

## Task Force on the Humane Treatment of Animal: Meeting Minutes

14:13 Michael Freda welcomes everyone to meeting. 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting since the force was formed. He acknowledges two members of CCM with their efforts of aiding the task force and asks the task force members for their introductions

Kimberly introduced herself as a veterinarian from North Haven  
Mark Bailey, chairman of City of New Haven Humane Commission  
Paula Poplawski, chair of New Britain Animal Welfare League Commission  
Dianne Collette, NECOG ACO and co-chairman of task force  
Ray Connors, Chairman of CT Department of Agriculture, supervisor of animal control division  
Deborah J. Fuller

Members give their introductions, Rep Frida acknowledges two members that are not in attendance

Michael Freda acknowledges public comment to agenda, there are none, and he moves onto agenda item number #2. Freda overviews that item #2 is to discuss minutes from the last meeting, and asks if there are any comments. There are none.

Michael Freda move to item #3 on the agenda and asks to for a motion to approve previous meetings minutes.  
Motion moves, and passes.

Mr. Freda moves to Item #4 on the agenda: Old business  
Mr. Freda talks about what they do after each meeting, and he gets a copy of the minutes from each meeting and puts those minutes into an action plan. He says the goal of the task force is to develop a number of different things that they would like to present to improve animal welfare at the state level, create a sort of progress report or a score card to legislators about individual facilities. He recommends ‘dog pounds’ get re-named to ‘animal shelters’ to an show example of what the task force can do and aims to do.

Referring to the 10 Point Action Plan which can be found at:  
<http://cgalites/pd/HTA/docs/10%20points.pdf>

Mr. Freda discusses an action plan follow up: to aid facilities in helping to change their philosophy in terms of the phrasing in those facilities. For example, changing the phrase “dog pound” to “animal shelter”.  
Mr. Freda then asks for comments.

Deborah Fuller says developing further recommendations would be better done in over a bit more time.

Mark Bailey comments and discusses the philosophy of word contexts, for example the phrase “healthy and treatable”. He says this terminology provides guiding principles that reflect a philosophy toward a progressive animal welfare, a new standard of animal welfare. He makes a

suggestion to look at the guiding principles of similar task forces and read those over, and says that this task force could choose to endorse guiding principles of similar reports and make them available statewide and could endorse them with our own summary statement, specific to Connecticut, or use these guiding principles as a model to develop Connecticut's own principles. He brought the guiding principles on paper and distributes them. Mr. Bailey then urges the task force to review the principles, specifically for the philosophical standard of terminology.

Fuller then asks the question about what document to refer to, Freda responds and is cleared up. Mr. Freda asks if there are comments on the guiding principles, then asks if Mark wants some of it or all of it implemented into philosophy.

Mr. Bailey says the task force should consider the principles and then discuss whether the task force would like to endorse these. This discussion would be about what it would mean to endorse them, and add their own summaries to them, or add their own principles, and basic guidelines to what to go over next meeting.

Ms. Poplawski says it looks like a good idea to go over these principles. Kimberly said she would be willing to go over them.

Mr. Freda then asks if the force would you be willing to caucus and go over recommendations for the next meeting.

Everyone agrees to do so.

Freda says okay, then there will be a subcommittee on this, and next meeting it will come with recommendations.

Mr. Bailey agrees, others agree.

Action Item: Subcommittee will be formed to come back with recommendations for the next meeting with comprehensive overviews  
Recommendations would be best to come out a week before next month's meeting.

Freda says to move to item two on action plan follow up. He then reviews this item and wants to develop a database for these capacities. He asks for comments from the general public, and discusses that there is a lot of fragmentation on this issue at the state level, and it has been a challenge to secure this, so this will be tabled until next the meeting.

Kimberly wants to move back to item number #1 on the action plan and recommends a loose skeletal system that goes across all shelters for commonalities, saying a central database would be vitally important for this information.

Freda says a starting point would be getting a list of individual phone numbers of shelters across the state, then find out where information from the shelters is going to.

He then asks for any more comments, and moves to item #3 on the 10 point action plan.

Frida reviews item #3 breakdown (refer for URL for 10 point action plan)

Mark says that it would be beneficial to do the survey and have the testimony from the public, in terms of ACOs, rescue directors, etc, in order to hear what they have to say at these meetings to help gather fundamental information on diversity of practice within the state.

Kimberly agrees with this, for example live release rates versus those with bad live release rates. Paula asks if these live release rates come from elsewhere? And responds to herself saying yes, they can. So she doesn't believe the results gathered accurately sum these actual results up. But says it can be extracted somewhere else.

