

# **A Report**

to

**Mayor A C Wharton, Jr.**



**Submitted by:**

**The Memphis Rotary Club**

**Memphis Animal Shelter Evaluation Committee**

**October 26, 2011**

## Report Summary

A review of the Labor Contract would show no articles that would interfere with, or hinder the appropriate and efficient operation of the facility. The interpretation of the Contract, and more important, the interference of City Hall in this interpretation, is a different matter. Some of this direction has been resolved by a change in the leadership of the Personnel Division, but there remains the clear understanding, on the part of all the Employees that certain individuals are exempt from the rules. Whether this is a result of personal relationships, or a misguided attempt to favor certain groups or categories, is unclear. It is however a major problem, and will be one for any future Director.

A review of the Policies and Procedures also show no major problems, if they are followed. However, there appears to be a combination of haphazard, or non-existent training, and a failure to apply the rules firmly and fairly. The previously mentioned interference from above, whether direct or inferred, is not the only reason, but is a major factor in this. With a few minor tweaks to suit the management style of a Director, the current rules would work. The solution to the problems the Shelter has suffered is to require everyone, without exception, to do what they should do, and not do what they should not do. In simple terms, "follow the rules".

Our interviews with Management, and with certain lower level employees, who specifically requested an opportunity to talk to us, reveal an organization, that while improved from a previously very poor condition, is still in basic disarray. The employees at every level, while not willing to say so on the record, will readily volunteer that there has been a relationship between certain individuals and the illicit dog fighting rings in the Community. This is particularly true where those who are perceived to be in a protected status are concerned. Extra care should be taken with new hires in the future to insure that they have a desire to work humanely with animals.

We have been in contact with the AT&T Account Executive over Government accounts for the City. He and Matt Pepper both indicated that the experimental GPS reporting and tracking system, being tested by the Sanitation Division could be coming to MAS. This low cost system would offer efficiency and accountability in vehicle location, dispatching, vehicle activity, and response. As it is now, management has no idea where the field Officers actually are, or what they are actually doing.

The new shelter facility is a major improvement over the existing building. In touring the facility, it is obvious that there are not nearly enough employees to make effective use of it, and there will be a real need to increase volunteer efforts to make it run correctly. We believe finding a strong volunteer to recruit, coordinate and lead a team will be essential. A good group of motivated volunteers will also improve adoption programs, improve the image of the Shelter, and raise overall employee performance through example. Critics of the current Shelter operation should not be excluded.

Another issue of concern was the current policy for adopting animals from the Shelter. While we were told that background checks were required on each adoption, they are not being performed consistently. The vast majority of dogs brought in to the Shelter are Pit Bulls. Therefore, the potential for criminal activity is very real, and the checks for criminal background must be made. There should be a record of this with each adoption, available for audit. Under no circumstances, should any employee, regardless of rank, be allowed to conduct viewing, and adoption "off the books". Every animal that is put on the truck, or dropped off by someone, should be accounted for from start to finish. There is simply no excuse for ANY "missing" animals, at any point in the system.

We strongly recommend a dedicated internal video system that records from the intake dock, and front door, through every step of the system. This should be monitored, and the footage maintained, off site, for a substantial period of time (perhaps in the providers archives) so that it can be reviewed by management to resolve performance questions or issues. This could also assist in any investigation. If, as we said in the second paragraph, you are doing what you should be doing, there should be no problem with it being recorded. This would also be a valuable tool for management to assess employee performance.

The last point is one that is not a problem within the Shelter, but one that impacts it directly, and will continue to cause major obstacles. This is the overriding, community wide issue of Pit Bulls, Dog Fighting, and the attitude that animals are disposable. Until this is addressed, the Shelter will continue to be overloaded, and not logistically capable of approaching any semblance of a no-kill facility.

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## Meeting with Matthew Pepper

8/2/11

He noted he was the fourth administrator in seven years' time

He serves on the board of directors for the national animal control association.

We may talk to employees at any time and at the shelter without problem. Indicated that most personnel are at the shelter around 9 am.

Upon his arrival a little over a year ago, he found no documentation of any kind being kept and no formal training of employees. He has begun a comprehensive training program that includes 40 hours clerical training, 40 hours kennel training and two weeks of field training.

