogs and what a lot of people fail to realize is that there are procedures that have to be done with those dogs and there are certain protocols that have to be done. As far as the way Ashley runs, I started as a volunteer there and I may be part time, only 3-4 days a week, but I love it. I wouldn't have started and become an employee if I saw an issue with how the facility was run, if I saw any case of neglect or abuse or anything. These dogs are well taken care for. Kennel stress – dogs are bound to unfortunately loose a couple pounds in a stressful environment. You know, it's the same as people and I just wish more people knew what they were talking about before they wanted to spread videos online.

?: Are all of these documented with the state?

Ashley: What do you mean?

?: These cases and these videos documented.

Mr. Trentman: Can you say your name please and where you are from?

Lindy: Lindy, OFallon. Are these documented with the state.

Mr. Trentman: This isn't a debate. Is that your question?

Ashley: This is not something that – I mean the Department of Ag was at my facility today.

Lindy: Was it documented with the state.

Ashley: No. The Dept of Ag did not have a formal complaint by anybody who had seen this firsthand. They will not take anything secondhand, so the Dept of Ag came undenounced to me today and did an investigation. She did an inspection of my facility, she was there on 2/23 which is today, 11/20/2025 and 5/30/2025. I don't get notified of any of these inspections. We passed with flying colors on all three occasions. These "abuses" She asked for context when it came to the videos. Those videos are all bite cases. These dogs have 2-3-4 bite cases on each one of those. I can not control what an aggressive dog does when it gets onto a pole. A dog will bite a pole, bust its mouth open, it bleeds tremendously. A mouth bleeds like no other. Those are things that happen. These dogs are aggressive. All of these dogs in these videos were owner requested euthanasia for multiple bites that have happened inside of homes. One was a behavioral euthanasia request from a veterinarian. So, not saying that it's right that these animals are, but that's not anything that I can control. We move bite cases on control sticks because that's what we do through the Department of Ag and what the NACA certification has us do.

Lindy: And what about the fabuloso?

Ashley: Fabuloso is used in the drains and in our trenches that we have. What I said to spray on the walls was a dawn dish washing soap and water mixture, or a degreaser of some sort to be able to get all of the nasty things.

Lindy: And then that kills bacteria?

Ashley: And then once you use that, you use wysi-wash over the top of that and spray it down with water and it rinses everything away. Our wysi-wash has to sit for 20 minutes in the kennel for it to be completely sanitized. Same as bleach. Anything we use in water is diluted with the bleach constitute and sits for a 20-minute time span and then dishes are done and they are sanitized as to protocol.

Lindy: And the dog with the intestines?

Ashley: Again, something I cannot control. I have consulted with the ASPCA, The Department of Ag, our veterinarian, several other veterinarians – they have no idea why animals do that. It is very common unfortunately and if they had an explanation and reasoning on how or why it happened, then it wouldn't happen again. Unfortunately, it does. We have taken change to protocol and now I have every animal, not only sutured internally, but also stapled, wears a surgical suit for 10 days and then also wears a cone for 10 days.

Lindy: How many animals have died?

Ashley: 4 over 2 years.

Lindy: 4 over 2 years?

Ashley: One of them was in the care of the veterinarian. I'm sorry, it was actually 5.

Mr. Trentman: Does anyone else have anything else if you have not spoke yet?

Kurt: I...

Mr. Trentman: Kurt you already spoke, I'm sorry. Anybody else who has not spoke.

Chairman Kern: I did get a letter, and I immediately spoke to Ashley. These are kind, compassionate, caring people who work for Animal Services. All of them are pet owners. We are pet owners. We wouldn't allow this to go on; it isn't going on. Ashley is doing a great job at Animal Control and I support her 100%.

Ashley: Thank you.

Mr. Trentman: We are going to move on from public comment.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: by Mr. Hollingsworth to approve the minutes from the January 26th, 2026 meeting. Second by Mr. O'Donnell.

Vote: Yes: 7 No: 0 Motion Carried.

Ashley Report

Mr. Trentman: Report from Ashley, our AC Director.