Kimberly agrees with Paula

Freda says to focus on getting that information

Paula asks when do you want it to begin or end?

Mark responds saying these reports are generally reported at an annual basis, and the force should try to find a common way to report the rates.

Paula asks whether it be done by calendar year or fiscal year.

Mark says to aim for the calendar year.

Mark moves us to point B on item #3 of the action plan.

He refers to a database of live release rates, and passes out a document on data for live release formulas. He discusses how this data helps shelters break down their euthanasia rates through a formula to figure out the live release rates. He has passed out is an annual report. The shelters, a lot of them, use this table for monthly reports as well. He says that this is one source to look at and perhaps recommend to shelters.

Freda discusses with others that this report will be done on a yearly basis.

Mark says there are various ways to calculate live release rates, and the task force needs to make sure that everyone uses the same means of calculating the live release rates.

Freda asks what the process is for collecting this information.

Paula responds saying that it is the years' worth of MACO reports that she will ask from each shelter, she would like to see what is done with this information.

Frida recaps what Paula said, and thanks her for her willingness to gather this information.

A comment comes from the public regarding the time frame for which these reports are generally gathered, that being some are done by fiscal year while some are done by calendar year.

Freda thanks them for the comment because it pertained to more easily gathering information.

He asks for their comments and encouragement.

Fuller then asks them to join the table, the 2 public commenters, and they join the table.

The public formally introduce themselves as Elise McConnell, Manchester Animal Control Officer and President of Municipal Animal Control Officer Association, and Laura Bourbon, Director of the Dan Cosgrove animal shelter in Branford, which also covers North Branford and Northford, and she animal control officer as well.

Freda thanks them and says the task force has an action plan, and Paula will contact Raymond Connors. He then asks Elise says she is willing to be a resource for the task force.

Elise says yes.

Kimberly asks how to collect information on the practices of each shelter.

Mark says he trying to come up with a sort of an electronic format that discusses practices and refers to survey once again. Areas to really look at are those such as intake, adoption, euthanasia, etc. He recommends taking a look at the outline of the survey and give comments to how to make it better, keep the questions as specific and easy to answer as possible with room for further comment. If any commissioners want to help, please do, citing that creating this survey is very difficult.

Fuller said she would help with that, and so did Elise.

Michael Freda asks about the time frame for this.

Mark responds saying over the next few weeks to come up with a draft survey in January or if not then by February, but questions need to be asked in terms of online survey that would be preferred or a manually done survey.

Kim recommends an online survey because some of the shelters don't have internet. She just wants to make sure that the data isn't skewed for those.

Frida motions to move to item 3D of the action plan.

Mark says the force is looking to help certain shelters digest and evaluate breakdowns of information. There are resources for shelters to help how to make assessments on these types of data. He hands out another sheet pertaining to breakdown of conditions of homeless animals and how to save the lives of these animals. He has brought a handout of a model pet evaluation matrix developed by Iowa State University. It is a detailed breakdown of the various conditions and situations these animals find themselves in, and the matrix makes a recommendation based on the guiding principles and the overall principle of trying to save the animal. The matrix gives information on how to approach each of these various categories. Mark gives examples of distinctions and talks about creating a state model of a pet evaluation matrix to cross reference with other states resources or national resources to save healthy and treatable animals

Kimberly says there is so much to do and so much to know, it is hard to be an expert in all these things and people don't understand the medical situations. The concern is that not knowing how to recognize when there is truly an emergency or something contagious. Basic medical skills and a go to matrix chart would be quite helpful for these places and provide guidelines for these types of decisions.

Mark says making our own state models of these matrices will help guide these types of decisions and alludes to previous experience of the known frantic nature of shelter management and how useful these matrices would be.

Elise says there are issues, especially in terms of medical situations. She gives the example of heart murmurs and how some are terrible and some can be very low risk, but a lot of the time the officers are not trained in the knowledge of these distinctions. She discusses them and how there can be action taken to alleviate these grievances. Most of those in areas of power are not knowledgeable on what is an emergency, what is contagious. Basic medical skills and a go to matrix chart to help them arrive at a decision would be extremely helpful. Guidelines need to be provided in terms of treatment of the individual animals, recognition of when animals need to be evaluated.

Mark says the ultimate vision is the community working together to help save the lives of treatable animals. These resources need to work in conjunction with each other on top of personal guidance. The goal of the task force is to provide various sources of information to make those kinds of decisions.