He currently has managerial positions open and an opening for a full time veterinarian. The veterinarian position was advertised as paying \$90K per year with full benefits (average starting salary for a vet fresh out of school is \$65K). Advertised in publications of vet schools offering residencies in shelter medicine. No applications were received. (info on vet position specifics from Janet Hooks interview)

Up until approx 3 months ago, Pepper had no input on hiring, as it was done through the city's human resources department. He tried to bring an operations manager with him from Louisiana who the city rejected twice as "not qualified."

One of his biggest problems is issues related to the labor unions and their disciplinary requirements and the support he receives from the city in this area. It is very difficult to hire and fire staff due to the way it must be handled re: labor relations.

Volunteers at shelter – can be a huge help or a huge hindrance. Friends of Memphis Animal Services has 30-40 good volunteers in the shelter at a given time and is a 501c3 organization. Other volunteers have been intrusive and bordering on illegal as using the volunteer position to take photographs and post on the internet alleging animal abuse/neglect.

Concern re: new facility. It will not relieve the overcrowding issue as it will only house approx 50 additional animals. Kennels that are meant to house only one dog at a time were counted as housing two by city designers. Also, he will be largely understaffed as the new facility's increased square footage will require a larger staff to clean and maintain.

## Meeting with La Sonya Hall, Deputy Director of Public Services

*Main contact for project per Mayor Wharton*

*8/2/11*

Department oversees animal shelter, libraries, DMV, multicultural, civilian law enforcement and more for a budget of \$29 million. Animal shelter has \$2.9 million budget but requires 90% of Hall's time.

### **New facility**

- In response to the question that the new facility will be inadequate, she responded that they were aware of its limitations, but that the design and construction contracts were from a prior administration.
- Dept has asked the advisory board to investigate ways new shelter could generate revenue as it has advanced medical equipment.

### **Hiring staff at shelter:**

- All employees go through the city's human resource system (as described it seems very laborious and multi-leveled), including the preliminary screening process to ensure employees meet minimum requirements for position. Once through the process, a panel will interview final candidates. Policies must adhere to civil service hiring processes as positions under union contract.

### **Second chance program**

- Developed under Herenton and has a rigorous vetting process. Only two at the shelter. One is a stellar employee and one was Demetria Hogan who was terminated.

Clinical side of shelter – the city has considered asking either the ASPCA or the Humane Society of the US to conduct an independent audit.

### **Shelter Advisory Board**

- Previous board members held chaotic meetings that encouraged public incendiary input.
- Current board opted to close meetings as they could not conduct any useful business with public spending all the time with accusations. Have had to have police intervention at the meetings and Pepper has had to be escorted to his car (also noted in Pepper interview).

### **Changes she would make immediately if possible**

- Remove the webcams. The city cannot control the viral nature of social media and cannot address all the times someone takes a single screen shot and emails it everywhere with whatever caption they choose. Their interpretations may or may not be correct of what is shown, but the city cannot refute due to sheer volume and viral

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nature of internet. Caused multiple threatening phone calls and emails to be directed at city and shelter.

- Find a way to tell about the good employees at the shelter as they are often overlooked.
- Employees need to have more attention to detail, focus more on documentation and find a way to use technology v. the current handwritten documentation

## Meeting with Janet Hooks, Director of Public Services

*Appointed in September 2009. Raid of shelter in November 2009.*

8/3/11

### **New facility**

Aware of its inadequacies, but predates her administration

Investigated expansion and it was cost prohibitive

### **“Back Door”**

In response to our question that we have heard both dogs and supplies are being sold “out the back door” of the shelter, she claims not to have heard such under the current administration. She knew similar accusations existed under Alexander (former shelter administrator, indicted) prior to 2009 raid.

### **Webcams**

- Would love to immediately remove for same reasons as stated by Dr. Hall. The city cannot control the viral nature of social media and cannot address all the times someone takes a single screen shot and emails it everywhere with whatever caption they choose. Their interpretations may or may not be correct of what is shown, but the city cannot refute due to sheer volume and viral nature of internet. Caused multiple threatening phonecalls and emails to be directed at city and shelter.
- Hooks also noted that in order for employees to work with the webcams present, they would need to change the culture of behavior so they would realize that something that might be harmless in reality is not when being watched by an outsider.

