

# MINUTES & NOTICE OF BOARD ACTION

BOOK 156 PAGE 1423

APPROVED May 3, 1994



## LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

*This document, upon approval in a public meeting by the Board of County Commissioners, serves as official minutes of such meetings as required under the Open Meetings Law, ORS 192.650.*

Pursuant to notice made by mailing agendas to news media, a selected list of jurisdictions and individuals in Lane County, a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held.

Questions should be directed to The Board Office Specialist 3, ext. 4203.

March 29, 1994  
9:00 a.m.

WORK SESSION  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Harris Hall  
Main Floor

Chair Jerry Rust presided with Ellie Dumdi, Steve Cornacchia, and Jack Roberts present. Marie Frazier excused. Sharon Giles, Recording Secretary.

### 1. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Rust announced that, due to time constraints, public comment would be taken out of order for issues not related to animal control.

### #2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jude Craddock, 61 West 31st Avenue, Eugene, described herself as a former foster child, and spoke in favor of the "Grandparents for Grandchildren and Justice" organization. She distributed an article she has written for a book. Craddock urged that children be placed with relatives if at all possible and spoke critically of the state Children's Services Division. (See material on file).

Florence Brown, 24164 Hwy. 36, Cheshire, stated she was angry with Children's Services Division and that the agency denied the rights of interested grandparents in child custody rulings. Brown asked the Board of Commissioners to consider issues related to grandparents' rights. (See material on file).

Mary Regeth, 1010 Clark, Eugene, criticized Children's Services Division for its handling of her granddaughter's case, and advised extreme caution in appointing case workers. (See material on file).

Nancy Falk, 2567 Marcola Road, Springfield, urged that the Board initiate a child foster care program similar to New Zealand's--known as alternative foster care. (See material on file).

Dee Michael, 591 S. 51st Place, Springfield, reported on the mistreatment of a relative child in foster care, citing negligence by the Children's

Services Division. She stressed that placement with relatives is frequently the best option. (See material on file).

Roberts explained that, under HB2004, the County does not automatically take over all Children's Services Division (CSD) functions in Lane County; rather a plan must be devised by July 1, 1995, to indicate which functions will be assumed. Roberts reported progress made in committees assigned to this task, and thanked those present who had contributed public comment.

Warren Weathers, Mayor of Lowell, spoke in support of the City of Lowell's request for County financial assistance under the EDAP program.

Public Comment by those who could not be present throughout the upcoming discussion on animal control issues followed.

Bob Brew, 941 Mill Street, Springfield, stated that his dog came from the Lane County Animal Regulation Authority (LCARA) and he found the agency's procedures to be in the best interest of the animals. Brew requested that the Commissioners not micro manage this issue, but pass along concerns to LCARA.

Lou Sinniger, 1174 Gateway Loop, Springfield, representing the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), spoke on behalf of LCARA employees. Sinniger reminded those assembled that the major focus of LCARA is enforcement, followed by animal welfare, public education, and adoption. Sinniger reported that there are ten animal welfare officers, five office assistants, and two supervisors in LCARA; thus staff meetings are difficult to hold and short because so many officers are in the field. Sinniger recommended more staff meetings and establishing a collaborative consensus model to cover training and administrative issues. (See material on file).

Scott Rohter, 1261 City View, Eugene, criticized LCARA's adoption policies for dogs, noting that each application should be reviewed on its merits. Rohter stated that irresponsible owners are the problem, not the animal. He suggested the agency expand its hours to include more weekend time.

Rust introduced George Russell, Director, Human Resources and Management Services. The following item was taken out of order.

##### 5. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

###### b. DISCUSSION/Review of Animal Adoption Criteria and Procedures at Lane County Animal Regulation Authority.

Russell stated that a packet of materials addressing this item and had been distributed to the Board. (See material on file). Russell reported that the ad hoc Adoption Advisory Committee has reconvened and has prepared a report on adoption and that David Suchart, County Auditor, has begun an audit on the policies, practices and procedures of LCARA department staff.

