

## MINUTES OF BMHA MEETING OF 6-16-2016

Meeting called to order 6:00 PM

Board members in attendance: Donna Brownlee, John Rinehart, Tom Witten (because there are only 5 Board members at this time, this DOES constitute a quorum)

BMHA members (not board members) present: None

ARACEO/Barkin' Basement Employees present: John Brinlee

I. Approval of Minutes of prior meeting: Approval was called for and seconded for the minutes of the prior meeting. Tom mentioned that the minutes should reflect the fact that he was approved by the Board for the Vice-President position, but since the President resigned, he is acting President, as per the bylaws, until such time as he accepts the position of President or a new President is chosen. John Rinehart agreed to make that change. Motion to approve minutes passed unanimously.

II. Report on County Negotiations and Cost-Cutting Ideas:

A. The County has indicated that they want some commitment from Tom and the Board that he will stay on and the Board will be stable. The Board currently consists of 5 members: the three in attendance at this meeting, Jan Peterson, and Shari Carpenter. This represents a small core of dedicated people, several of whom have been Board members and/or Animal Rescue supporters for years. The Board is confident that this membership is stable, hard-working, and dedicated to a productive and successful partnership with Union County and its municipalities. Moreover, Tom Witten is committed to putting together a business plan to allow BMHA to proceed into a more solvent and stable future. This will require John Brinlee's assistance, as we need to find out how much money is left and what our spending is like now that several cost-cutting measures have been put in place.

B. In the last month, talking with Scott Hartell and Steve McClure, it became clear that there really was no way we could get a variance to place a separate building on the property dedicated strictly to retail sales. We had hoped we could relocate the Barkin' Basement thrift store next to the shelter, as it would save us over \$15,000/year, but the argument is that if we got a variance, it would set a precedent, and many others would follow. There would likely be complaints about the noise etc. However, it was made clear that we CAN do as much retail INSIDE the Rescue as we want---it just has to be mission-related. So animal food, collars, leashes, etc., are all fair game, as is animal-themed jewelry and other animal-themed items.

The group has looked for a location where BMHA might secure a zero-dollar lease; they couldn't find any, but OTEC, for example, has substation property they only use for hay storage, on Gekeler Lane. We could approach them and ask if they would provide a zero-dollar lease for us to erect a building.

The question was also raised about adding an addition onto the Rescue and putting Barkin' Basement there; if it was physically attached and a part of the Rescue, would that be allowed? The answer was no; sales would still need to relate directly to the mission, and Barkin' Basement sells many items that have nothing to do with animals and animal rescue.

C. The question also was raised about drilling or using an existing well. Surprisingly, the answer was that we of course CAN use an existing well, or even have one drilled; we just cannot use the water inside the shelter for drinking etc. Nevertheless, since there is an existing well on the property that is capped off, all we need is a pump and plumbing to tie into outdoor lines. This would save us a substantial amount on utility costs. John Brinlee agreed to look into the cost of getting a pump and plumbing the well to the Rescue.

D. Regarding John Brinlee being compensated for his after-hours Animal Control work: The understanding of the County representative is that the Sheriff's position is that they have officers during the day. In case of animal attack, they will call a Sheriff deputy or city police, but loose animals after hours are not being responded to. Their position is that dispatch is not "officially" contacting John Brinlee, they're just passing off his number. That's not always true, as Dispatch has contacted John directly many times. The Board agreed that this sounds like an exercise in semantics, but if this is the position of the Sheriff, then it's clear John is NOT going to receive ANY compensation at this time.

The Board concluded that we need an "escalation list"---a list of hierarchical people that concerned citizens can contact to resolve a problem of a loose or lost animal after hours. This list might include the phone numbers for the Sheriff, County Commissioners, perhaps city officials. We believe such a list might impress on those involved how serious the problem can become. There have been entire weeks that no Animal Control officer was available and John was getting all of the calls. This is obviously going to require further negotiation before it is resolved satisfactorily.

E. Contract With Union County:

1) The County has agreed that they need to be paying the Oregon State-mandated \$27.00/day per dog for 5 days of housing. The law does not require any further compensation, as the law says that after 5 days animals may be euthanized (it does NOT say "must be", and besides, that could only really happen with a vet on staff, which we obviously cannot and never

have been able to afford), so the County will not provide any further compensation for housing the animals directly.

2) However, as noted in prior minutes, BMHA has proposed a counter-offer of \$11,500.00/quarter in addition to the 5-day monies. The County is at least in principle favorably disposed toward this, but as with any County expenditure, it must be justifiable. The County needs to see that we are moving towards fiscal stability and that we are more fiscally sound. To that end, John Brinlee will work with Tom to quickly put together the account figures, showing how much we've reduced costs and that we do have a substantial number of days of operation left to us.

3) The Board moved to give Tom executive authority, as he has negotiated very well for us so far, to sign a contract on our behalf if one is presented. Based on what Tom has presented to us so far, we believe Tom will not commit us to anything that falls far short of what we have countered with. Motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.

III. Revenue Ideas: A number of potential revenue-generating ideas were presented at the last meeting. Many of these are currently in the works.