### **Second Chance**

- Two currently at the shelter. One very good, other is Demetria Hogan who was terminated.
- She currently has apprx 26 in her department and doesn't know names

### **Open vet position at shelter**

- Imagines part of trouble in filling position is due to perception of shelter and media blitz
- The veterinarian position was advertised as paying \$90K per year with full benefits (average starting salary for a vet fresh out of school is \$65K). Advertised in publications of vet schools offering residencies in shelter medicine. No applications were received.
- Vets who have offered to volunteer time have been aggressively chastised by animal rights groups and pulled back in response
- Looking at possibility of establishing an internship with vet schools that offer shelter medicine specialty in an effort to stabilize the vet coverage at shelter

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Hiring of staff is left to human resources with the final decision falling to Hall and Pepper. She stays out of staffing issues. Says she has an excellent relationship with the unions.

**Advisory board**

- Acknowledged that Steve Tower (board chair) is her personal vet
- New board members were named only after the previous members' terms expired
- Previous board was dysfunctional and encouraged public antagonizing of the shelter
- Emphasized it was purely advisory in nature – Hooks as director can ask the board to investigate, analyze and recommend solutions for a given situation or the board can make recommendations to Hooks which may or may not be utilized
- Hooks has only made one request to the board – to investigate ways the new facility might utilize state of the art medical equipment to generate revenue.

She would like to see employees adhere to policies more closely. Feels giving employees latitude to determine what documentation is necessary is a poor decision – wants to see employees be in stricter compliance with policies in place.

Budget of \$2.9 million for shelter this fiscal year. Up over last due to increased costs tied to moving to new facility and two new approved positions (one animal control office and one animal care tech).

## **Existing Shelter Overview – Interview of Matthew Pepper**

*I met with Mr. Matthew Pepper, Administrator of Memphis Animal Services at the Memphis Animal Shelter on Tchulahoma Road to discuss his existing operation and primarily his views regarding the nearly completed new MAS facility at 2350 Appling City Cove.*

*8/9/11*

I was warmly greeted by Mr. Pepper and his staff including Chelton Beamon, Operations Manager, to whom he introduced me. Matthew and I were soon on a first name basis as he very openly shared with me all sorts of facts and figures regarding the current operations at the existing facility before discussing with me his views regarding the design of the new building which is scheduled to open sometime in September.

1. The new building is 36,000 SF in area as compared with the existing building which is 11,000 SF.
2. The new building will have 22 separate Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning units (Roof mounted HVAC units). This system is cheaper to install as compared with fewer, larger units but will require a high amount of maintenance and high utility costs, especially with 14 complete air changes per hour.
3. The new building had some roof drainage problems with water flowing onto the new main entrance but this problem has been solved. There was also a drainage problem at the rear of the building which has been corrected.
4. There will be a total of approximately 296 cages (210 canine, 86 feline). This is only 36 more cages than the existing MAS on Tchulahoma Road. Moreover, the new building will NOT be able to be expanded according to Matthew Pepper.
5. The biggest job for the staff is constantly cleaning the cages. Matthew Pepper explained that in many new facilities around the country, the “best practice” is to have two cages (back-to-back) per dog. These cages are separated by a “guillotine” vertically sliding door which allows the staff to move dogs from cage one to cage two through the guillotine door and then clean cage one. With cages laid out in rows like egg crates, this layout with double cages per animal highly facilitates sterile cleaning of an entire row of cages by one staff member. Furthermore, there is no “handling” of the dog to move it out of its cage. Food is simply placed in the second cage and the guillotine door is slid up to allow the dog to move to the second cage. Then the door is dropped allowing the first cage and all the cages in that row to be cleaned at the same time.
6. Unfortunately, the cage-layout in the new building repeats the same type layout of the existing facility which has one cage per dog. Therefore, in order to clean the cages (a constant ongoing activity), staff must physically handle and remove each dog from its cage and leash it to a wall hook while the cage is being cleaned. According to Matthew Pepper, this is not only a time consuming, inefficient system but it requires more staff, more time and the cleaning results are less sterile than could otherwise be achieved. As

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he puts it: "This is definitely not a best practice" (The new facility was planned and designed before Matthew Pepper came to Memphis in March 2010.)