Roxann Marshall, Clerical Supervisor, reviewed the packet materials with the Board. Marshall reported that the Board's requests which arose during the March 8, 1994 meeting have been addressed including recommendations by the adoption committee that adoption practices be observed at similar facilities. Marshall reported that she visited the Oregon Humane Society in Portland and has used their policy as a model for adoption criteria. Marshall stated that the adoption committee had suggested in-house adoption counselor training sessions and that she has implemented that procedure. Marshall added that this will occur on a scheduled basis to insure consistent quality customer service. Marshall identified Sharon Harmon, Director of Shelter Services, Oregon Humane Society, Portland; and Mert Davis, Director of Greenhill Humane Society, Eugene, who were in attendance to provide comment. Marshall also identified Melissa Price, speaking as the at-large adoption committee member, and Dr. Martha DeWees, veterinary representative of that committee.

Melissa Price recounted the history of the adoption committee, and reported that 17 criteria had been developed to form the adoption policy. Price reported that development of the policy was deliberative and all encompassing.

Dr. Martha DeWees called for unity in working on a solution to this issue, and reported that since a new adoption policy had been in effect since last year, LCARA staff reported that the process has been smoothed, with a major decline in appeals after adoptions. DeWees stated that the biggest concern of the adoption committee was criteria and after a review, the committee agreed to support the current criteria because it is a sound basis for adoption. DeWees stated that the committee felt that current policy is similar to others of a like nature in the state and that a purpose statement had been developed for the adoption process (see material on file).

Continuing, DeWees noted that the goals of the purpose statement include placing as many appropriate pets as possible in nurturing homes, education on humane treatment, and discussing the "outdoor dog" criterion. On the flexibility of adoption criteria, DeWees stated that the committee resolved that an increase in flexibility is necessary, and when adoption is denied a second opinion must be sought. DeWees noted that field officers who deal with animal abuse situations may be less flexible when rotated to public contact positions that involve people who want to adopt animals. DeWees stated that the adoption committee is suggesting a reorientation and sensitization for those officers, and that funding is needed to implement this. On the importance of customer service, DeWees stated that the public needs to feel welcome and that LCARA staff should attend periodic customer service enhancement courses.

Regarding outdoor dog criteria, DeWees reported that the committee will rewrite that definition. DeWees added that in her study of

animal behavior over 30 years, the social requirements of dogs was the chief factor for keeping them indoors, not the weather.

Sharon Harmon, Operations Director, representing the Oregon Humane Society, Portland, stated that Oregon has a tremendous pet overpopulation problem resulting in the destruction of many animals because of lack of good homes. Harmon praised Lane County for reviewing adoption policies. Harmon reported that she has worked with Randy Covey and Roxann Marshall and appreciated their attention and sensitivity to detail. Harmon stated that the adoption policies as written could use updating, and noted that her agency has rewritten its adoption policies to reflect the values of her community. Harmon reiterated DeWees's comments on the need for a social environment for dogs and added that it is often difficult to match the right animal with the right client. Continuing, Harmon stated that it was necessary for officers to be trained in sensitivity, client service, and animal behavior to insure success. Harmon offered the services of the Humane Society staff for that purpose.

Mert Davis, Executive Director, Greenhill Humane Society, stated that his organization and LCARA are distinct agencies, but share many of the same goals and objectives. Davis added that, with the exception of the 24-hour holding period required by LCARA, that agencies policies and criteria are not dissimilar to other animal agencies throughout the country. Davis noted that, as in other agencies, mistakes will be made in adoption. On the subject of dogs kept outdoors, Davis reported that it is difficult to place animals that were not allowed to socialize and remain indoors. He stated that his agency tries to educate the public on the socialization needs of dogs.

