

St. Clair County Animal Services

Minutes for Meeting

Conference Room: 6:00 P.M.

September 29th, 2025

Members Present:

Robert Trentman, Chairman
Scott Greenwald, Asst. Chairman
Mike O'Donnell
Lonnie Mosley
G.W. Scott, Jr.
Robert Wilhelm
Harry Hollinsworth

Others Present:

Ann Barnum, Human Resources
Mark Kern, Chairman
Matt Smallheer, County Board Member
John Coers, County Board Member
Lexi Cortez, Belleville News Democrat
Robert Allen, County Board member
Phil Henning, County Board member
Eddie Johnson, Animal Services
Dawn Blackwell, Animal Services
Robin Schaefer, Volunteer
Claire Weygandt, Animal Services
Hannah Weygandt, Animal Services

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. Please keep your comments or questions to about 2 minutes and if you have anything direct them towards this chair.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: by Mr. Mosley to approve the minutes of August 18th, 2025, meeting. Second by Mr. Greenwald.

Vote: Yes: 7 No: 0 Motion Carried.

Ashley Report

Mr. Trentman: Reports from Ashley Jett, our AC Director.

Ashley: Alright so for the month of August, we had a 96% live release rate. We had a really good adoption month; we did 25 adoptions out of the shelter. Quite a few strays brought in, we had 54 strays brought in, and we had- I think we had 10 animals returned to owner. So, pretty good for us, we're used to like 4 or 5 per month, but 10 is pretty good. In that we had 31 rescue transfers that left the building to go to rescue. Of those 31, GPG took 3 adult dogs and BAHS took a total of 28 animals. Those 28 animals include 15 kittens, 5 adult cats, 1 puppy and 7 adult dogs. Our adoption center transferred 10 to our adoption center in the month of August. We had a little bit of setback with our spay/neuters, so we were having a little harder time. We got a lot of them adopted out at the end of the month and then we were able to start moving animals into the shelter over on the other side. We also had a momma have 3 puppies, Brenda, so we have her in foster, so it's been - we have a lot of things we don't usually handle in our shelter happen than we just kind of have to figure out a plan for currently. Trying to think of what else we have. I did just want to say that we did start the transfer program for adoptions for animal control just straight out of animal control. So, we created this little binder, the same binder we take with us when we go to the Fairgrounds and it's all animals from the animal control side of the building that can either leave via rescue or leave via adoption. And since August 1st, we've moved 12 animals to the adoption center, or to the adoption floor. Of those 12 animals, 9 of them have already been adopted, actually 10 of them have been adopted because Sarrey went home today and then of those 12, 6 of them were pit bulls. So, that just goes to show that the animals we do have in our animal services are adoptable. They are very adoptable, they should be leaving and going to rescue and not sitting on our animal services floor. So, we kind of have 2 adoption sides going right now, and if we have somebody, if somebody comes in, we show them the book, if they like somebody in there, if they like somebody in the adoption center, we'll show them everyone. It's pretty impressive for what we do there, we're a really small facility when it comes to adoptions, so it's pretty impressive for us to have taken that many since August. Raven and Adira are the 2 that just came in last week, Adira- I don't know if you guys

seen the post or not, but Adira came in severely injured, we had to take her for surgery last week where she had to have a leg amputation and a tail amputation. Raven came in with a huge lump on her side, so we had that also repaired on the same day. We're waiting for biopsy results on that but I'm hoping that she's a very young lab so I'm hoping that it's nothing. So yeah, again were taking on a lot more medical that we normally wouldn't have capabilities of doing. We did fundraise for them, we raised quite a bit of money through our St Clair County Animal Welfare group, so hopefully majority of that is taken care of through fundraising. I don't know what else to..

Mr. Trentman: The building.

Ashley: Me, Dawn and Kamryn are going to a conference in October, it's Midwest Animal Sheltering Conference, so hopefully we will bring back some good information with that. We have Empty the Shelters that starts October 1st and it goes for 2 weeks, so discounted, low-cost adoptions. Our 3-year tags have arrived, so we will be implementing 3-year tags next year, where you can just pay for all 3 years up front. We have a clinic coming up on October 29th, I haven't posted it yet, but we will have a vaccine clinic coming up at the end of the month. As far as the building goes, if anybody has drove by it, it actually has a roof and is enclosed for the most part. We just toured it today; they put all the lines on the floor where all the rooms are going to be, so you can kind of get a visual concept of what's going on and what's taking place and what's going to be where. Just they have like 15 contractors all trying to work at the same time starting next week, this week- the end of next week and then of course starting next week, so it's progressing really well. They did put out- if you guys are following them on Facebook, Wright Construction did put out 60 second video of a 6-month time lapse of the building and the progression and then we also do have one that the EMA did too, where they took a drone and went over the top of the building. This is a current update of what I have at this point. That is all I have.

Mr. Trentman: Explain what a fear free shelter is.

Ashley: A fear-free shelter is a way of sheltering animals so that they have low stress, low anxiety, low fear; so part of that entails them having their own separate spaces to where they can't see a dog across the way from it, whereas our kennels now have a hallway between them. They have dogs on both sides. It just causes a lot of noise, which causes a lot of anxiety which causes a lot of fear based reactivity and things of that nature. So, a fear free shelter you can't see - our new shelter has individual wings. Every dog has indoor outdoor spaces and you have a like a viewing window from an outside hallway. So you have your employee walking hallway that directs you into that same space but you also have your walk-through where you can look through a picture window if you were an adopter and be able to go look at what they have. We also did install heated floors so that the animals have a heated floor that will maintain a specific temperature throughout summer and also winter. That'll help us with cleaning purposes. That'll also help us with just comfort purposes too. It's a different kind of environment that this is all gonna have Wi-Fi capabilities for us to be able to play music so that the animals can have some sort of music and sound, so it should help reduce noise, should reduce stress. I think that's it.