Ashley: So, for the month of January, we had a 95% live release rate. We took in 80 dogs and cats within the month's timeframe. We had 9 animals adopted. We moved 21 animals to the adoption center, 3 animals returned to owner, and 17 transferred to rescue. We had a very successful fundraiser event in the month of January at the fairgrounds. It was our wrestling event, where we raised a substantial amount of money to help with further medical in the future. February, we held an adoption event at the Tye Dyed Iguana, In April we plan on participating in the Shelter Slumber Pawty again and in May we have the Glo Bingo, to fundraise for the county. So, we are doing what we can. Again, we have our people who are showing up on a daily basis and that's what matters. I have people who are dedicated to this regardless of how strenuous it is on them, and they are showing up on a daily basis. They give more to the animals that are in our care than they do to their own pets sometimes. So, to make some accusations is a pretty low blow.

Mr. Trentman: Dawn, do you have anything to add to Ashley's report? Dawn is in charge of the adoptions.

Dawn: Just to comment and say that I happened to look at Facebook today and nine years ago, I was sitting out there like all of you who had questions. And I feel like it's ok to have questions, but you also have to pay attention to what you are hearing in places and make sure that things are 100% accurate before. I appreciate everyone for coming. Literally I was waiting to come in here looking at my Facebook and I'm like here we go; it takes an army is what I said. We came and we achieved that and I am very proud to actually be working for the county now. When I started with Mark, I was not liked, ok, because we wanted change right. But how do we get there. Everyone works a way to get there and it's a process, just like the processes of being able to get to the new facility – its going to be amazing and we are going to be able to do more for the community as a whole. Being able to do initially spay/neuter for the pets that come in and for the community as well. Spay/neuter is expensive and the only way of keeping animals from coming in, like Bob said, is by not having coming in the door, because they are not roaming, trying to smell everything and they move onto other things. I'm proud to be where we are.

Mr. Trentman: Ashley, do you have anything else.

Ashley: Yeah, I just have one more thing to say and I won't keep you long because I know we have been here forever, but I don't know a lot of you here and I just wanted make sure that I could introduce myself. My name is Ashley and I am the Director of Animal Services. I have worked for Animal Services for my entire adult life, 18 years. As I started out this job as just an insurance option for myself and my infant daughter. I was a single mom, and it drastically turned into something so much better. So, a wise fellow coworker once told me: please do not mistake my tears for weakness. I am very confident and I am very, very – I am not going to be defensive, but I am very confident in my ability to run this facility. I am very confident, compassionate and above all I believe in my ability to better these pets for St Clair County. You can look at my track record. When I first started this position, I was very young, and within 4 years of starting my position, I created the rescue transfer program single handedly. Since 2011-2025, there have been 11, 145 animals that have left the facility alive and transferred to rescue. Those relationships were direct affiliation of something that I have done single-handedly. I wont actually say that it's been single-handedly because I did have help with transportation, pictures, evaluations and things of that nature, but internally something that I did single handedly. In 2010, our procedures were so much different than they are now. I remember Dawn coming and us taking pictures of animals while they were tied to a chain-link fence, trying to take pictures of them and doing dog introductions between a fenced area and her own personal dog and several of the dogs in this facility. There have been drastic things, we walk dogs every single day while their kennels are being cleaned, sanitized and squeegeed. We prepare enrichment 3-5 times throughout the week, 3-5 days throughout the week our dogs have enrichment for the dogs in our care. We run playgroups on a daily basis, weather pending, Dogs are walked 2-3 times a day. We have monthly vaccine clinics to allow the public to take advantage of low-cost options for vaccines, and we work with rescues and veterinarians to provide treatments for heartworms for some of the animals in our care. We passed a no-kill resolution, we are the only county in the State of Illinois, and we have remained no kill consistently since. We offer \$10 microchips to anybody who wants one, not just specific for our county. We created a foster based program for our long-time residents, neonates, nursing kittens, pregnant, injured, sick/medical cases. We provide much needed medical assistance to animals who require it, when rescues wont transfer

into their facility, and we play music for the animals. You won't find another animal control who does all of this for the animals in their care. Not a single one. Even the Department of Ag Rep today said the same exact thing. It is noted on our report from today, if you would like to see it. My staff who is here, I appreciate you, I applaud you for showing up on a daily basis. You are the background. And that's all I have to say.

Mr. Trentman: We got you Ashley

(applause)

Mr. Trentman: I need a motion to accept Ashley's report.

MOTION: by Mr. Greenwald to approve Ashley's report. Second by Mr. Scott.

Vote: Yes: 7 No: 0 Motion Carried.

Mr. Trentman: We don't have any ordinances or resolutions. Any other business to come forward? Any board members on this committee have anything to say.