Mr. Pepper said that MAS takes in about 16,000 animals per year which is three to four times the number of animals taken in by animal shelters of many cities the size of Memphis. Of these 16,000 animals taken in, 38% are "owner surrendered". His experience is that in Southern states, dogs are more frequently allowed to roam unleashed. He said that the pit bull problem is partly a local cultural problem. However, he said that during his tenure since March 2010, there has been a 29.8% increase in "placements" of animals. The exact number is 503 placements from Jan. 1, 2011 through July.

## **Notes Regarding How the Shelter Keeps Up With the Animal Inventory**

*Chelton Beamon, operations manager at MAS (taking over Matt Pepper's responsibilities)  
Glenn Andrew, in charge of 1)inventory of animals and 2)prepareing the list of which animals are  
to be euthanized. Glenn was promoted to this position in June of 2011.*

*8/26/11*

### ***Chameleon Animal Number and Kennel Card***

MAS uses the Chameleon software to keep up with the animals. Glenn said Chameleon software will not keep a history of the cages the animal has been in – only the current location. Chameleon software generates an animal number when a new animal comes in to the shelter or is called in from a field truck. The MAS employee recording the new animal inputs into Chameleon software the particular cage the animal is assigned. A kennel card is printed out from the Chameleon software. See pdf of Kennel card.

The kennel card is place on the animal cage. The Kennel Card has the Kennel number, the animal number and the following information:

Name

Color

Breed

Sex

Age

Collar Color (if applicable)

Collar Type (if applicable)

Tag (if applicable)

Markings (if applicable)

Intake Date

Review Date

Intake Type (Stray/Field)

### ***Band around animal's neck***

The number assigned by the Chameleon software number is written by hand on a band which is placed around the neck of the animal.

### ***Petharbor.com Cage Number***

There is a cage number that identifies the cage - this number does not change. MAS has labels on each cage. The labels have a number and Petharbor.com on them. As indicated above, the cage number is on the animal's kennel card. If the animal changes location, the kennel card goes with him. The MAS employee who moves the animal is supposed to mark through the original cage number on the kennel card and handwrite in the new cage number. This information is also supposed to be updated in the Chameleon software. Glenn Andrews said the animals will eat through the plastic Petharbor.com label identifying the cage number and

the tag will fall off. He said he worked for Animal Services in NY and they had metal holders connected to the cage with clear plastic pieces on top. The cage identifier would be put in the metal holder so the animals could not eat through the tag.

Petharbor is part of the Chameleon family of software. If Petharbor is used to its full capability, an image of the animal and all the pertinent information on the animal is posted online to help find an owner. Karen Hill went to the Petharbor.com site on 8/27/11 and checked for adoptable animals at MAS. She found one dog at MAS entered 8/24/11 and six cats entered 8/9/11.

Karen also went to the MAS website and saw one could see photos of some of the animals at the shelter by selecting Petfinder. This takes one to Petfinder.com which is handled by the Friends of the Memphis Animal Shelter.

### ***Daily Inventory***

The inventory Glenn Andrews printed out for 8/26/11 was 40 pages long and indicated there were 660 animals in the shelter. There were approximately 65 dogs listed as "pending" and 20 cats for a total of 85 "pending" animals. It should be noted that Chelton had estimated there were 300+ animals at any given time.

Glenn prints out the inventory list for daily inventory by 2 pm. If the cage number on the inventory list is 900, this means the animal was on the list to be euthanized. There are times, however, that an animal that was on the "to be euthanized" list is not actually euthanized due to lack of time. In some cases, if space opens up, the animal on the "to be euthanized" list may be moved back to the 200 cages (show animals for prospective owners). If employees do not update Chameleon software for this change, an animal with a 900 cage number on the inventory list may be in a 200 cage.

