

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COLLIER COUNTY  
DOMESTIC ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

Naples, Florida  
April 1, 2024

LET IT BE REMEMBERED that the Collier County Domestic Animal Services Advisory Board, in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 4 p.m. in **REGULAR SESSION** in Administrative Building F, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Collier County Government Center, Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

CHAIRMAN: Jim Rich  
VICE CHAIR: Meredith McLean  
SECRETARY: Sue Law  
VACANT  
Michele Antonia (absent)  
Kelly Hyland  
Dr. Robert March  
Cpl. Sherry Rego

ALSO PRESENT: Marcy Perry, Director, Domestic Animal Services  
Cindy Delgado, Administrative Assistant, DAS  
Dan Rodriguez, Deputy County Manager  
Tanya Williams, County Public Services Department Head  
County Commissioner Burt Saunders  
Amy Patterson, County Manager  
Tim Crotts, Manager, Contractor Licensing

*Any persons in need of the verbatim record of the meeting may request a copy of the audio recording from Domestic Animal Services.*

**I. Call to Order**

**Chairman Rich** called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

**II. Roll Call – Establish a Quorum**

A quorum of six was established.

**III. Pledge of Allegiance**

*[The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.]*

**IV. Approval of the Agenda**

*Secretary Law made a motion to approve the agenda. Vice Chair McLean seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.*

**V. Approval of the Minutes**

**Chairman Rich** said X.

**A. January 16, 2024**

*Vice Chair McLean made a motion to approve the January 16, 2024, meeting minutes. Secretary Law seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.*

**B. February 20, 2024, Workshop**

*Secretary Law made a motion to approve the February 20, 2024, workshop minutes. Cpl. Rego seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.*

**Ms. Williams** said Commissioner Saunders planned to be here tonight but had another meeting that conflicted and he couldn't get out of it. He wants you to know he's here to help and to feel free to reach out to him.

**Ms. Perry** said we're on Zoom now so people can listen to us live.

**Chairman Rich** said if they have any questions, they can type it in and we can answer it during the following meeting. Once we're experts at Zoom, we'll answer live. It's great that more people can view and hear what we're saying.

**VI. Leadership Report [Marcy Perry, DAS Director]**

**Ms. Perry detailed the March report:**

- Animal Control Officers issued 316 violations and responded to 1,075 calls for service.
- Through the combined efforts of field services and shelter operations, we impounded 448 animals and found loving homes for 131.
- We reunited 75 pets with their overjoyed owners and transferred 184 animals to approved pet-placement partners for adoption opportunities.
- We opened up different opportunities for volunteers on Thursdays, when we're doing playgroup sessions. We have 10-15 volunteers coming Thursdays for dog enrichment, which has worked out well.
- Our team is growing. Starting next week, April 8, we'll be welcoming a new veterinarian and a behaviorist. The behaviorist will collaborate closely

with staff and volunteers to develop enrichment programs for the animals, further enhancing their well-being and increasing their chances of finding forever homes.

#### IV. **New Business**

**Chairman Rich** said he met last week with County Manager Amy Patterson and Deputy County Manager Dan Rodriguez, so he amended the agenda to ensure the board receives the latest information. He asked the two to attend today's meeting to provide a report. This isn't a Q&A, but they will provide us with the latest information.

##### A. **Update Report [County Manager Amy Patterson and Deputy County Manager Dan Rodriguez]:**

*Ms. Patterson told the DASAB:*

- We had a great meeting.
- We're very excited to be having the veterinarian joining the team, as well as the behaviorist. It's the first time we've had a behaviorist on staff.
- The budget process is coming up so we may be looking for help from the advisory board.
- Our budget process has kicked off and divisions and departments are working hard on their budgets so they will be asking for expanded positions. DAS has had a shortfall of employees so we're looking to correct that in the upcoming years.
- We're looking at developing a future staffing plan and a way to ask the Board of County Commissioners for additional full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) in increments.
- We are looking at different ways to reduce our reliance on KeyStaff temps to we can bring people into full-time employment as county employees. That's a much better scenario than trying to rely on temporary staff. The temporary staff members will be encouraged to apply for those opportunities as they become available.
- There have been questions about when the proper time to talk to commissioners is, both individually and as the DAS advisory board. Timing-wise, we're moving toward the June workshops, so we should discuss these requests at the next couple of meetings.
- We need to get the advisory board's thoughts and have you understand the staffing plan so we understand each other and are in lockstep when we start delivering messages to the commissioners. We need to make sure that we're in agreement.
- The advocacy piece is something you all do well, as well as members of the public, where you can come in and talk to the board about DAS's needs.
- The budget and capital project planning process are important. The capital project planning process is called the AUIR. The two AUIR meetings and four budget meetings are some of the least attended public meetings. You would think with a \$2 billion budget there would be a lot of interest in that and there would be a lot of people showing up to ask and advocate for things they find important, but shockingly we get very little participation in the budget workshops and the budget hearings and less participation than that in our capital project planning efforts.
- She encourages everyone to participate. The budget workshops are the third