Mr. Hollingsworth: Since I have been here, dealing with this committee as well as Ashley, I believe her. I am not trying to take anything away from anybody else, but I know she is sincere. I can feel it, I see it. And when we ask questions she gives – hard questions, but good questions. Sometimes, you know we as people sometimes take things, not looking to the whole picture. We want to criticize stuff, but it's good to criticize in a nice way but don't be so mean and angry. Because all over the world, but I know she does a good job, and I just appreciate her and the staff that she has. The staff, and you, because you got way out of your way to do lots of things too, Chairman, to make it better. That's what I feel like.

MOTION to adjourn by Mr. Greenwald. Second by Mr. Wilhelm.

Vote: Yes: 7 No: 0 Motion carried.



Kennel Statistics, Including Animals Left

Intakes from 2/1/2026 to 2/28/2026

	DOG	PUPPY	CAT	KITTEN	TOTAL
GRAND TOTAL	33	6	10	14	63
CONFISCATE	3	0	0	0	3
CAHOKIA	3	0	0	0	3
EUTH REQ	1	0	0	0	1
BELLEVILLE	1	0	0	0	1
OWNER SUR	0	0	8	5	13
BELLEVILLE	0	0	2	2	4
DUPO	0	0	0	3	3
LEBANON	0	0	6	0	6
RETURN	2	1	0	1	4
(no jurisdiction)	1	0	0	0	1
BELLEVILLE	1	1	0	0	2
LEBANON	0	0	0	1	1
STRAY	20	2	1	2	25
BELLEVILLE	10	1	0	2	13
EAST ST LOUIS	2	0	0	0	2
FREEBURG	1	0	0	0	1
LEBANON	0	1	0	0	1
MILLSTADT	1	0	0	0	1
O FALLON	0	0	1	0	1
SAUGET	1	0	0	0	1
SHILOH	2	0	0	0	2
SWANSEA	1	0	0	0	1
WASHINGTON PARK	2	0	0	0	2
TRANSFER	7	3	1	6	17
(no jurisdiction)	1	0	0	0	1
BELLEVILLE	3	2	1	2	8
DUPO	0	0	0	3	3
EAST ST LOUIS	1	0	0	0	1

	DOG	PUPPY	CAT	KITTEN	TOTAL
FREEBURG	1	0	0	0	1
LEBANON	0	0	0	1	1
O FALLON	1	0	0	0	1
SWANSEA	0	1	0	0	1



Kennel Statistics, Including Animals Left

Outcomes from 2/1/2026 to 2/28/2026

	DOG	PUPPY	CAT	KITTEN	Total
GRAND TOTAL	31	11	8	17	67
ADOPTION	7	7	3	7	24
BELLEVILLE	2	6	1	0	9
CAHOKIA	2	0	0	1	3
DUPO	0	0	0	3	3
EAST ST LOUIS	1	0	0	0	1
FAIRMONT CITY	0	0	1	0	1
FAIRVIEW HEIGHT	1	0	0	0	1
LEBANON	0	0	0	1	1
MASCOUTAH	0	0	1	2	3
STATE PARK	1	0	0	0	1
SWANSEA	0	1	0	0	1
EUTH	4	1	0	0	5
BELLEVILLE	1	0	0	0	1
CAHOKIA	3	0	0	0	3
LEBANON	0	1	0	0	1
O/R EUTH	1	0	0	0	1
BELLEVILLE	1	0	0	0	1
RELOCATE	7	3	1	4	15
(no jurisdiction)	1	0	0	0	1
BELLEVILLE	3	2	1	2	8
DUPO	0	0	0	1	1
EAST ST LOUIS	1	0	0	0	1
FREEBURG	1	0	0	0	1
LEBANON	0	0	0	1	1
O FALLON	1	0	0	0	1
SWANSEA	0	1	0	0	1
RTO	4	0	0	0	4
BELLEVILLE	3	0	0	0	3

	DOG	PUPPY	CAT	KITTEN	Total
SWANSEA	1	0	0	0	1
TRAN IN ST	6	0	4	4	14
BELLEVILLE	5	0	1	0	6
CASEYVILLE	0	0	0	3	3
EAST ST LOUIS	1	0	0	1	2
LEBANON	0	0	2	0	2
O FALLON	0	0	1	0	1
TRAN O ST	2	0	0	0	2
BELLEVILLE	1	0	0	0	1
MASCOUTAH	1	0	0	0	1
TRANSFER	0	0	0	2	2
DUPO	0	0	0	2	2

Animals Left In Shelter
on 02/28/26

DOG	PUPPY	CAT	KITTEN	Total
56	2	9	5	72