Glenn estimates it would take five hours a day to properly conduct an inventory and correct problems he finds. On a good day, he has two hours to devote to inventory. On a bad day, he has 45 minutes. During the time Karen Hill interviewed Glenn, it was apparent he has many responsibilities and employees look to him for answers and assistance.

There are days Glenn cannot complete the inventory. His shift is up and before he leaves, he tells the staff to make sure every animal has an ID band around its neck and that each cage has a kennel card. The staff is to give him notes the next day on problems they find. He will try to finish the inventory the next day.

### ***150 "pending" animals in inventory when Glenn took over inventory procedures 6/11***

When Glenn took over the inventory procedures 6/11, there were 150 "pending" animals on the Chameleon inventory list. This is the 150 missing animals that has been reported by the media in the past. Glenn said 99% of the time an animal is put into "pending," it has been euthanized, but Chameleon software was not updated by an employee. He has done the research to update the records of approximately 65 of the 150, so that they are no longer listed as pending. To clear a "pending" animal takes time. Glenn has to go through the cards for the animals euthanized, adopted or that went to foster care to find the missing kennel card. The

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kennel cards have normally been updated to reflect the details of the euthanization (including dosage given), adoption or foster care arrangements. The kennel cards for these three groups are filed separately in numerical order for each day. When Glenn finds the missing kennel card, he updates the Chameleon software with the information on the kennel card. The "pending" status is then removed from the inventory printout. Glenn said he had not had time to research the additional 65 pending animals.

***Unlocated animals since Glenn took over inventory procedures 6/11***

Glenn no longer puts "pending" in the Chameleon software when he cannot find an animal on the inventory list. He puts an "x" on the paper printout of the inventory list that he is making handwritten notes on. He said he did not want to change the status to "pending" in the Chameleon software because he would no longer be able to see the last cage location of the animal once the status is changed to "pending." The last cage location helps Glenn find the kennel card to determine whether the animal was euthanized, adopted out or put in foster care. Because the animals which cannot be located are not listed as pending, the inventory states there is an animal when there is not. It also may list one cage several times. The cage location of the missing animal will be listed, then the cage number will be listed again with the animal that is currently residing in the cage. Glenn said there is a way he could change the status to "pending" and type in the Chameleon notes for that animal the last cage the animal was assigned. Glenn did not think that was an efficient way to handle the misplaced animals.

**Comments by Chelton Beamon**

Chelton said one small employee mistake can make the inventory incorrect. The location of the animals are constantly changing. After the inventory is printed out for the day and before it is completed, animals are being brought into the shelter, animals are adopted and given to foster care, moved to the area for sick animals (clinic) and moved to be euthanized. The intake of animals and the animals that are adopted out are immediately recorded into the Chameleon software, but the software is not immediately updated for animals euthanized. Employees also may fail to record the change in location of an animal in the software. Chelton said they had discussed having the technician who euthanizes the animal immediately update Chameleon software, but they have not found it practical to do. The animals euthanized one day may not be updated in Chameleon until the next day.

Chelton did not think it was practical for the inventory to be done after closing when there was less activity going on in the shelter.

Beginning Tuesday, August 30, 2011, Chelton will have the clerks (on the morning after the euthanasia) record the information on the euthanized animals into Chameleon. On that date MAS will also start photographing the animals coming in and putting the photo in Chameleon.

The animals are euthanized by 5 p.m. Some animals are sick when they come in and are immediately put on the "to be euthanized" list. Approximately 50 dogs are euthanized per day Tuesday through Saturday. Chelton estimated between 70 to 100 dogs and cats come in per day on Tuesday through Saturday. Approximately 30 of these animals are owner surrendered

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animals. Chelton also estimated 30 to 50 go out alive per day through owners reclaiming, adoptions and rescue groups.

Factors effecting the number of animals put on the “to be euthanized” list are the amount of cage space available, the health/condition of the animal and the staff to care for the animals.

Chelton said he had to recently terminate employees for not coming to work. He said Mrs. Hogan did not complete the required paperwork. Chelton was formerly a police officer and he investigated Mrs. Hogan in regards to the missing dog, Kapone, like any other police investigation. He said it was officer mistake that caused the problem.

Chelton is not opposed to having GPS in the field trucks. He has worked with GPS in vehicles with other work and he said there are issues at times with the GPS.