week in June, usually on a Thursday. This year, we expect they'll last longer because we have priority-based budget consultants working with us and they'll be making presentations and working through this, so it will be a more lengthy budget workshop this year.

- Our budget hearings are in September, a bit late when we're talking about resources and FTEs. The opportunity for the public to speak to the Board of County Commissioners about the DAS's needs is in the June time frame.
- We'll talk about it so you can understand where we are with the budget, what we're recommending, and the best way to advocate so the message is clear to the board.
- We're going to be looking to include funding for two budget items. It will be small to start. One is community support. We'll be looking for partners and organizations that want to partner with us to do community spay and neuter and what that will look like if we need to enter into MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding). We have to flesh out those details.
- We hope we can hold a community spay and neuter day once a month or every other month. That would involve leveraging some of our resources and the community leveraging its resources so we can achieve the long-term goal of a strong community spay-neuter and community veterinary program. At some point, we'll find a home for that and that involves a longer range plan about the future of DAS facilities.
- The second piece going into the budget process would be to start saving for an advanced fund for a future DAS facility in the east due to the growth and sheer size of eastern Collier County, Golden Gate Estates, Immokalee and the Rural Lands.
- Having a second location in the eastern lands is imperative. It will stop us from having to bring animals from the east to the west. We also need a better situation for our livestock. Davis Boulevard is not ideal. My horse would probably wreck the entire facility within a short time. It's a beautiful little barn, but if there are more than a couple of animals, it becomes an unworkable situation. We need to think about something geared toward livestock and other animals, not cats and dogs.
- That would give us the opportunity to repurpose the Davis Boulevard facility, creating better parking, maybe adding play areas or doing something with an additional building, etc. We need to look at how we can maximize that facility and find a permanent home, maybe in two locations – one for a community spay and neuter center and another for community veterinary services.
- Saving up what we can yearly gets us moving toward that goal.
- We own about 1,000 acres of property near Ave Maria that may be a good location for a future facility. We'll keep our options open.
- She'll ask Marcy when the DASAB's next meetings will be and we'll make sure to get a consolidated message moving forward on those budget asks and the ways you can participate in the budget process.

***Mr. Rodriguez told the DASAB:***

- A lot has been going on at DAS, certainly the last six months.
- Thanks to DAS staff, employees, Marcy and all our team members who work there daily. It's one of the few facilities open seven days a week and they take volumes of walk-ins, not only just for questions and answers

about operations, licensing and other issues, but emergency calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week for animals that are injured, hurt or are strays. That takes a lot of work, so kudos to DAS employees.