Randy Covey, Animal Regulation Supervisor, LCARA, stated that animal control has many parts, including community health and safety, animal welfare, adoptions, euthanasia, education, citations, presentations, public relations and frustrations. Covey declared that there are no easy answers to the problems engendered in animal control, but that his department tries to learn from interaction with the community. Covey stated that the best form of animal control is cooperation between the community and the agency that serves them.

Rust called for questions from the Board which would be answered after a recess.

Roberts posed the following: What assurances would be made that adoption rules would be applied with flexibility and a reasonableness standard? What policy is in place that addresses contacting people placed on a waiting list when animals are euthanized? What is the LCARA customer service model?

Dumdi supported Roberts' question about flexibility. Further, she asked if there is an adequate budget to provide training for staff, and if better follow-up in license renewal would augment that budget. In addition, Dumdi asked if the advisory board could be expanded to include a rural representative.

Cornacchia also supported Roberts' question on flexibility. Continuing, he asked why mixing children with puppies and kittens is discouraged in Lane County by LCARA and Greenhill, while the Humane Society pamphlet expresses no reservations and encourages education. Cornacchia also expressed concern about how hours of operation affect customer service. With regard to a letter sent to him by the Lane County Farm Bureau on changing Lane Code definitions of livestock and pets to agree with a state statute, Cornacchia asked for a response from LCARA on making recommendations.

Dumdi stated that enforcement rules differentiating livestock from pets must be clarified.

Rust reported that a citizen contacted him because she was denied adoption of a pet to accompany her in a professional capacity as a care giver in nursing homes. Rust asked for a response from the agency on that issue. Rust also asked why people who are adopting animals to be watchdogs (not attack dogs) are denied. Rust also asked for LCARA's philosophy on the issue of whether the dog's breed or the intent for its use determines adoption procedure. In regard to Sammy, a dog that was euthanized, Rust asked if the dog's death was necessitated by LCARA policy.

The meeting was recessed at 10:25 a.m. and reconvened at 10:42 a.m.

In response to the questions posed by the Commissioners, Russell stated that each question would be handled by a different respondent. Regarding Dumdi's question about including a rural representative on the adoption committee, Russell noted that Ms. Price and Dr. DeWees are rural residents. He stated he is amenable to expansion of the committee, but cautioned that it not become unwieldy.

Regarding Rust's question about Sammy, Covey reported that the criteria did not mandate his death, but the best decision possible was made with the information available at that time. Covey stated that Sammy could have been adopted and gone to a good home, but regretfully, Animal Control does not always make the right decision. Responding to Dumdi's question regarding the adequacy of the training budget and license follow-up, Covey stated that budget restraints restrict training; and license follow-up was not adequate but new procedures are under study. Dumdi asked about the ongoing collection of license fees and Covey replied that 400-500 reminder notices are mailed out to citizens each month concerning license fees, but that a follow-up program is needed.

On Cornacchia's question about hours of operation, Covey stated that Animal Regulation is open until 5:45 on weekdays and is open on Saturday to provide access during the weekend. Regarding Cornacchia's question on Lane Code changes to the definition of livestock, Covey expressed concern about addressing situations that involve commercial operations vs. pet or domestic animal operations, noting that concern about animal welfare was unique to each situation. Covey added that the Board may need to make a policy decision on involving animal control in livestock operations.

Regarding Rust's question on hunting dogs, Covey replied that the breed of the animal is only considered in regard to the general characteristics of the animal, not to any faculty for hunting. Covey stated that a prospective adopter's intent to use an animal for hunting is not grounds for denial unless the animal will be used strictly for that purpose. On the subject of Sammy, Covey stated that criteria allowed for a decision to be made either way and the decision was made on the best information available--in Sammy's case it was a judgment call. He agreed that LCARA needs to reconsider giving "the benefit of the doubt" to adopters. Covey added that the basis of the adoption program was to find the best possible home for the animal by providing education and information to people who wish to adopt. Rust expressed satisfaction with this answer.

