

# MEETING MINUTES

**MEETING PURPOSE:** Animal Control Board Meeting

**MEETING DATE** April 29, 2015  
**AND LOCATION:** Zimmerman Center, 1801 Virginia Lane

**ATTENDEES:**  
Animal Control Board Member:  
Delmer Schmidt (Chair), Robert Pumphrey  
Charles Bushey, Jeannette Vieg, Cara Chamberlain

Animal Control Staff:  
Tom Stinchfield, Animal Control Supervisor

**RECORDED BY:** Denise Hice

## I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairperson Del Schmidt called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

Introduction of Tom Stinchfield, the new Animal Control Supervisor who was hired in February, 2014. Replaced Dave Klein who retired in December, 2014.

## II. PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENTS

A citizen commented that she was upset about the article in the Billings Gazette about Yellowstone County's Animal Control Officer. She didn't appreciate knowing that animals were euthanized prior to contacting the owners. She said that one animal control officer for the County is not enough.

The Board Members commented that City Animal Control is different than the County and the City has no control over how the county handles its Animal Control Division. The Board recommended that the citizen take her concerns to the County Commissioners and get on the agenda for their next meeting.

Supervisor Stinchfield commented that the county has hired a new animal control officer.

The Board Members commented that the County's Animal Control Officer used to attend the Animal Control Board Meeting and suggested that

Supervisor Stinchfield invite the County's Animal Control Officer to the next board meeting.

### **III. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **A: HONEY BEES ALLOWED WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS**

Lonnie Larson, President of the Yellowstone Valley Beekeepers Association said he was available for questions regarding his proposed draft to the Animal Control Board. The following discussion took place:

- Enforcement is not possible without the registration of the hive(s).
- Approximately 60,000 bees in each hive and the range of the bees is 2 ½ miles in any direction of the hive.
- The purposed draft is for honey bees only.
- A fee would be imposed by the City. A reasonable charge to register would be the same as for chickens; \$25.00. There are currently 109 chicken permits issued.
- A citizen would have to be registered with the State of Montana first.
- Bee diseases are not transferable to people, only to other hives.
- Bees are considered livestock.
- Pesticides can hurt the hive.
- Fear of bees can cause problems between neighbors. It would be the beekeeper's responsibility to get adjacent neighbors to grant permission for the hive(s). Neighbors would have to show medical proof of allergies.
- There are currently approximately six (6) hives currently in the City of Billings and an unknown number of feral hives (i.e.; hives in old logs).
- Would hives be allowed on top of buildings in a commercial areas?
- If there was a problem with a hive Animal Control would ask the Beekeepers Association to assist with checking the hive(s).

The Animal Control Board commented that they would like to have this issue ready to present to the City Council in the Fall. Mr. Larson said that beekeeping is more than just having a hive in the backyard and volunteered to work with Supervisor Stinchfield on putting together a fact sheet to have ready for City Council.

Cara Chamberlain presented a motion to move forward on the issue.

Robert Pumphrey seconded the motion.

The Animal Control Board voted: Yes – Charles Bushey, Robert Pumphrey, Jeannette Vieg, Cara Chamberlain.

Delmer Schmidt abstained from voting because his wife works for a vendor that sells bee hives.

The motion moved forward. The Board wants the proposed ordinance tweaked, and then sent to them for final comments prior to presenting to the City Council.

Mr. Larson commented that the Beekeepers Association meets at the Library the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm.

**B: DOGS ALLOWED WITHIN CITY PARKS ON A LEASH**

Mark Jarvis with Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands (PRPL) commented that he didn't have any new information to report since the June 16, 2014 meeting. The Board believes that this is an animal control issue so animal control should take the lead; however, a joint group between the Animal Control Board and PRPL Board should be formed. Jeannette Vieg volunteered to represent the Animal Control Board. Mark Jarvis said that Marsha Clausing from the PRPL Board has volunteered to represent PRPL, and Sue Rustler be would the Citizen At Large.

Robert Pumphrey presented a motion to give the joint group 30 days to work on the proposal to allow dogs within city parks on a leash. It will be presented to the Animal Control Board in June and then to the PRPL Board.

Delmer Schmidt seconded the motion.

The Animal Control Board voted unanimously yes.

**IV: NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**V: ADJOURNMENT**

3:05 pm