- DAS has great momentum now. There was an evaluation period over the past six months to a year where the county manager wanted to look at the operations, see what DAS does, and break down all aspects – from where we get animals from, how they're evaluated and the decision to place them into fostering or a return to owners.
- What you're seeing is more attention put in certain areas that need attention and now we can evaluate the resources that are needed. We had a good idea two years ago, but now we have the information and numbers to back it up.
- With the new veterinarian, we now have two veterinarians. We're going to continue to grow resources as needed, but the big issue was we no longer want DAS to be a dumping ground where everybody dumps their animals and walks away.
- Marcy and the team are criticized because they try to get some animals to stay with their owners so they can help place animals. If they're truly a pet owner and believe in their animal, that's where that starts – helping us find a home for the animal, not only with owned animals, but with strays.
- The fosterers and volunteers do tremendous work donating hours for animal care. We don't take that for granted. We believe in what they're doing and appreciate it because it saves hours of staff time and provides better one-on-one animal care.
- He took a tour in Immokalee with Tom Kepp, who showed him some of the problem areas. Amy will tell you about Code Enforcement and the future plans. We're going to put many resources into enforcement and education in the field, especially in eastern Collier County and Immokalee, where we need it most.
- The Spay and Neuter Community Plan is a great idea. Tom showed me his wonderful facility, the mobile clinic that SNIP Collier bought and funds. There may be opportunities in the future with our veterinarian and their resources that would allow us to hold spay days in Immokalee or eastern Collier County.
- Tanya and the county manager spent a lot of time with Humane Society Naples, which has opportunities there with the high-volume spay-and-neuter vet they hired several months ago. It involves pulling everybody together and capitalizing on resources.
- He toured a community cat fostering clinic off Rock Road with Ewa to see the work they do trapping strays and getting them spayed and neutered. You can see they need resources and help. The county may have an opportunity to do that with the spay and neuter program. We can provide some veterinary care and they can provide trapping resources, bring animals in and take them away and foster community cats. That's where the challenge is.
- The DAS facility cannot hold an unlimited number of animals and we don't want it to, so if we can work together as a group and maybe set up a subcommittee on the spay and neuter community program, it would help to formalize and start that once our new vet is situated.
- He saw Jim Rich and his team in action, with 41 cats getting spayed and neutered and Jim funded the vet, materials and equipment. That says a lot.

- If we can maximize the county facility's potential in the future and partner with people like Jim Rich, Tom Kepp and others like SNIP Collier or the Humane Society, that's how we're going to go after the big demand out there and eventually get control of the population so we can move into many other programs.

***Ms. Patterson told the DASAB:***

- We've been talking about the transition of the Animal Control Officers to Code Enforcement and over the last several months, the teams worked closely together to understand the operations, what we will and won't be doing and how it can be a seamless transition.
- We know that any time we embark on change, there are unintended consequences and we're committed to working through that. We're piecing together the last pieces of our administrative requirements for the turnover of Animal Control Officers to Code Enforcement. Some minor language tweaks are needed to ensure that when Code Enforcement takes on the responsibility of writing citations, we have the legal authority in place so it holds up. That will be the final piece. we anticipate this change within the next month or 1½ months.
- Along with DAS budget requests, there will be requests for additional Code Enforcement Officers this year. She's working through the numbers, but that will give us the opportunity to get out in the community in a different way, allowing Code Enforcement and Animal Control Officers to cross-train and to go after the root of what's going on out there with animals that come into DAS.
- We need to get out and educate people about animal care and housing and go after code violations that allow people to house animals improperly. Just taking the animal doesn't stop them from getting another the next day. We could help people secure fences and ensure they have proper housing for animals, which is a step in the right direction.
- The strength of Code Enforcement on building and other issues will be a huge win.
- She will provide an update and information on FTE requests for Code Enforcement at another meeting because it's a positive step for animal control.

**Chairman Rich** thanked them for the updates.

**B. Review of Critical Needs List [Chairman Rich]**

**Chairman Rich** said at the last meeting, he asked Ms. Williams to take the lead in listing the board's recommendations about the needs and improvements for DAS. He asked her to compile the list to discuss at this meeting but we never received that list, so he went through the minutes from the last meeting. He reviewed everything board members brought up and made a list.

*[The chairman passed out the list.]*

***Chairman Rich told the DASAB:***

- Please look at the list and make sure your recommendations are listed. If there's anything you want to add or correct, please let Cindy know within

the next two weeks so we can have a list we can work on.

- He'll ask Marcy to go through the list in two weeks and have her prioritize what she feels are the most important things we need to work on as a group or by talking individually with county commissioners. It's time this group has things to work on to make a difference and be active. This is a good start.
- Three months is too long in between meetings but we haven't had anything substantial enough to warrant a meeting. This will keep us busy for some time. He hopes we can add to this list in the future and have a workshop as soon as possible.
- One issue is that terms are expiring next week, such as Meredith's, and Dr. March will not be with us. The candidates we vote on now must be approved by county commissioners. Depending on when the BCC approves the new board, then we can have a meeting, possibly May or early June.
- Once approved, Marcy or Cindy will send board members available dates for a meeting so we can review the priority list and work on it.

