

**ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 5TH FLOOR MANATEE ROOM
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
JUNE 17, 2026**

Present were:

Dena Sabou, Chairperson
Katy Demick, Vice-Chairperson
Kim Bruenner
Melissa Carman
David Dainels
Katy Demick
Wendy Gonzales
Kerri Hughes
Ly Bibiana Salmon Wetzel
Carol Whitmore

Two seats are vacant.

Also present were:

Johnanna Beville, Program Analyst
Melissa Bomar, Children Services Manager
George Kruse, Board of County Commissioner
TJ Armstrong, Adoption Manager
Stephanie Krum, Behavioral Manager
Ellie Levine, Volunteer Coordinator
Taunia Ireland, Animal Population Manager
Dr. Syna Johnson, Chief Veterinarian Shelter Operations
Steven Bell, Animal Services Supervisor
Michael Strollo, Commutations Coordinator
Vicki Tessmer, Board Record Supervisor, Clerk of the Circuit Court
Caitlin Dixon, Board Records Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court

1. Johnanna Beville called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

AGENDA/SIGN-IN SHEET

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2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Johnanna Beville, Program Analyst, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL**

A quorum was declared.

4. **INTRODUCTIONS**

Members and staff introduced themselves.

5. **ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD PURPOSE**

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Mrs. Beville provided a handout reviewing the advisory board's purpose, key duties, important limitations, and structure and operations.

Discussion ensued regarding Members making statements to the public.

6. **INTERNAL PROCEDURES AND RULES**

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Mrs. Beville reviewed the procedures and rules packet. She is available for any questions and will revisit the packet at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding issues about the next meeting date, wording in the ordinance, the procedures and rules, and authority over projects.

9. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. Beville reviewed the process of putting future items on the agenda. She highlighted the importance of emailing the staff liaison and providing support documentation. The Liaison will review the item with MCAW leadership and the Board Chair for possible inclusion on the next meeting agenda. If a member makes a motion recommending action on the item, the Board Chair will present the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) at a regular meeting.

Commissioner George Kruse mentioned the advisory board cannot self-assign things to staff and they cannot make policy.

Discussion ensued regarding the process of getting items on the agenda, meeting more often, and holding a meeting in July.

Member Whitmore requested information regarding the budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to provide the Board with a better understanding of available resources and funding considerations.

A motion was made by Member Whitmore directing staff to provide a record of the budget for Animal Services and the CIP budget, any future projects, and possible future buildings on the Bishop Parker campus and Lena Road, at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Demick and carried 9-0.

Dr. Syna Johnson, Chief Veterinarian Shelter Operations, responded to questions and noted it would be helpful to obtain information on other shelters in the region for behavior programs and future support for the new resource center.

7. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

Vicki Tessmer, Board Records Supervisor, opened the floor for nominations of Chairperson and Vice- Chairperson.

Nominations- Chairman

Member Hughes nominated Member Daniels

Member Daniels nominated Member Sabou

Member Daniels removed himself from nominations.

Nominations were closed, and Member Sabou was appointed as Chairman.

Nominations- Vice-Chairman

Member Bruenner nominated Member Demick

Member Demick nominated Member Brunner

Member Bruenner removed herself from nominations.

Nominations were closed, and Member Demick was elected Vice-Chairman.

8. **DISCUSSION OF BOARD PRIORITIES**

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Chairperson Sabou suggested previously submitted items including tethering regulations education campaign, fishing line signs at boat ramps and piers, Animal Services Advisory Board (ASAB) participation in University of Florida (UF) shelter evaluation, and daily dog walk tracking records, as topics for the next meeting.

Member Daniels submitted proposed topics and addressed the need to implement a comprehensive public awareness campaign regarding County regulation on animal tethering.

Discussion ensued regarding there is a state law regarding tethering, awareness about tethering regulations, and social media campaigns regarding tethering.

Michael Chase, Communications Coordinator, shared an overview of his capabilities with the Board.

Ms. Beville directed Members that if they have a campaign for which they would like to raise awareness, they should share the information with the Staff Liaison, who will then share with Manatee County Animal Welfare (MCAW) Leadership and the Board Chair for possible inclusion on the next meeting agenda. If the Board makes a motion recommending action on the item, the Board Chair will present the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) at a regular meeting.

A motion was made by Member Whitmore to act on the recommendation for anti-tethering education campaign. The motion was seconded by Chairperson Sabou and carried 9-0.

11. **SUNSHINE LAW AND PUBLIC RECORDS OVERVIEW**

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Melissa Bomar, Children Services Manager, used a slide presentation to review the Sunshine Law and public records law including members not engaging in discussion outside of meetings, scope of the Sunshine Law, meetings must be open to the public, recording meetings, Florida Statute 286.0114, penalties for violating Sunshine Law, Public Records Act, public records definition, disclosure and retention, providing public records, fees for providing public records, retention schedules approved by the State, and ethics in government.

Discussion ensued regarding public engagement on social media, no third-party communication, and ways of submitting public comment.

12. **ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER**

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Johanna Beville, Program Analyst, utilized a slide presentation as well as a handout reviewing Robert's Rules of Order, guiding principles, important definitions, proceeding during meetings, motion procedures, motion templates, reference guide for making motions, and member actions.

10. **COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

Commissioner Kruse clarified how updates from the Board will happen in the future.

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Caryn Hodge expressed her excitement and optimism regarding the Board's work. She asked questions regarding who will be conducting the University of Florida (UF) study and the process for posting meeting dates and times.

Julie Madison thanked the Board for their time and addressed concerns regarding the heat, recommending that the dogs be monitored. She also shared statistics regarding dog surrenders in Manatee County and the number of stray animal calls that Manatee County Animal Services Officers are unable to respond to.

There being no further public comments, Chairperson Sabou closed public comments.

Discussion ensued regarding routine temperature checks, UF employees are conducting the review, and animal control calls are property based.

14. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place September 9, 2026, 1:00 p.m., in the Manatee County Administrative Building, 1112 Manatee Avenue W, Bradenton, in the 5th Floor Manatee Room.

Member Wetzel addressed the issues regarding stray cats in the county.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairperson Sabou adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Minutes Approved: _____