After much discussion, Freda wants to table this issue.

Freda moves to item number #4 on the action plan.

Kimberly recommends to collect more specific information in order to make these protocols and changes.

Mark responds saying organizations could provide us with guidance with that. He then lists examples of three that stand out most to him; Maddie's Fund, Shelter Pet Project, and the Center for Sheltered Dogs specifically.

Freda says the task force should develop a plan on how to schedule them, and who should reach out to whom. He then says he would reach out to each organization and try to schedule them to come in over a sequence of meetings.

Freda moves to item number #5 on the action plan.

Freda opens to the public comment

Mark says Ray might have something for us today on this.

Freda responds saying we can then table this for Raymond.

Mark responds saying this is a matter of Chapter 22, but that is a lot.

Elise recommends refresher training for ACOs. There needs to be more commonalities for ACOs. It makes a difference for when data is trying to be collected and why is this non-uniform practice not being corrected. She explains that there are a lot of missed opportunities in terms of training, and refresher courses are something that should be mandated.

Laura says ACO training should be more specific and hands on with the state. The problem is ACO officers come in without tactical training, they are learning on the job. She cites personal experience of essentially learning as she goes instead of formal training. ACOs should be going to formal tactical training with information and knowledge on state laws.

Fuller asks if ACOs have annual meetings.

Both Elise and Laura say yes.

Fuller asks the two if they think it would be useful to make it bi-annual to help continue hands on training. She says should be easy to propose for refresher courses to make mandatory of must attend meeting that comes with 8 hours of education with hands on labs organized for ACOs.

Elise says they have been doing that, and she cites her own personal training offered by her. She then says that there are ACOs that are willing to do the training, and those that are not.

Kim says that should not be an option to not attend.

Elise says that she is right; it should not be an option. Prior to the mandated training bill, she did not have nearly the attendance she has now. Now people are being held accountable for their training. It's frustrating they cannot offer more large scale hands on training, in small groups it is easier currently.

Kimberly says making people accountable for training is the ultimate goal. People must do their continuing education. Hands on labs are very valuable but knows they are difficult in larger groups, but she still comes across officers that do not know how to use a rabies pole. Elise responds saying she is aware of this and does not believe it is right.

Kimberly says there is more to be done to be given a standard before an ACO is given the keys and "thrown out on the street". She says they are the first line of power and need to be equipped properly, and wishes Raymond was here so they could talk it out. She also says that she believes all ACOs should be provided with uniforms. She then asks the two public commenting ACOs if it is true that some ACOs are in plain clothes and they said yes.

Elise responds saying some do not even have radios or their own vehicles. She asks how do you take an excessively sick animal in your personal vehicle, and that's predominately what happens in smaller towns. She asks how this is still acceptable.

Kimberly says the task force needs to work towards changing that. She believes this is a true problem, and there should be more standardization for animal control officers. Elise says it is also not acceptable for towns to say there is not an ACO on duty just hold the animal, when it in fact needs to be taken to a shelter. It is a matter of public safety, whether it is a boarding kennel or a shelter.

Laura responds saying that there needs to be a start at looking at the standards of some of these shelters and how they operate. Some don't even have running water, some are disgusting. She wants shelters to be a place where people want to bring their dogs. She once again reinforces the need to make sure the standards are upheld.

Kimberly asks the public commenting ACOs how they feel about regionalizing some of the smaller towns shelters. Elise responds says she recently was regionalized, and she still only has one roof that 3 towns bring in their animals to. Says she has a lot of animals and few staff to be equipped. She feels that some of the smaller agencies should be regionalized even if it is just sharing the shelter, smaller towns pull together and utilize one another.

Kimberly asks the officers then if there were universal rules that all shelters oblige by the way an animal is processed and taken in, there would be no questioning in the way a procedure is done, if they think that would be helpful. Laura responds saying absolutely. Regionalism saves towns money, and overall provides better service.

Mark remarks saying the long range goal of the task force is to compare state law and the standards and practices and try to bridge any gaps there. The task force is hearing about some of

them now, cites a personal example he was familiar with in terms of a procedural law that is not always followed by shelters. The task force should look as to why this happens, what prevents these procedures from being the standard, is it the law or problem with the standards themselves? This is something that the task force will a long view of and make recommendations over the next several months.

Freda remarks to Elise, saying not all ACOs are on call, what does she think the reason for that is?