**Action Item: Marcy will go through the list and make a list of the priorities for the DASAB to work on.**

**Cpl. Rego** asked if the DASAB could have more than one workshop.  
**Chairman Rich** said absolutely.

**Cpl. Rego** said this is important because we only have until June to put something together for the BCC. We may need a couple of workshops to brainstorm for the BCC's budgeting hearings.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

- The budget workshops are in September and it's important that DASAB members attend, if possible, with the priority list.
- We're not going to get everything we push for on our list, but if we focus on the staffing plan and getting full-time employees, we can write something for commissioners in June. September is when they're going to really look at it.
- The two meetings before the BCC budget workshop are Thursday, June 20, and Friday, June 21. The meeting starts on a Thursday and continues Friday if there's a spillover, which we anticipate.
- For the DASAB, two dates in May are available to hold 4 p.m. workshops in BCC chambers, Wednesday, May 1, and Monday, May 6.
- If the BCC hasn't voted on our members yet, a workshop doesn't require a quorum. We also could allow people to participate on Zoom.
- The other dates for possible workshops are Mondays, June 3 and June 10. Marcy can send an email and DASAB members can let us know the best dates so we can reserve the room. That would get the DASAB two meetings before the BCC June 20<sup>th</sup> workshop.
- If we need a third meeting, we can coordinate something.

**Action Item: Marcy or Cindy will send board members available dates for possible workshops.**

**C. Terms Expiring April 13, 2024**

***Chairman Rich told the DASAB:***

- Terms expire April 13 so we held a meeting tonight because we can't wait for the terms of Dr. March, Meredith and Sue to expire or they wouldn't be eligible to vote.
- In past years, we've always done it a week earlier.
- We have three positions expiring. One is a veterinarian and we don't have a replacement for Dr. March. No one will ever replace you, but if you can help us find someone, it would be beneficial. (Dr. March said several people are considering it.)

**Vice Chair McLean** asked if it can be a vet tech.

**Chairman Rich** said yes it can. He noted that Vice Chair McLean's chair can only be held by a Humane Society employee.

***Chairman Rich nominated Meredith McLean for reappointment to the DASAB and asked for a show of hands to vote. The vote was unanimous, 6-0, and Vice Chair McLean was reappointed.***

**Chairman Rich** said we aren't voting on the vet position tonight. The other position is an at-large position and there are three applications, Sue Law, who would like to stay on the board, Tracy Duhaney and Lori Harris.

***Secretary Law told the DASAB:***

- Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the board this past term. The time spent has been eye-opening and offered her better insight into both sides of the story.
- She started with the new administration under Director Marcy Perry and was determined to give the support needed to make it a success for the animals' sake. She's seen compassion and empathy be the standard at DAS now, rather than the exception.
- She's the newest member of the board without prior board experience or public speaking experience.
- During her time on the board, she's stayed busy daily, advocating for lost pets and Domestic Animal Services.
- She's made suggestions that have been implemented and a few that were never considered, but she will keep on trying.
- There are many different rescue areas. Her area of interest is reuniting lost pets with their families. She speaks daily with DAS officers and staff, arranging for strays to be picked up, and she's out in the field scanning for pets to help them get home.
- She's met with sheriff's deputies to locate and return stolen pets and speaks daily with pet owners and finders, advising them what to do.
- For the past 11 years, she's written a weekly lost pet article for the *Naples Daily News* that showcases local lost-and-found pets.
- She feels she has the most experience and a better idea than other candidates about what goes on with the county's lost and found pets. She'd like the opportunity to help things move forward in a positive way.

**Chairman Rich** asked if there were any questions for Sue; there were none.



***Tracy Duhaney told the DASAB:***

- She's been a county resident for 12 years, loves DAS's mission and what DAS provides to the community.
- She agrees with everything Amy Patterson said.
- She's an animal advocate and like Sue, she's working on public speaking.
- She loves wildlife conservation, from local to international and Africa.
- She advocates on behalf of animals so they're not taken advantage of or held for wildlife trade.
- She recognizes and respects animals' value within the community and households.
- She'd love the opportunity to join the board.
- Her expertise as a business strategist and culture curator within businesses and the community is valuable and would bring a different perspective to the board as we move forward with Collier County's next 100 years.

