

Human Resources and Planning Committee

August 13, 2020

The Human Resources and Planning Committee met on Thursday, August 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the McDonough County Courthouse, Courtroom 201. Committee Members in attendance included Chair Letha Clark, Vice Chair Mike Cox, George Dixon, Michael Kirby, Terra Litchfield, Deckle McLean, and Dave Nissen. Committee Member Larry Aurelio was absent. Others in attendance included County Chair Scott Schwerer, Patrick Stout, Bonnie Scripps, Gayle Carper, Karen Blakely, and Committee Secretary Stacey Alexander.

Chair Letha Clark called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Review and Approve Minutes from July 9, 2020

Member Dixon moved with a second by Member Litchfield to approve the minutes from July 9, 2020, with corrections. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Animal Control Report

Chair Clark gave the report. The total number of dogs in the shelter at the beginning of July was 10 and they ended the month with 15. They started July with 48 cats, at one point throughout the month they had 74 cats in the shelter, they had 23 adopted and 3 were euthanized bringing their total down to 48 at the end of the month. There were 145 dog tags sold in July, they did not have any sales at the animal shelter as they were are sold in the Treasurer's office.

Member Dixon asked if they had a plan on how to handle the amount of cats they have? Member Dixon said they have pretty good success in adopting the cats out but they still need to figure out how to lower the numbers. Chair Clark said they have turned some cats away as they did not have room for more. The Humane Society is stilling sponsoring cats through the end of August at a greatly reduced rate which has been helping. Member Dixon inquired about the health of the cats due to them having so many. There are some respiratory infections which is to be expected with the amount of cats they have.

Chair Clark discussed the building as it is still missing gutters and fascia boards, she doesn't believe that anything is being done about it and other Members were in agreeance. Member Dixon asked if the roof addition was ever put on, Chair Clark and Member Litchfield said it had not been done, Dixon said it has been dragging on since last fall. Chair Clark said that grass is now being cut on a regular basis. Member Dixon asked County Chair Schwerer who was in charge of the maintenance department, Schwerer replied that it was the Sheriff. Schwerer informed the Committee that Allen, the head of maintenance has been off for quite a while as he has had some health problems. Dixon said that while it has put a crimp on them now, they have had plenty of time to get the addition complete. Dixon said he talked to Allen about getting started in the fall and was told they could not set the posts when the ground was frozen, Dixon said the ground was not frozen at that time and he does not feel they are trying to do it. Member Litchfield confirmed that the Sheriff was over Allen and that he is who they should make complaints to, Chair Schwerer told her that was correct.

Policies & Procedures

None.

Humane Society

Chair Clark addressed Bonnie Scripps regarding the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the County Board and the Humane Society regarding the new animal shelter. Clark said this was started in late September 2017, the Animal Shelter and the Humane Society found out that they had been named in Richard Yaste's estate, from St Charles MO. The financial advisor for the estate met with Member Dixon and Bonnie Scripps to explain the intent of funds for the humane society and animal shelter, between the two entities they received a total of \$118,755.16.

The Humane Society had held a meeting in the beginning of 2018, some of the HR & Planning Committee Members were present. Bonnie Scripps presented plans for a new shelter receiving a unanimous vote to proceed. Member Dixon announced that there would not be any tax dollars contributing to this project. During discussion of the new building Scripps said that while they had considered renovating the current building it was decided that it simply would not work. West Side Lumber contributed a lot time with drafts. The new building would be 8,960 square feet, it would be more energy and space efficient, it would also provide an expanded and safer parking lot. At this time, it was discussed to build to the east of the existing building, the land would be made available by the City.

At the April 2018 HR & Planning meeting Schwerer had asked members of the Humane Society to make a partnership with the County and to prepare a Memorandum of Partnership. Scripps suggested that the Humane Society will hold a fundraising campaign for additional money towards the new building, Scripps said this would be separate from their annual fund raiser that supports their annual budget. Schwerer talked to the Mayor and the city will continue to contribute operational funds.

At the January 2019 HR & Planning meeting Dixon announced there was a memorandum being prepared that would clarify the roles between the County and Humane Society, Chair Clark announced that this is the time to ask questions or suggest changes. At the February meeting the 1st draft of the Memorandum of Understanding was shared by Dixon. It stated funds to be donated, responsibility of fund raising, there will not be any tax dollars contributing to this and the County is to have final decision on the new building and that the County would continue to own and operate the shelter. The Humane Society would have use of certain rooms, and continue to provide input on the shelter.

At the August 2020 HR & Planning meeting the memorandum was presented again with a few changes. Scripps said the paragraph at the end stated they would like more access to rooms, keys to the facility, and be able to identify there as well. Dixon referenced paragraph 2 and suggested that we spend some money from the memorial fund but not all. He asked who owned the shelter, Schwerer believes that the City owns the property and allows the County to use the building.

A large discussion was held regarding who will be responsible for utilities and how much more they will be, will the City still be contributing in this financially and what will their role be in this. A concern was made that monthly costs would increase, will more employees be needed and if so would the City continue to pay half the cost of payroll and benefits. It was agreed that in order to move forward there needs to be a discussion with the City to get answers from them. Carper stated that this could be a great partnership between the three which is very unusual.

A discussion was held in regards to renovate and add on to the existing structure. Comments were made by various members that it wasn't a possibility as the land is not suitable to build an addition on, the layout of the facility and parking is awful and cannot be changed. They would like to make a better situation for the cats and there will be no way to do that with the current building. They also wouldn't have anywhere to put the animals while a renovation would be done. The renovation to the Lamoine Hotel and the old furniture building were brought up, and how successful they were. Carper explained that both of those buildings had very sound structures which the shelter does not have and it is rotten. Member Litchfield said that it usually costs more to renovate and add on to an existing facility than it would to

build new. It was asked if the Humane Society knew of another facility that was comparable to our draft, Quincy is similar only larger. It was also compared to Rushville, ours would be bigger being able to hold 30 dogs while Rushville can only hold 12.

Member Cox stated that the County and Humane Society have a great relationship and hopes that it can continue, the Humane Society is very generous to the County. He also sees this as a better place for employees to work. Scripps believes that having the extra space will allow for more volunteers which would reduce stress on the employees.

The Humane Society was asked how the plans for a fund raiser are coming. Bonnie said it is in the works but they don't want a lot of information out there about it until all parties are comfortable with the agreement, plans have been held up due the Corona virus. A brochure has been created but it will take a significant gift to make it happen.

GIS Update

No report. Vice Chair Cox informed the Committee that he talked with FEMA regarding GIS and how good it is.

Draft Memorandum of Understanding Between the Humane Society of McDonough County and the McDonough County Board

Vice Chair Cox moved with a second by Member Dixon to proceed with the Draft Memorandum of Understanding Between the Humane Society of McDonough County and the McDonough County Board, and attorneys for both parties to review the Memorandum for any changes to fit the agreement between the two. Then it will be brought back to the Committee for approval. Motion carried with a voice vote, 1-nay.

Claims

Member McLean moved with a second by Member Kirby to approve claims as submitted. Motion carried on voice vote.

Other

None

County Board Chair Comments

County Schwerer let the Committee know that an employee, and a resident of the Elms had been in an accident coming back from Springfield and that there were not any injuries. There are 150 positive cases of Covid as of August 13. The Budget Committee has gotten started.

Adjourn

Member Litchfield moved with a second by Member Kirby to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. Motion carried on a voice vote.