

**COLUMBIA/BOONE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES
MAY 14, 2009**

INTRODUCTORY:

The Columbia/Boone County Board of Health met for a regularly scheduled meeting at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, May 14, 2009, in the Department of Public Health and Human Services, at 1005 West Worley. Stephanie Browning (Department Director), Linda Cooperstock (Public Health Planner), Gerry Worley (Environmental Health Manager), and Molly Aust (Senior Animal Control Officer) represented the Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services staff. Bret Loudermilk recorded the minutes of the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Harry Feirman
Dana Hughes
Ilalyn Irwin
Dr. Colin Malaker
Lynelle Phillips
Jean Sax
David Sohl
Dr. Michael Szewczyk
Dr. Nathan Voris

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

MEMBERS NOT EXCUSED:

Darren Hellwege

NOTES:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by the Chair, David Sohl.

The agenda was approved as submitted.

The minutes from the April 9, 2009, Board of Health meeting were approved as submitted.

The minutes from the April 22, 2009, Animal Control Public Hearing was approved as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS:

ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE:

Mr. Sohl said that this month's Board of Health will be centered around topics from the Animal Control Public Hearing held on April 22. He said there will also be discussion on chickens. The main focus, he said, will be to digest these, consolidate them and figure out what topics we need more information on and what additional topics we might consider. He said the situation will be fluid as it evolves. Mr. Sohl also said that the agenda for subcommittee meetings will be posted prior to the respective meeting.

(a) Tethered Animals:

Dr. Voris said that inhumane tethering was already covered by the ordinance. Ms. Irwin said the ordinance needs to be more specific should have a time limit on how long animals can be tethered, and should be better defined. Also discussed was researching other communities to see how they handle tethered animals. Mr. Feirman asked if dogs only were covered by the ordinance. Dr. Voris replied that it was meant for dogs and they should try to define that better in the ordinance. He said that he would research the definition of tethering.

(b) Managing Feral vs. Owned Strays, Including Feral Cat Colonies:

Dr. Voris made the following statements:

- Stray cats should not be exempt with respect to destruction of neighbors' properties.
- Per city code Animal Control can pick up stray animals
- Stray cat "owner" should be as responsible as a dog owner
- Rabies vaccine needs to be the responsibility of the person caring for the cats because public health is of the utmost importance.
- Stray cats are 3/5 times as likely as dogs to carry rabies.
- The state law defines ownership as having fed the cat three times. The state law says stray cats are a public nuisance. It is not the business of this Board to change state law.
- If several people or an agency feeds the stray cats, they are the corporate owner of the cats.

Ms. Browning stated that Animal Control gets an average of one call a day on cats and it is city and county-wide. Ms. Aust, Senior Animal Control Officer responded that they would impound a pet that was wandering around. Ms. Browning reminded the group that there is a fiscal implication of trapping and picking up an increased number of animals.

Ms. Browning pointed out that we only heard from one side of the cat issue; we hadn't heard from the birding community.

Dr. Szewczyk said the board should do what makes sense fiscally and practically. Dr. Voris said the selective enforcement bothers him.

A subcommittee was formed to research these issues and included Dr. Voris, Ms. Sax and Mr. Feirman.

(c) Mandatory Spay/Neuter, Fee for Intact vs. Licensing:

Dr. Voris made the following comments:

- Mandatory spay/neuter was not a good idea according to the ASPCA/AUMA position papers.
- He said a blanket mandatory program was not recommended and there should be incentives to sterilize and penalties for repeat offenders.
- He said something could be written into the ordinances to encourage pet owners to spay and neuter their animals.

- There could also be creative programs and education concerning this issue. Ms. Browning suggested looking at other cities' ordinances, expanding options for low cost options. She stated that Council is looking for recommendations in general.

Individual Board members suggested tying chipping to licensing, incentives for vets to remind clients about licensing, online animal permits.

(d) Chickens:

Ms. Browning asked how many in the audience were at the meeting regarding the chicken issue. Nearly everyone raised their hand. She then asked how many were opposed to having chickens within city limits. No one raised their hand. Ms. Browning said people with passion come to these meetings and then ones who might be opposed don't think a lot about it until their neighbor has a chicken in their yard. Ms. Browning said she knows there will be numerous complaints if people within city limits are allowed to have chickens.

Mr. Sohl asked the audience if chickens get out of the yard, what happens if they are killed or don't come back. Members of the audience said that is a reasonable expectation when it comes to chickens.

Ms. Cooperstock asked if chickens would also attract coyotes and animals of that sort. Mr. Sohl said that would be part of their research.

Ms. Phillips said there is a diverse culture when it comes to chickens, many cultures raise chickens.

Ms. Browning stated that people can already keep chickens indoors. Mr. Worley, Environmental Health Manager said the ordinance is vague and somewhat of a technical issue as they could not issue a summons if someone kept chickens indoors cause they would not know about it.

Other considerations were how chickens fit into maximum number of animals permitted, noise issues, enforcement of messy or sloppy chicken yards,

A subcommittee on chickens was formed and included Ms. Phillips, Mr. Sohl, and Ms. Browning.

(e) Micro chipping, City/County Registry, Tracking Lost/Abandoned Pets

With respect to these issues, Dr. Voris' subcommittee, with all the Board members invited, will research the issues and prioritize spay/neutering first and licensing second.

(f) Limits on Number of Animals Owed/Cared For:

The ordinance currently permits one livestock animal per half acre, and pet owners can have four dogs and cats. Board members said the ordinance should be clearer. Ms. Sax said owning too many animals can cause problems and that a basis for the number of pets should be established and that there should be a rationale for inside pets vs. outside pets.

Dr. Szcwczyk said he is curious about what cities similar to Columbia have done regarding these issues. He mentioned cities such as Springfield.

Dr. Voris said he will research it and send out what information he gathers to the Board.

Dr. Voris' subcommittee will research the issues on number of animals and barking dogs (see below). All Board members are invited to sit on this subcommittee. Members on this subcommittee, in addition to Dr. Voris, include Mr. Feirman and Ms. Sax.

(g) Veterinarian Involvement (Licensing/Spay/Neuter):

(h) Barking Dog Ordinance:

Currently Animal Control receives 140 complaints last year with action taken on 25. Dr. Voris' subcommittee will include barking Dog issues in their research.

The subcommittees were asked to examine the following considerations in their groups: Ordinance recommendations plus the educational component and City vs. County suggestions.

(i) Breeder Definition/Responsibilities:

(j) Rabies Considerations:

REPORTS:

HEALTH DIRECTOR:

No Report.

WATER SAFETY/SAFE KIDS:

No Report.

MENTAL HEALTH:

No Report.

DENTAL:

No Report.

ANIMAL CONTROL AND LICENSING:

See Above.

HEALTHY KIDS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES:

No Report.

NEW BUSINESS:

There being no additional new business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.