***During questioning by Chairman Rich, the following points were made:***

- She hasn't served on county boards, but she's on the American Heart Association board, and is the chairperson for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee for Leadership Collier under the chamber of commerce.
- She's not affiliated with any local animal rescue groups.
- If she were elected, she'd consider the growth within the county and what benefits animals and owners.
- The loss of a pet, surrender or otherwise, has an impact on ownership and the community.
- She'd bring a new perspective and would look at all the initiatives underway to analyze them as a collective collaboration.

***Lori Harris told the DASAB:***

- She worked for Bradstreet Corporation and finished her career with Nielsen Media Research, the TV ratings company.
- She was able to retire young and after her husband retired, we lived on our boat for six months a year and loved it. That prompted her to join the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary to give back to her country.
- Then she became a licensed captain, a staff officer and an instructor. She's often stopped at Publix by people who recognize her as the boating class teacher. They thank the auxiliary for teaching them on waters around Marco Island.
- She's been a DAS volunteer since 2016. It's the best job she's ever had. She wrote an article about that for Commissioner Fiala that was published in the *Coastal Breeze*.
- She's the adoptions coordinator for Guardians of Florida Animal Rescue. We do a lot of background checks before placing an animal in a home. Sometimes they say they own their home and they don't. It's been very rewarding ensuring the right animal goes to the right home.
- At DAS, if it's a 2-year-old dog that's very active and 80 pounds, we want to ensure there's a fenced yard, but we can't do background checks. Unfortunately, that leads to a lot of dogs being returned to the shelter,

which is sad. Sometimes it's not a good fit.

- On Marco Island, we have a lost pet recovery team for visitors and residents. We do our best to find a dog, return it to its owner, rather than DAS.
- She's a church member and loves that, especially the beach sunrise service.
- She'd like to join the advisory board to help DAS further. There's a representative from Humane Society and For the Love of Cats. They should consider a DAS volunteer. She'd like to be the volunteer representative.
- Together we can continue to educate the public about the shelter.
- When she tells people about the county shelter, they think it's the Humane Society on Airport Road and she has to correct them and tell them DAS is funded by taxpayer dollars and does spays, neuters and vaccines.
- Getting a TNR program continued with local organizations would be amazing. We can collaborate with the community and get everybody together to keep animals out of the shelter.
- She's overjoyed about DAS's progress. The 1-4 p.m. Thursday enrichment sessions have been amazing. There's a play group with designated dogs and the rest of us take the other dogs out and get them out of the kennels. It's an amazing team effort.
- She loves going to DAS. It's amazing having Gabe from the Humane Society coming in and looking at policies and procedures to get everybody on staff properly trained.
- Working with Code Enforcement will provide better coordination in the field and keep animals out of the shelter.
- She's thrilled about the upcoming building renovations, the addition of the new staff, and hearing about a behaviorist joining DAS. She looks forward to getting more training on to train dogs. She once learned at DAS and wanted to take all the animals home, but later learned she can't rescue them all.
- If they're trained to sit and offer their paw, they get adopted more quickly. She'd be happy to help train dogs and help in any way possible.
- DAS is an amazing place to be. The staff is amazing, although they're limited. As volunteers, we do everything we can to help staff.

**Secretary Law** told Ms. Harris that she's also a volunteer at DAS. She hasn't been walking the bigger dogs, but spearheads the bed drives, toy drives, whatever they need.

**Ms. Harris** said that's awesome and she wasn't aware she was a volunteer.

**Secretary Law** asked if she volunteered anywhere locally.

**Ms. Harris** said Guardians of Florida.

**Secretary Law** asked if she volunteers for SNIP.

**Ms. Harris** said no, but she delivers food to them. She has a good connection at Petsense on Marco Island and whenever their food is expiring, the manager gives her carloads of food, so she calls Tom to see what he needs for his fosterers.

**Secretary Law** said she's asking because at the meeting before the last one, when she left the meeting, she was attacked by Tom and some groupies and you were with them.

**Ms. Harris** said Tom's a friend.

**Secretary Law** said she was screamed at all the way out to her car.

**Ms. Harris** asked what she meant by attacked. They asked you a few questions.

**Secretary Law** said they screamed at her all the way to her car.

**Ms. Harris** said she's sorry. She was unaware of that.

**Secretary Law** said we requested the videotape.

**Chairman Rich** asked her what changes she'd make to the board if she were elected.

**Ms. Harris** said she'd ensure that meetings are held monthly. She'd love to participate in workshops and ensure there was a vet on staff, which is important. Do they have to have a vet on the board. Would a vet tech be sufficient?