Responding to Roberts' question about flexibility and tracking potential adopters, Marshall stated that flexibility and customer service criteria will be reviewed by all staff and that potential adopters are contacted and provided written information when an appropriate animal is found. (See material on file). Roberts asked if the system in place is adequate, given current resources, and if people coming in to adopt are properly informed about procedure. Marshall replied no, that volunteers serving as greeters would be useful, and that more work is needed with staff. In response to Roberts' question on customer service approach, Marshall stated that the approach of other agencies should be studied and customer skills training should be provided for adoption counselors. Regarding Rust's question on a care giver adopting a pet, Marshall stated that at the time of that request (two years ago), the adoption criteria was not in place and this request was not handled correctly.

Regarding Rust's question about watch dogs, Harmon stated that watch dogs need to be with the owner to be effective, not chained up outside. She added that adoption for this purpose is permitted by her agency [Oregon Humane Society]. Davis added that at his agency [Greenhill] a "watch dog" is defined as an animal that alerts the owner to an intruder's presence, as opposed to a "guard dog" that is chained to one location or left outside all night. Regarding customer service, Davis stated that because of the emotional demands placed on employees, this is a very difficult area, but his agency strives for consistent service. With regard to adopting small animals to homes with small children, Davis reported that his agency

discourages this practice because of concern for the well being of the child. Cornacchia stated that there appears to be a difference in the initial attitude toward the situation, citing differences in criteria applied by Greenhill and LCARA, versus criteria of the Oregon Humane Society. Continuing, Cornacchia stated that it appears to be an approach of enforcement of an ideal vs. public service and education. Davis replied that his agency is trying to encourage placement of the animal in the home for a long term by educating the public on the animal's needs. Cornacchia replied that wording in written material provided by Greenhill and LCARA seems to reflect an enforcement policy. Davis stated that the bottom line for his agency was placing as many healthy adoptable animals in good quality homes as possible.

Rust opened the meeting for further public comment.

Sherry Dobson, 90992 Poodle Creek Rd., Noti, stated that denial of her application to adopt Sammy was the reason why she had brought the matter to the Board and public's attention. Dobson stated that there were four others who were denied adoption of the same animal. Continuing, Dobson stated that on February 8, her husband Rick had filed for adoption of the dog, and that on the next morning Roxann Marshall asked if the Dobsons were still interested in adopting the animal. Further, Dobson stated that on February 14 she talked to George Russell and was told to go before the Board on February 15. Dobson added that she wasn't aware that Sammy had been euthanized until February 18--at which time she called Russell and left a message to return her call. Dobson stated that Russell never returned her call. Dobson recited statistics on animals who have been adopted and euthanized in 1993 at LCARA. Dobson reported that on a Friday afternoon she called Covey, whom, without knowing who she was, explained that Sammy had been destroyed because "the Dobsons no longer wanted him." Dobson stated that this was completely untrue.

Dobson posed questions that Rust stated cannot be answered at the meeting due to time constraints, but will be addressed. The questions were: 1) An explanation of the "contract between the City of Eugene and Lane County Animal re: maintain a goal of at least 30 citations per full officer per month." 2) "After the animals are destroyed, how are their remains disposed of? Are they buried, cremated, or by some other method? And if the answer to that is buried, I'd like the location of it." 3) A wish to "have Roxann clarify the statement she made, which is, we cannot hold onto an animal indefinitely. It is not healthy to the animal."

Dr. Ann Samsell, Director of City of Eugene Spay Neuter Clinic, 30075 LeBleu Road, Eugene, speaking as a private citizen, stated that she has been at her post for over 12 years and noted the difficulty in matching the appropriate animal with the appropriate adopter. She stated that she has observed a tremendous turnover in office employees at LCARA due to "bumping" and a stressful environment.

Samsell listed suggestions for improving the overall function and image of LCARA: 1) The use of trained volunteers for office and kennel areas; 2) Regular staff development seminars; 3) More lenient policies on fostering animals to relieve staff pressure and accommodate special cases; 4) A close examination of goals aligned with an informed direction.