Elise responds saying to be on call depends on how big the town is. They should coordinate towns with individuals that handle these types of cases, give resources that are available, but more resources may come over time. She gives a personal example, and she does not see the need of an ACO always being on call when you have a police force able to respond to these types of calls. There is no reason that a police officer cannot go and pick up a dog and bring it to a shelter.

Freda says Manchester has been able to bridge the gap and maintain efficiency, does she see that in other municipalities?

Elise responds that some towns want it on call in case something happens, but if that ACO cannot be reached then the police department is left to handle it.

Freda gives an example of North Haven and how the town wants the ACOs on call and the ACOs like that.

Laura responds saying that for her towns, they are on call 24/7. She likes the consistency better, they are the professionals in the industry, and they are better equipped to handle the calls. She tends to believe for consistency sake, that she believes on call is better.

Elise remarking saying that not all towns have the assistants that Laura is speaking of.

Mark says the standard across towns tends to be very different. He cites differences in New Haven's practices.

Paula cites examples of different practices between different towns. She remarks how everyone is different and we are in the situation where we need the on call officers.

Kimberly says she believe it is beneficial for people who are appropriately trained to be available anytime of day, other individuals don't recognize certain situations or don't have the same training. She thinks there is a great benefit to have an ACO available 24/7.

Laura says there are different ways ACOs communicate with people versus how police officers communicate. It comes down to a difference in trying, and it allows situations to settle down more easily. It is valuable to have ACOs consistently handling animal control calls.

Freda proposes to table this topic since it is so full to be revisited at the next meeting. The task force will work towards some formalized recommendations.

Freda moves to item number #6 on the action plan.

Freda asks if there are any online training courses that would like to be recommended, that the task force would welcome that to eventually make those part of formal recommendations.

Mark brings back up the Center for Sheltered Dogs, and talks about the resources like webinars online available, and knows ACOs that have benefitted from these. These could be part of creating a sort of database or providing of resources for ACOs. He remarks that this organization is close by, and it would be nice to create a relationship with them. Webinars are available online and have documents that go along with them as well and are very valuable resources to help the task force achieve their goals.

Freda asks Laura and Elise if they see this being handled through Ray Connors or do they see the task force trying to make the recommendations or is it something that the Association of Animal Control Officers can do.

Elise recommends consulting Ray, but with a webinar, she believes they are a bit tough for a lot of ACOs since some don't have computers. Training would be better another way.

Laura believes the resources on gaining knowledge are good, but hands on training is best. It is the best way to really learn how to deal with situations.

Mark says he believes this is supplementary material, to provide resources that will extend and amplify mandated hands on training.

Freda remarks saying he believes the force has come up with a concept about this sort of talk to come up with in January.

Mark recommends reaching beyond task force and involving others in subcommittee work.

Freda responds saying when this is addressed in January, the force will want to create objectives for February.

**ACTION POINT:** reconvene on this in January, develop an action plan in the February meeting  
Frida moves to item #7 on the action plan.

The task force discusses about what statutes should be changed.

Freda says to table this for now, that it will flow out in research.

Freda moves to item #8 on the action plan.

He says the goal is to have this information by January.

Mark says he has not had a chance to look it over.

Freda says they will continue to work with CCM on this, and to revisit this in January.

Frida moves to item #9 on the action plan.

Mark says he does not have any research to present, but a suggestion in line of inviting expertise to these meetings. He suggests inviting some of the most successful rescue representatives in terms of their relationships with municipal and regional shelters on how they go about  
Paula agrees.



Freda moves to item #10 on the action plan.

Freda then asks for public comment on this item in terms of, to do as a task force to institute a successful volunteer model?

Laura believes cultural community beliefs influence regarding volunteer amounts and effectiveness, in terms of training and experience, etc. Her area has a system in place of people doing what they are most capable of doing, or wants to do.

Freda inquires how this volunteer help works and gives an example of dog walking by volunteers. He then asks what that entails.

Laura responds saying the volunteers have to ask questions prior to that activity. She says just because an animal was one way one day doesn't mean it's the same way today, communication is necessary. She asks that volunteers try to follow the protocol in place.

Mark remarks on Laura's achievements as an ACO in terms of live release rates and asks how she created this sense of community culture in live release.

Laura responds saying the mayors and first selectmen of these communities can create the culture of these communities of what they expect and want. In her personal experience with her first selectman, he was very open to trying new procedures in terms of building the programs she has built in the shelter. When they opened the doors to the community a lot of people were there to help, it is a great resource (volunteers) to aid animal adoption

Freda says he would to consider this, and Branford has a successful model. He recommends to build this foundation one by one, but is unsure if a volunteer mandate can be made, but can later can determine recommendations on a municipal to municipal level.