**Chairman Rich** said yes. They want diversity on the board, different opinions and perspectives.

**Chairman Rich** asked if she believes she could be a team player and play within the rules as established by the Board of County Commissioners. He noted that she spoke before the Board of County Commissioners, called the DASAB a dysfunctional board and requested that the commissioners determine our candidate selection rather than accepting our recommendation.

**Ms. Harris** said that's correct.

**Chairman Rich** said that doesn't seem like being a team player. We don't agree on a lot of things and that's great because if everyone agreed, there would be no diversity. But we respect each other's opinions and whether we get loud, what you see is what you get. There's a lot of transparency. This didn't seem like it was transparent. He spent a lot of time with you on the phone and told you exactly how DASAB operates, but that didn't satisfy you and you felt the need to go to the commissioners.

**Ms. Harris** said no, you answered all my questions and she appreciated that. She just needed to speak to the commissioners. Going from 12 meetings a year to four means you don't have anything to do. That's dysfunctional.

**Chairman Rich** said it's not dysfunctional. It means that so much is being done already within DAS, instead of past years where this board had to do everything. There wasn't as much to meet about. Now we have a lot of issue to meet about.

**Ms. Harris** said she's overjoyed at the direction DAS is going and would love to be part of the team to help guide that.

**Chairman Rich** said that will be up to our votes here and thanked everyone for coming.

**Susie Mehar** asked to speak in favor of a candidate, Sue. We were allowed to speak in favor of the candidates when we met at DAS.

**Chairman Rich** said that wasn't part of the process.

**Ms. McLean** asked if they could discuss the candidates. She wants to think about moving forward before we vote. We talked a bit last time about changing and she's

staying on the board, so she's probably the last person who should say this, but her position is that there are benefits in rotating new people and perspectives onto the board. She wants to consider that to ensure the board reflects our community.

**Chairman Rich** agreed and remembers she pointed out that he's been on this board a long time, and maybe it was time to go. But he probably brings more to this board than most of you. He spends hours and hours on issues and realized that we didn't have the paperwork that we should have had. She's been on this board for two years and he respects her being on the board and what she's brought to the board during that time. You're one of our newest members. But you're correct, sometimes new blood does help. Any other discussion?

**Ms. Hyland** agreed, saying sometimes a different perspective from others isn't a bad thing. Why don't we have DAS volunteer on the board? We're trying to find vets and we have someone from the Humane Society, we have someone from the Sheriff's Office. This is a DAS advisory board and if someone works inside within DAS who can bring up issues we don't see because we're not there daily, that would be a good thing.

**Secretary Law** noted that if they were an employee, they may not feel free to speak without worrying about their job. She noted that she's a DAS volunteer.

**Ms. Hyland** said that people who see issues should not fear bringing those to light.

**Chairman Rich** said the county manager mentioned that issue at the last meeting. This has nothing to do with what we're talking about now. If you feel that Lori is more qualified, then you should vote for her.

**Ms. Hyland** suggested that the makeup of the DASAB could be changed.

**Chairman Rich** said it can't be changed. Our county manager mentioned that at the last meeting. Because of diversity, that's the way the board is set up. It's not going to change and they made it very clear.

**Secretary Law** said Kelly should look at the ordinance about the composition of the DAS board. You should know what's written.

**Chairman Rich** said Ms. Hyland can take that up with the county commissioners and try to change that law if you want. But right now, that's law.

***Dr. March made a motion to nominate Sue Law for another four-year term.***

***Chairman Rich seconded it. The motion passed 5-1; Ms. Hyland voted nay.***

*[Ms. Front contended Sue shouldn't vote for herself and was told that the rules allow board members to vote for themselves.]*

**Chairman Rich** apologized to those who applied, adding that another position will open next year.

## **VIII. Public Comments**

**Chairman Rich** reminded everyone that they have three minutes to speak and they will be timed.

***Ms. Mehas told the DASAB:***

- Congratulations to Sue. Nobody, besides Jim Rich and Sue Law, is in that facility more daily, making a difference behind the scenes.
- She saw on Facebook that one of our long-time dogs, possibly Brody, a black dog, is getting adopted out-of-state. How do you know that's not a dog fighter in Ohio? She messaged Jane Camarena and she said she'd tell me later, so she's came tonight to find out.
- Did somebody go to their front door? She's thrilled he's getting adopted because he's been there three years but how do you know the adopter isn't a Charlie Manson?