Mr Trentman: How did we return 10 to owners? Did we do something different this month?

Ashley: No, we've just had a lot more people actually come in and identify their animals. I wouldn't even say that any of them were really confiscated animals. The majority of them were just strays that were brought in that were either microchipped or just something that somebody saw via our Facebook post and or on the Lost and Found page and then realized it was with us.

Mr Trentman: So, since Robin took the time to come up here, let us know how she ended up with the dog?

Ashley: Yeah, so Robin is new to us she just reached out to see about volunteer opportunities and she currently volunteers with a couple other shelters. Her work schedule is kind of not allowing her to really go during their business hours or their volunteering hours so we're just gonna take her whenever we can if she wants to come on weekends, we are making arrangements for her to do that. She took a couple PTO days last week so she could come help with a shelter the day that Dawn had to take our two surgical animals she went and helped with that. But while she was doing her walk-through, Miss Petunia, one of our dog side ended up pregnant was in our adoption center and had just given birth to seven puppies. So while she was there she left and within 15 minutes of her leaving, she had already messaged me and said how do you feel about me fostering Petunia and her babies so it was literally that the next day she came and picked them up we got them all comfortable and then she had them for the time being, so. Then during that she posted Petunia all over Facebook all over the neighborhood pages and found her a home in a matter of five days, yes in a matter of 5 days.

Robin: Yes, yes, in less than a week yes.

Ashley: She came to the shelter last week, she took some videos and some pictures and created some litter videography's of the animals we have there and interacted with playgroups and all kinds of fun stuff while she was there. So, she's been posting lists of cute videos and stuff- we're lucky to have her.

Mr Trentman: Great- well thank you Robin. Eddie, what'd you have, got anything?

Eddie: Bites, more bites, more bites. I wish people would just learn, picked up a lot of bite cases this month. I don't know what's going on. Just a lot of bite cases. Been busy with the bite cases.

Mr Trentman: Are the dogs that bite, people normally have muzzles for them or do you know- well I guess not if they're biting somebody right?

Eddie: No- it's just people being irresponsible most of the time. Letting their dogs run. You know. Most of them are just people not being responsible.

Ashley: A lot of non-compliance too. We've have more non-compliance to our bite cases than we've ever had before. So, people just disregard the fact that they have to quarantine their animals in general or provide proof of rabies or register them with the county.

Eddie: Yeah. I wrote a lot of tickets this month.

Mr. Trentman: I wonder if we can- on a bite case, because when we return a dog to owner, can we give them a muzzle with it or no?

Ashley: That would be a pretty expensive cost to us. I mean short of deeming a dog dangerous is the only time the law requires them to have a muzzle. Most of these bite cases are accidental. These dogs are not aggressive, some of them are. We've actually had a lot of responsible owners who have signed these dogs over for euthanasia because they know that they are not compatible with the community. We've had a lot and a lot and a lot of aggressive dogs. I mean these dogs are getting meaner by the day. So, short of having to go through a deeming dangerous process, it wouldn't do us any good since they're already surrendering them, obviously euthanasias the best option in most of those cases but we can't. We microchip them just so we know if they're going back that they've been a previous bite or if they ever get loose we can kind of give a heads up if someone ever finds them running loose. That's pretty much all we can do.

Mr. Trentman: So, we have record that it bit somebody?

Ashley: Oh yeah.

Mr. Trentman: Dawn, what do you got?

Dawn: Starting with August, it was a really good month in August. We moved a lot of dogs, I've been really excited about what we've been doing with the, you know once we evaluate the dogs, and feel the information that we have, and our evals and assessments and the animals can be community compatible animal. So, I feel like that's drawing a lot of traction actually when people come in the door. We have the books, we take them to the Fairgrounds, and then I always stress that our animals are only from our community, they're not transferred in from any other organizations or any other counties. And people love that aspect a lot. People are really, I don't know. I feel like we've had a decent amount of traffic like dogs one week, cats the next. A lot of cats moved back and forth, so it's been decent amount of traffic. These two are the two that take dogs out for lunch at the Corner Chill and Grill.

Claire: Every Tuesday. We go to Corner Chill and Grill and bring a dog with us and with our information that we hand out. So, we always take good friendly dogs so that we represent well. Anybody that talks to us loves to know that we are only community animals, and a big majority doesn't even know now that we've been no kill since 2017. There's still that misconception out there that they think Oh Animal Control, you euthanize them, no, we don't. We take the time, we get to know the animal. Us on the adoption side we don't always have the time to see all the ones on the AC side that we can recommend for adoption so when we get a moment and we see a walker out there we "oh wait we need to meet that dog, because we need to show that dog" and help them get out the door. We're willing to do anything we can for this community because the animals deserve it a good home. We've got some great animals.

Mr Trentman: Okay, great.

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

Vote: Yes: 7 No: 0 Motion Carried.

Scott Greenwald: Ashley and Eddie I want to thank you for taking care of the issue in Fairview Heights. I know social media wasn’t too good, I’m not real good with that social media so I was glad they took care of it for me. Thank you, guys, for handling that.

Ashley & Eddie: No Problem!

MOTION to adjourn by Mr. Wilhelm. Second by Mr. O’Donnell.

Vote: Yes: 7 No: 0 Motion carried.