Dr. Katherine Schubert, 30 E 49th Avenue, Eugene, a veterinarian and employee of the City of Eugene Spay Neuter Clinic, speaking as a private citizen, stated that she was concerned about LCARA because of County government's inattention to the mission and management of the agency, which she believes is burdened with conflicting values. She stressed the need for dedicated and committed leadership. Schubert noted that while not all outdoor dogs are neglected, the majority of neglected dogs are outdoor dogs.

Martha Moulton, 83712 Springhill, Pleasant Hill, stated she was an animal lover who could not understand "how are animals are better off dead than adopted."

Sonja Mayer, 86119 Territorial Road, Veneta, stated she had an emotional experience with LCARA four years ago, and has since learned that the agency and its procedures are "about as good as you're going to get for right now." Mayer stated that she was glad to see the Board spending more time on the issue, and that LCARA had admitted to a mistake.

Rick Dobson, 90992 Poodle Creek Rd., Noti, stated that in regard to his adoption of Sammy, he did not specifically ask for a hunting dog or guard dog. Dobson criticized LCARA, stating that the employees have an arrogant attitude, there is lack of communication, and that former employees told him he should lie on the application to get a pet.

Ed Brown, 24164 Hwy. 36, Cheshire, voiced criticism of County government, and stated he has a neighbor who leaves pets alone for days at a time.

Sherry Woods, 81555 Territorial, Lorane, stated she was turned down for Sammy and was not allowed to fill out the paperwork because she does not have a fenced yard. She stated she was mistreated during her visit at LCARA and asked for better customer service.

Marc Paulman, 82858 Rattlesnake Rd., Dexter, spoke in favor of making changes in the definition of livestock for inclusion in Lane Code. (See material on file).

Richard Matney, 3601 Hilyard, Eugene, said that two years ago he had attempted to adopt a cat from LCARA, and 15 hours after he submitted the application, the animal was euthanized. Matney declared that a staff person was against his plan to have the animal declawed, and

that Roxann Marshall had been told to put a hold on the animal and was unaware that it had been euthanized.

Carey Moffett, 26210 Ferguson Road, Junction City, President, Lane County Livestock Association, and First Vice President, Oregon Sheepgrowers Association, 84825 Territorial Road, spoke in support of changes in the definition of livestock for inclusion in Lane Code. Moffett also stated that enforcement officers are not "giving the benefit of the doubt" in deciding what constitutes minimal care, and that there needs to be a change in attitude at LCARA.

Jerome Lodico, General Delivery, Springfield, stated he took 11 toy poodles to LCARA to adopt out, but changed his mind and called back two hours later to take them back. Lodico reported he was shocked to learn that the dogs had been euthanized.

Nick Urhausen, 2858 Warren, Eugene, requested a hearing on enforcement policies because he felt there is no recourse for challenging a ruling, other than to hire an attorney. (See material on file).

Bob Clayton, 2913 Central, Director of Stop Pet Overpopulation Today, stated that the strict adoption policies of LCARA are in the best interests of the animals and the community, and are in line with guidelines put forth by the Humane Society of the United States. Clayton suggested that a task force be formed to review implementation of the policies. He offered the services of his organization.

Catherine Porisch, 28549 Sutherlin Lane, Eugene, stated she was one of the people who attempted to adopt Sammy. Further, she said she made a personal visit and was placed on a backup list at LCARA. She stated she made several calls in regard to the adoption and was told she would be notified, but was never contacted. She added that during her contact with the animal control officer, that person did not seem intent on placing the animal. Porisch reported being humiliated by the process.

Kelly Jacque, 3325 Bardell Avenue, Eugene, stated that she had a positive experience in adopting a dog from LCARA, but that a consistent policy on placing animals must be established.

Rosemary Ziegler, West Eugene, spoke in favor of more restrictive pet adoption policies.

Dave Sweet, Box 3326, Eugene, stated that the hearing process was unfair to people who were there to give comment. On the subject of LCARA, Sweet declared that the agency was in need of a major overhaul. (See material on file).