**Secretary Law** said that with Jane in charge, you can bet she's checked them out thoroughly. She connects with people out-of-state and drives dogs with skin conditions up north so they're adopted by families and won't be in that element anymore where their skin is a mess. Jane is on [www.BarkItUp.org](http://www.BarkItUp.org) and would definitely check it out.

**Ms. Mehas** thanked her and asked when DAS will be able to start using the big money that was allocated to renovate, fix up and revamp the shelter?

***Ms. Williams answered:***

- The money is currently being spent. We are in the middle of the surtax project for the rehabilitation of the existing facility.
- Most of what's being done now are things you can't see, the infrastructure that we must get in place before we can convert temporary air-conditioning units into permanent air-conditioning units.
- The whole facility has been painted, so the cosmetic part is complete.
- The next step is working with Marcy and the project manager to identify how to strategically shut down buildings and move animals out. It has to be a phased project and will take time.
- We've been working on it and there will be substantial movement forward in the coming months. She could share the project management plan with the board to get that information out.
- The infrastructure piece is currently being done so that when we get ready to start phasing in the buildings, everything will be in place. The first piece is Building 2, which includes the sally port and several other areas.
- Then we'll move into outlying kennels and remodel the lobby. We've been doing a lot of back-end work.

***Action Item: Ms. Williams will share the DAS project management plan with the DASAB.***

**Ms. Mehas** said she's glad to hear that and happy the money is being spent. She asked that she not be referred to as Ms. Mehas, of the Cat Alliance, in the minutes. She's speaking for herself. She also wants to thank Sherry for speaking a long time at the last meeting about law enforcement, what you can and can't do about going on properties, etc. She won't disclose the fences she climbed, the cattle guards and mobile homes. What Sherry said was clear, concise and easy to understand.

*[Ms. Front was asked to move to the speaker podium and not use the county staff's podium.]*

***Ewa Front told the DASAB:***

- She's a county resident and wants to discuss the new DAS policy of wait-listing pet owners who need to surrender their pets. Regardless of how well intended the policy is, it contributes to homeless, free-roaming pets in the community.
- It may be meant to promote responsible ownership and keep the shelter empty, but DAS's policy of waitlisting pet owners is harmful to our community in two ways. No. 1, people are releasing their pets into the community without regard to the animal suffering. No. 2, the pets are further breeding, adding to the county's huge overpopulation of unowned pets.
- She knows of two recent cases. Max Madden's neighbor left two cats behind and he was trying to contact DAS and was told the wait time for surrender is two months. *[Secretary Law said she suggested Ewa call Marcy about it.]*
- In another case, a lady with cancer couldn't bring her cats when she went for treatment at Paradise Garden and DAS postponed her for two months.
- This is a disservice to our community. Domestic Animal Services is here to serve my community and not refuse to help a Good Samaritan or people going through cancer treatment.
- Those cases are why DAS is in this community. If someone is irresponsible, they will dump their pets, regardless of whether they have to wait one day, seven days or two weeks.
- She's asking for an immediate suspension of this irrational approach.
- A man said he called DAS on February 14 and was told he could bring in the cats in on April 16.

***Darlene Santos told the DASAB:***

- She wants to get more involved. She's been fostering in the Naples area since 2016 and loves it.
- She couldn't believe DAS didn't have a vet and wants to learn how DAS works but she's been afraid to go there because she felt her heart would get broken.
- She talked with Marcy about the vet and learned how difficult it is to find one. She couldn't believe they might be looking out of the country.
- She's here to learn and also is interested in TNR.
- She's uncertain of what the truth is because she's heard many stories and wants to help animals.
- She heard some animals may need transportation to get home because the owners can't get to DAS to pick up pets so some pets weren't going back to their owners. That concerns her.
- She's interested in change. It's great we take turns and rotate on the board. Change is good. Try to give new people a chance to try it out.
- She's learned a lot during the last couple of meetings and now she's working to free her Tuesdays to go to Board of County Commissioners meetings and learn.