Chelton Beamon said UPC codes used to be used, but issues came up with the scanner. Chelton said the safety and security of the MAS employees is his chief concern.

***Suggestions based on interview with Chelton Beamon and Glenn Andrews:***

MAS should research how an Ipad could be used to perform the inventory. Glenn is currently trying to use a paper copy and then by hand indicate the changes that need to be input into the Chameleon software. He then tries to update the Chameleon software using the paper copy. MAS should keep paper copies of daily inventories that Glenn makes handwritten notes on in a three ring binder in date order.

MAS should use the “pending” status in the Chameleon software each time an animal cannot be located. Before the status of the animal is changed to “pending,” Glenn needs to type in the Chameleon notes the last cage location of the missing animal.

MAS needs to designate an employee to spend much more time on the inventory. Glenn does not have sufficient time to handle the daily inventory and to make sure all animals are accounted for each and every day.

MAS needs to assign an employee or volunteers to find the kennel cards of the “pending” animals and any that Glenn knows are missing that he had not changed the status to “pending.” The employee or volunteers should consider inputting into the Excel software all the daily Kennel cards that are in the file cabinets by date (3 separate filing systems – one for euthanized, one for animals adopted out and one for animals that go to a rescue home). The employee or volunteer should indicate on the Excel worksheet whether the animal was euthanized, adopted and foster care animals and the date this happened. This process would need to be started for the earliest date one of the “pending animals” went missing. Using the sort feature of Excel a master list of animals that were euthanized, adopted out or went to rescue home by animal number could be compiled. Then a search could easily be made for an animal by animal number to find the date and location of the kennel card so Chameleon could be updated and the pending animal removed from the inventory.

MAS should consider using a UPC code on the kennel card to help keep up with the kennel cards.

## **Interview with Jeanne Chancellor, Volunteer**

8/26/11

Ms. Chancellor met with us for at least an hour and a half. She was very helpful and answered all questions fully and forthright. She and the other volunteers report to and answer to Mr. Tracy Dunlap, Senior Technician at the Shelter. She suggested two other persons for us to contact and interview, Ms. Claire Ryan and Ms. Catherine Rhea. Interviews will be arranged with all three ASAP.

Ms. Chancellor and two other volunteers were the cofounders of "Friends of the Shelter" which is a 501 C 3 organization dedicated to helping the shelter with problems which they are not prepared or allowed to address. This allows pets to stay in the home in many cases because of their participation. This is their "Pet Retention Program" in which they help people keep their pets.

At one time, prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> administrator back, there were about 50 volunteers. At the time of his removal there were only about 6 left and they were the "die hard" ones that were willing to put up with about anything to help the situation. Now they have built back up to about 30, which is a pretty good number in this facility. A new volunteer goes through a multitier training program and introduction to the expectations of what to do and not to do. Normally 2 volunteers per day works out about right during the week. More are needed on Saturday, 6 or 8 ideal to cover all the bases.

Mr. McCormick and I toured the new facility last Tuesday (8/23) and were impressed and also puzzled about many of the things we saw. It is about twice as large as the current facility and has "interface" areas between the staff and the public that will be hard to cover. Ms. Chancellor has also seen the facility and agrees that there will be a need for a larger volunteer role. We would anticipate that it will take twice as many volunteers to cover the new assignments. This brings up another subject that deserves some attention – how do you get them and how do you screen them.

Some volunteers are there simply to gather data to use against the shelter and some are there to cause problems (intentionally or unintentionally). We were given the current "Application for Volunteer Service" that is currently in use. It is fairly simple. There is no request for references at all. In discussions with Ms. Chancellor we feel that the vetting process should be improved going forward.

Ms. Chancellor was a delight to talk to and very helpful.

## Shelter Employee Interviews

*Rotarians interviewed Management and Supervisory staff members at the former Animal Shelter location Wednesday afternoon, August 24 and from 8am til early afternoon on Wednesday August 31, preceding each interview with advising the interviewee of the purpose and scope of the interview as in Paragraphs A. and B.  
8/24/11 & 8/31/11*

A. Introduce ourselves as representing Rotary; that our organization, as a club project, has volunteered to assist in gathering information about the Shelter's operation for the sole purpose of helping the Shelter to become the best that it can be toward making Memphis proud of its efficient and humane operation. No part of the interview will be conducted for the purpose of finding or placing fault or blame or to single out individuals for discipline or discharge.

