

**ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 5TH FLOOR MANATEE ROOM
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
AUGUST 12, 2026**

Present were:

Dena Sabou , Chairperson
Melissa Carman
David Daniels
Wendy Gonzales
Kerri Hughes
Ly Bibiana Salmon Wetzel
Carol Whitmore

Absent was:

Katy Demick, Vice-Chairperson
Kim Bruenner

Two seats are vacant.

Also present were:

Johnanna Beville, Program Analyst
George Kruse, Board of County Commissioner
Ellie Levine, Volunteer Coordinator
Dr. Syna Johnson, Chief Veterinarian Shelter Operations
Michael Stollo, Communications Coordinator
Vicki Tessmer, Board Record Supervisor, Clerk of the Circuit Court
Caitlin Dixon, Board Records Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court

1.  Chairperson Sabou called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA/SIGN-IN SHEET

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

 Chairperson Sabou led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL**

 A quorum was declared.

4. **SIGN- IN REMINDER**

 Reminded members to sign in at the entrance.

5. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

 A motion was made by Member Whitmore, seconded by Member Carman, and carried 7-0, with Members Demick and Bruenner absent, to approve the minutes of June 17, 2026.

Member Whitmore requested to have the meeting minutes emailed to the members prior to the meeting, so they have time to review.

 Discussion ensued regarding the efficiency and role of the ASAB, distinction between recommended actions and directing staff, assigning an ASAB spokesperson to address the Board, forwarding recommendations to the Board, appropriate motion verbiage, use of department resources, surrenders account for approximately 10-15 percent of animal intake, hurricane protocol, example of agendas used by other advisory boards, Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR for cats) routinely conducted, focusing on solution-based ideas.

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8. **COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

 George Kruse, County Commissioner, updated the Advisory Board regarding the Board's request for staff to review the updated feasibility study. It is difficult to solicit bids without knowing the specific needs and scope of work. The request to replace the temporary shade structures with permanent ones was not approved by the Board.

9. **AGENDA ITEM REQUEST PROCESS**

 Ms. Beville noted a link will be emailed to each member to submit potential agenda items and the submission deadline will be 10 business days before the next meeting. Each member may submit a maximum of three items; however, submission of an item does not guarantee that it will be placed on the agenda.

 Discussion ensued regarding some agenda request items fall under different departments, the potential for animal welfare to eventually expand, and the possibility of establishing an additional Advisory Board focused on wildlife and farm animals.

10. **REQUESTED AGENDA ITEMS**

Item was discussed during agenda item 7.

11. **APPROVED AGENDA ITEMS**

 Chairperson Sabou reviewed the requested agenda items.

Animal Services Budget

 Ms. Beville provided a handout of the budget for FY26, and explained the FY27 budget has not been approved by Board.

Discussion ensued regarding the copy of the budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), members becoming familiar with budget, and volunteer recruitment data.

 Ellie Levine, Volunteer Coordinator, reported volunteer hours are distributed to volunteers on a monthly basis. Volunteers logged a total of 2,181 hours in July, compared to 1,732 hours in June, and a total of 129 volunteers logged hours in July, compared to 140 in June. Volunteers logged 443 hours at Cat Town in July compared to 378 hours in June. There were 34 Cat Town volunteers in July compared to 37 in June. At Bishop, volunteers logged 948 hours in July, compared to 743 hours in June. There were 94 dog volunteers in July, compared to 84 in June. About 700 hours were logged in July related to training, fostering, offsite events, transporting animals, compared to 611 hours in June. This information is available to the public.



Lena Road - Future Animal Shelter

A motion was made by Member Whitmore, seconded by Chairperson Sabou, and carried 6-1, with Member Daniels voting nay, and Members Demick and Bruenner absent to recommend to the Board to preserve the Lena Road property for a future animal shelter.

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12. **RECOMMENDATION ITEMS TO BOCC**

 Motions were made during previous items.

13. **NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

There was no new or old business.

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

 Shirley O'Brien addressed concerns regarding the prefabricated kennels were not meant to be long term.

 Martha Jacobs expressed support for denial regarding permanent shade structures and noise-absorbing materials and the need for a licensed veterinarian serving on the ASAB who is not employed by the County.

 Laura Lidell shared suggestions on things to improve at Bishop Animal Shelter.

 Julie Madison commented on the need to appropriately fund the county based on the number of residents. Not enough animal control officers for county. Animal facilities need to be safe and functional. There are intake issues occurring across the country.

 Liz van der Laag requested clarification on who is accountable for transitioning the shelter from prefabricated buildings to a permanent shelter.

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

15. **NEXT MEETING**

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

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairperson Sabou adjourned the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

Minutes Approved: _____