Jim Bobson, 40237 Reuben Leigh Road, Lowell, stated that lax adoption problems would contribute to the problem of pet overpopulation. Bobson stated the problem lies with irresponsible pet owners.

Kimberly Wingard, 1800 W. 6th, Junction City, stated she owns seven dogs and that more compassion is needed in dealing with animal control issues.

Carol Reed, 2055 Catherine Street, Springfield, read a statement from Rosemary Christiansen, which praised progress made in animal control policy by Lane County. (See material on file).

Rust commented that he agreed with Christiansen's statement, and that Sammy's unfortunate case was a step in the process toward arriving at community standards for animal policies. Rust suggested that Russell return to the Board with findings for another discussion, incorporating the topics and suggestions made at the hearing.

Helen Carroll, 2399 Haig, Eugene, stated she has encountered a negative attitude by LCARA staff, that animals are frequently euthanized before an adequate waiting period has passed, and that a better way should be found to match lost pets with their owners.

Roberts declared that it was important to keep in mind that this is a taxpayer supported public program, with expectations that differ from Greenhill and the Oregon Humane Society. Roberts stated it was important to strive for better customer service, but that the mission of LCARA was to deal with the problem of stray and loose dogs, not find good and meaningful homes. Roberts added that if the people of the county want that service, then a ballot measure process should be undertaken; until then the public is only willing to pay for control of stray and loose dogs. Roberts noted the importance of balancing resources with the interests of the community when animals are in custody and control, and that the County cannot afford to provide service beyond its present limit. Roberts maintained that the adoption rules in place do a good job, and in concert with the community, flexible application can be accomplished.

For purposes of clarification, Dumdi stated that the meeting today was a discussion, not a public hearing. Dumdi observed that the underlying concern expressed was a need for staff training. She stated that the Board was very much aware of the need for training, and that positions in animal control require a sensitive interpretation and application of the rules. With regard to dog policy in rural areas, Dumdi pointed out that dog runs, barn shelters and long chains are considered acceptable.

Cornacchia reported that he had received a great deal of correspondence on the question of whether animal control services should be contracted to Greenhill, and that the majority favored Lane County Animal Regulation as a concept and department. Cornacchia

maintained that this confirmed the need for Lane County Animal Regulation, and concluded that the way the County performs a job is as important as the job itself. Continuing, Cornacchia added that the agency has two functions: enforcement of regulations and adoption services. Cornacchia observed that it is unfortunate that innocent people get caught up in the machinery of enforcement, but there was no need for a complete overhaul of the department or process. Cornacchia declared that customer service and respect to the public are paramount. Cornacchia requested action on the following items: 1) Work returned to the Board on policy as reflected in the Lane Code definition of livestock; 2) An analysis of the needs of the customers with regard to hours of operation; 3) A discussion of licensing and control of breeders, specifically "puppy mills" within the next six months. Cornacchia concurred with Dumdi's definition of rural vs. urban pet situations and added that discussion is needed on the term "fenced yard." On the issue of "watch dogs" and "guard dogs", Cornacchia requested discussion of these terms and the need for a possible policy differentiation. Regarding adoption policy, Cornacchia stated that he wants to focus on encouragement and education first in relation to children and puppies; discouragement second.

Rust agreed with Cornacchia's comment on LCARA's status and policy, and stated that the County Auditor's report on LCARA would be an useful tool. Rust apologized for the perception that people may have been rushed in giving public comment, but noted that the agenda covered many issues. Rust thanked the audience for attending and offering help. Rust stated a mistake had been made with regard to Sammy, and it is his wish that errors in pet adoption be made in adopting out, rather than euthanasia. In regard to questions posed by Dobson and Moffett, Rust directed staff to report back with the answers in writing, specifically the "quota" question.

3. COMMISSIONERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION as per ORS 192.660

None.

5. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

a. Announcements

None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

  
 Sharon Giles, Recording Secretary