B. Any part of the information obtained will be considered confidential if the employee at interview requests that it be, insofar as the laws of Tennessee permit the interviewers' withholding of that information.

### Questions:

1. Name of employee, job title, length of employment.
2. Job description as the employee understands it.
3. Hours or shift employee currently works
4. Has employee been asked by superiors to perform duties not in job description? details.
5. Provide an idea of employee's workday by describing what the employee would consider an average day, from reporting for duty to end of day.
6. What procedures for dealing with impounded animals would the employee change? Why?
7. What procedures in place for dealing with such animals does the employee consider as working well ?
8. Are there procedures in place encouraging employees to make suggestions about Shelter practices and/or policies.? What are they ,if any.?
- 9 What does the employee recommend for improving procedures for receiving and handling employees' suggestions?

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10. Without naming names, what actions or incidents of neglect, if any, have you witnessed that you consider to be unacceptable treatment of animals.? Details. What does the employee consider to be appropriate measures to prevent such actions or neglect?

11. What would the employee suggest to improve relations between management and employees?

12. Are there any issues, practices and/or procedures not covered in the interview that the employee considers to be important for their elimination, modification, or strengthening?

13. Would the employee recommend employment at the Shelter to someone the employee liked and respected? If so, what would be the points the employee would cite as making Shelter employment desirable? If not, what would be the points the employee would cite as making Shelter employment undesirable.?

**Report**

The following summarizes the major points derived by the interviewers from the shelter employees:

1. The morale of the shelter staff has been hurt by the public criticism and scrutiny directed at the shelter operations and personnel.

2. The operations of the shelter are materially affected by lack of funding and insufficient animal control personnel, to the effect that it is not unusual, because of sick day, vacation or other absences, for only one animal control officer to be available, resulting in delayed service to calls and difficult, often dangerous, exposure of the officer, who usually needs assistance with handling animals.

3. There is an intense need for education of the public as to the work of the shelter, the volume of service calls, the number of animals handled, the dangers faced by animal control officers, the care provided for animals and the fact that dogs and cats are not the only animals handled...on one of the days of interview there were two horses and two pigs in the care of the shelter.

4. Public education is seen by several employees as necessary to avoid the embarrassing experiences they had suffered when wearing their identifying badges...one had been publicly cursed and another spat upon at a convenience store.

5. A need was expressed by animal technician staff, charged with the duty of euthanasia, for counseling. on the employer's time, because of the psychological and emotional toll that dealing with death on a large scale can exact.

6. There was a universal claim by the interviewed employees that they felt their work is important and that they were satisfied with their employment.

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7. The only mention by interviewees of inconsistency between what management had instructed employees and actual practice, had occurred regarding the physical areas to which rescue organizations were admitted. The same restrictions did not uniformly apply to these organizations, with the term "favoritism" used.
8. The on-premises cameras were uniformly regarded as harmful to understanding of actual conditions and practices at the shelter and films were subject to selective editing, subjecting employees of the shelter to harsh judgment by animal rights groups.
9. The new shelter facility was generally regarded as a welcome improvement through installation of such devices as the guillotine cages, in which the guillotine type gate can isolate an animal in one-half of the cage while the other half can be washed and maintained. However, concern was expressed that, at the rate the animal census is increasing, there will be animals in both halves of the cages.
10. Finally, there was a consistent theme among the officers, who dealt with the animals, that each could have benefited materially from a more thorough, more detailed, more organized training program.

## **Interview of Mr. Tracy Dunlap, Senior Animal Care Technician**

9/2/11

Mr. McCormick and Dr. Richardson met with Mr. Tracy Dunlap, Senior Animal Care Technician, for approximately one hour. He was very cooperative and answered all our questions without hesitation. It might be pointed out that Mr. Dunlap has worn many different hats at the MAS and currently is the volunteer coordinator as well as the rescue coordinator and the events coordinator. He has served as the Interim Shelter Supervisor between permanent appointments.