A) State Law (ORS 609.100) requires that dog licenses be no less than \$25.00/year (with the exception that a County may charge as little as \$3.00/year if the dog in question has been spayed or neutered). For many years, the Rescue has been selling licenses for \$15.00/year. The Board noted that it is very important to comply with State law and local ordinances, so beginning July 15, 2016, dog licensing fees will increase to \$25.00/year. It was not discussed whether that can be prorated for partial years, for example, if a rabies vaccination would run out in 9 months, can a 9-month license be issued? Most likely the answer would be no, as it is not a health risk to renew a vaccination before the old one runs out, and it would be a bookkeeping pain, so likely BMHA would require \$25.00/year or fraction thereof, but this may need to be settled at some point.

The Board did discuss the County's desire to have software-driven record-keeping of licenses issued. While we agree that's a great idea, we are VERY concerned that the money for licenses would go directly to the County and be administered by them. License fees are one very important way that we support ourselves. Moreover, it's much easier for people to purchase licenses at the Rescue rather than some public office or the Sheriff's office. We think it would be detrimental to move licensing to another facility, because it's easier for the public to purchase at the Rescue, and it would be going to a good cause rather than into the County coffers, which people might rightly resent, thus reducing compliance. But we think that a software option is a

great idea, so long as Rescue personnel have access to it to enter the relevant information and that licensing remains an activity of the Rescue.

B) There was a discussion of requiring adoptees to prepay for a license when they adopt an animal, and issuing a certificate that requires them to show proof of rabies before they are able to get the license tag. This would help with rabies compliance and make it much more likely that people would actually get it done. We already require a signatory contract mandating spay/neuter and proof thereof, so this probably wouldn't be difficult. John Brinlee should begin to implement this if the Board approves and if he thinks it would fly.

C) Business Sponsorship: There was much talk at the last meeting regarding potential business sponsorship of the Rescue, and several ideas came out of it.

1) Perhaps businesses or private individuals could "sponsor kennels," providing funds towards the care of the animal until adoption as well as taking care of the animal on a daily basis. For example, a parent could sponsor a kennel on behalf of their child, who would be responsible for walking the dog, playing with the dog or cat, socializing with the animal. The sponsoring individual or representative of the business would sign a contract that binds them to proper care of the animal or kennel being sponsored, and of course, parents would sign for their kids.

2) The idea was raised again about selling advertising on the website, and showing advertising at the Barkin' Basement. Donna Brownlee indicated she intends to draft a letter asking to meet with business owners in the County and broaching the idea of advertising in this way. Businesses could purchase advertising at different levels of exposure---Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum---each more costly than the last but with more perks. For example: at the Barkin' Basement, we plan to install a digital picture frame. We could then cycle between photo ads of various sponsoring businesses. Perhaps with the Gold level of advertising, a business gets their ad placed three times in the queue, and their ad is more prominently displayed on the web site or is at the top of the page where it may be seen immediately, rather than having to scroll. Ads could be refreshed monthly, or perhaps a business could purchase advertising for the entire year. We could even sell advertising on the fence of the Rescue. For a fee, businesses could place a sign on the fence, kind of like a billboard, advertising their business to people driving down the road. As it is a busy highway, that would garner lots of viewings.

The big picture of all of this, of course, is that the Board is thinking outside the box, trying to find ways to partner with the community in a positive way, as well as generate a stable revenue stream for the Rescue that does not depend on the vagaries of public donations.

IV. The Continuing Livestock Problem: We are dealing with the livestock problem but have hit an impasse due to the belligerence of the people who owned the animals. Tom noted that this one

needs to be done by the book. We need to hire an attorney to basically write a legally valid letter to send to the people who have abandoned these animals, and potentially to require them to pay the amount originally agreed upon, perhaps with penalties and fees attached. Donna agreed to try to locate an attorney to do this, and John R. and Donna agreed to help with the cost, which would likely not be enormous. John Brinlee has texts, emails, and phone messages documenting his numerous good-faith attempts to get this resolved, so really all the attorney has to do is summarize it in such a way that we can move forward without fearing a lawsuit from the people who left the animals there.

V. Is the County bringing dogs to Terence McCoy? First, we know that animals have been brought out to him, and the Board knows from comments by employees at that facility that those animals are being adopted out by him. The County does not have any reason they use Dr. McCoy as opposed to any other vet, but the question is whether or not Dr. McCoy bills the County. If he does, this has 2 ramifications: first, it means we could potentially bill the County for services rendered over the last 5 years for which compensation was never obtained (although it should be stressed that we fervently hope it never comes to that!); and second, it suggests the County has an implied contract with Dr. McCoy. That in itself would be favoritism since no bid was put out to contract for veterinary services. Moreover, in a Hospital setting, should a patient be unable to pay the bill, the County is not responsible for that bill; the hospital eats the cost and passes it on to other customers. It is no different (or should not be any different) in the veterinary world; if an animal comes in to a Vet and is treated, but there is no owner to pay for the care, then the Vet should eat the cost. So we very much need to find out if the County is paying Dr. McCoy for his services.

Meeting adjourned 7:15 PM.

Notes prepared by John Rinehart, Secretary, BMHA