Fuller asks if there can be recommendations on what not to do.

Mark goes into ongoing discussion of volunteer coordination for municipalities. Focus is on people management. These are elements coming together, not putting the efforts on individual shoulders.

Frida says it almost seems that the approach should be two fold. He remarking saying possibly the mayors should have a presentation on what a successful volunteer network would be and then an ACO presentation on what a successful volunteer network would be. He says perhaps this can be built municipality by municipality.

Mark says this can inspire existing volunteer programs as well.

Paula asks Laura if she has a volunteer coordinator to help manage the people.

Laura says yes, but they are not always available, so it ultimately ends up falling back on herself, but she has a staff member to also help her with that.

Elise says it is very important to understand that not all towns are going to be open to this. She gives a personal example of volunteer help. Volunteers were given specific protocols, and those are very difficult to manage for one individual person. She does not agree that anything should

be forced upon anyone, but should the town want to take on this responsibility, these would be good guidelines.

Freda agrees with her statement.

Frida moves forward to item 5 of the task force agenda.

There are talks about developing follow up plans for the next meeting; the task force has already discussed this throughout the course of this meeting.

Freda says although there was a scheduling conflict today, feedback from CT-N was good last meeting and CT-N will broadcast the next meeting.

Freda suggests Fridays would be a good time to have the meetings from 2-4, but that could run the risk of getting bumped out otherwise, and he then suggests that they alternate Wednesdays and Fridays starting next year, or just keeping it the way it is. He opens this up for thoughts on this.

Paula says there might be sometimes she might not be able to make the meetings, but remarks that everyone going to have conflicts at some point.

Fuller suggests that the membership be extended, especially if there's only 9 members and there are going to be time conflicts, and she adds there are more people that have valuable information. Freda responds saying he is working on expanding this task force for 2015 and beyond, hopefully. He gives examples of a few people who will be on board in 2015. He says is open to the thought of expanding it, but will have to re-do the bill in order to do so, but his goal is to continue this task force.

Frida then asks if there are any more comments, feedback, or suggestions.

Freda moves to item #7 on the agenda.

Freda asks if there are any more comments from the public.

Elise then reads off of written down testimony. She recommends bettering the ACO position and treatment of animals in their care. She remarks that if a municipality does not permit an ACO to provide adequate care, they need to establish a fund that all ACOs can access in terms of educating municipalities on deeds that ACOs can do and should do and someone should check online to see if these resources are available. She reiterates understanding what a placeable animal is crucial for ACOs in municipal care, gives the example of kenneling which leads to differences in placibility over time. Sometimes she feels rescue organizations push ACO practices to what they want versus what the municipalities want. She remarks that mandated training should encompass temperament tests, and that the task force is a step in the right direction if there are going to be mandated additional hours. She is in favor of more hours of hands on training. She says there needs to be some changes in data gathering in terms of circumstances rather than objective data, for example *why* was this animal euthanized versus the amount of animals euthanized.

Paula remarks saying MACO reports do not show those nuances, so if ACOs can provide that type of information, even beyond euthanasia, that would be helpful.  
Mark says the role of human commissions can help with this.

Freda gives thanks to Elise and Laura for their testimony and then asks if there are any other comments from the public.

Jennifer Humphrey, founder of Brass City Rescue Alliance, a nonprofit rescue, speaks. She says from a rescue perspective, there are great shelters and not so great. The task force must go beyond change of terminology, but must try to change the perspective of dog breeds themselves. She believes it is important that every town and city have a humane commission, or some sort of task force. She remarks on the conditions of some of shelters bring horrible, and that these conditions are rarely brought to light. She believes input from these types of rescues such as hers to the to these proposed human commissions or task forces would be beneficial. She then recommends that this task force reach out to Animals for Life and Animal Rescue Foundation to participate in these meetings.

Freda thanks her for her outstanding testimony.

Mark talks about social media and its effect on animal welfare. For example, pitbulls being allowed in Louisiana after legislation banning them.

Freda asks if there are any other comments from the members, says there just was public testimony and asks if there are any other public comments. He then discusses when the next meeting will occur.

Michael Freda thanks the task force for the comments and the public comments and the two animal control officers, Elise and Laura.

Motion to adjourn? Motion.

Motion to second? Second.

All those in favor? Aye.

Meeting adjourned at 16:27.