In talking to Mr. Dunlap, it is apparent that education is his “strong point” and his major thrust. He is responsible for the orientation of the volunteers and holds a session about once per quarter. There are currently about 15 applications for volunteer placement on file. He feels that it is a “tough” assignment for an extremely “soft hearted” person but that there are many ways in which one might be utilized in the volunteer ranks. Mr. Dunlap agrees that the screening process is not good. The application (which will be attached) is fairly simple and does not ask for references. On the other hand it does not become restrictive by the questions that are asked. Mr. Dunlap does the only interview of the volunteer applicant and makes the final (?) decision.

There is a liability issue with all volunteers. Some areas of the facility are dangerous and access is restricted. Even with precautions, volunteers are subjected to some risk on a daily basis. This must be acknowledged on the front end and accepted by all applicants.

There is a PR risk with all volunteers in that their true intentions are not immediately known and will only become evident over time. There is a Privacy Clause in the agreement signed by the volunteer that should prevent them from talking to the media. There is always the risk that this will not be followed since there is little punishment except dismissal.

Mr. Dunlap feels that a full time Volunteer Coordinator is needed even in the present facility and that this need will become huge in the larger new facility. We agree that many more volunteers will be needed to man the Appling Road site. Without organization and leadership this will not work well. The fiscal restraints on the budget prevent the hiring of the number of people really needed. Ergo, Volunteers!! Along with this should be an educational program to begin teaching youngsters the correct attitude toward pets. Mr. Dunlap feels that this should start early and could be carried out by volunteers with the proper supervision and training.

Mr. Dunlap would like to become the Education and Volunteer Coordinator and devote full time to development and education. We agree that this position will be very desirable in the future to have the needed personnel.

## **Review of Equine Facility at New Memphis Animal Shelter**

10/21/11

I recently visited the new animal shelter to inspect the equine facility, and more particularly, to review concerns over the proposed unloading process of horses being delivered. The shelter's present plan of unloading horses in the main driveway is justifiably of concern as this will take place in an un-controlled space. Frightened, agitated horses can frequently exhibit their "flight" instinct and without confinement could easily escape their handler and flee into the general parking area placing employees or members of the public at great risk, not to mention the animal itself. Furthermore, the possibility clearly exists for the animals to escape to nearby public roads and even Interstate 40. There is a litany of major potential problems with that scenario. An idea has been floated about to alter the 12 foot section of fence at the northeast end of the facility to create a gate into which a trailer and truck can be backed in to the barn area. While this isn't necessarily the best solution, it is clearly workable and will provide protection for all concerned. It would necessitate a minor re-working of the driveway and the elimination of a handful of parking spaces. This will result in added expense, but the increase in safety and reduction in liability will be significant. I also took a minute to make a couple of other observations. They include concrete floors in the stalls and the apparent lack of sufficient ventilation.

Per discussion with a local large animal veterinarian, concrete flooring is least desirable for horse stalls due to stress and strain it puts on horses' feet. An additional concern exists for weak and debilitated horses. They have a strong desire to lie down frequently and will run great risk of scuff and scrape wounds when standing up. This will also result in added stress on their hocks. Recognizing that a horse's stay at the shelter is generally just a few days, the problem of concrete floors can be greatly mitigated through the use quality rubber mats. This will, of course, create the need for regular cleaning on top of the mats and periodic cleaning under to reduce growth and spread of bacteria. It is also recommended the concrete floor be sealed prior to use to prevent bacteria from being absorbed into the concrete. Addressing the problem of concrete floors with straw is the least desirable due to resulting urine absorption and resulting accumulation of waste material.

Lastly, a comprehensive review of the facilities ventilation should be conducted to ensure adequate air flow through each stall. It appears the only ventilation that exists today is through the front gate of each stall. Air should flow through each stall to remove built up heat, especially during summer months. The use of overhead fans is encouraged to keep air moving.

An additional benefit of this will be to reduce the number of flies during summer months. Any modification of the stalls to accommodate improved air flow should be undertaken with a goal of providing separation for the animals to reduce the likelihood of direct contact which is a major cause of spreading disease and possible injury.