**Chairman Rich** asked if she's fostering cats or kittens.

**Ms. Santos** said both and she's advanced into fostering dogs.

**Chairman Rich** said if she needs help with fostering or spaying and neutering cats, she can talk to him.

**Ms. Santos** said she knows families who need help and she has helped a family get an animal get spayed.

**Chairman Rich** said he and For the Love of Cats can help out.

## **IX. Advisory Board Member Comments**

### ***Dr. March told the DASAB:***

- Good luck to all of you. Continue doing the good work you're doing. You're all a big part of helping animals.
- Make sure you take care of Marcy. She's doing a great job. He's had many discussions with her. She wouldn't be easy to replace.
- She knows he's here to help. It doesn't matter if he's not on the advisory board, he's here as a vet to help. The same applies if there are ever any questions or anything you need from me. You know where to find me.

**Chairman Rich** thanked him for his service to DAS, the board and for everything else you do for the animal community.

### ***Vice Chair McLean thanked Dr. March for his service and told the DASAB:***

- Sometimes when the public speaks, there might be questions and it's good if we don't interact with them while they're talking. She agrees with the three-minute rule.
- It's often hard to understand the animal welfare field's best practices. It's not uncommon to have a waitlist or to manage or schedule intakes to ensure animals in the facility's care are taken care of properly. If we have 300 animals showing up in a week, we can't care for them because it's not feasible.
- It's important to schedule intakes to ensure animals' health is cared for and to ensure the facility is not overwhelmed with animals. Everybody here has a waitlist. We don't want to and we don't want to say no, but a lot of times we're prioritizing those red flags, whether it's health or immediate.
- There have been animals where they felt like the animal's safety was not the best and they didn't take that animal right away. As frustrating as that is, that's the best practice in the industry. It's to ensure the welfare of the animal is taken care of.
- She's glad to hear DAS will be focusing on community spay and neuter and potentially long-term veterinary programs for our community. We need to start servicing the community. She'll be happy to give her input.
- She's been in the animal welfare industry a long time, is considered a leader in this community and participates in many different things. When she speaks, it's to serve the broader community. It's nothing personal to this team. She appreciates being here and is glad to work with all of you.

### ***Secretary Law told the DASAB:***

- Thank you for your vote of confidence.
- She hates to see Dr. March go but knows he's a phone call away for anything we need.
- She was excited to meet Amy today and hear about the future plans. We've

got a lot to look forward to, a lot to work on and she looks forward to being a part of it.

***Cpl. Rego told the DASAB:***

- We're sorry to see Dr. March go. Thank you for everything you do and for being a phone call away. We appreciate you.
- She thanked Amy for her wealth of knowledge. We can come up with a lot of things and she's glad others agree we should do a few workshops. We can get good discussions in to see how we can help get full-time employees to help with everything, community outreach, Code Enforcement, enforcement, etc.
- She's looking forward to the next two months to see where we go from there.

***Ms. Hyland told the DASAB:***

- Thank you Dr. March for being here. You're a great help to the community and she appreciates it. She's worked with you in the past and knows you're just a phone call away.
- She hopes that moving forward we can get some questions answered that we had at the last meeting about Code Enforcement and DAS working together and how that will work.
- She agrees with what Ewa said about timing. That's a difficult situation and she understand DAS needs room to take animals in, but we need to work on limiting the number of animals that come in so that when there's a dire need, someone can get the help they need and not wait.
- Their only option is to turn the animal onto the street, which creates more of a problem.
- All board members are here for a reason. People handle situations differently, personalities are different and everybody may not get along, but it isn't personal. People should put that aside and support the mission. That's how we're going to progress and work as a team. Sometimes that gets lost here, so hopefully we have good things to come and we'll see what happens.

***Chairman Rich told the DASAB:***

- He's very optimistic about our future here.
- We're going to work hard here to get these things done and we'll do what's needed to help, but it's frustrating when we have ideas and nothing happens.
- The \$400 machine (to take a ticket while waiting in the DAS lobby) that was on sale for \$200, why does it take so long for a simple implementation like that? It would solve many problems. It's frustrating for us to be putting our time in only to see that nothing happens.

***Ms. Williams responded:***

- She agrees but part of the wait involves procurement. The other part is ensuring it's carried out. She takes responsibility.
- She doesn't have an answer to why the ticketing system isn't in place yet but will find out after this meeting. If it's a procurement issue, we'll work through procurement and get that resolved. If it wasn't a procurement issue, and it's a staff failure, that will be addressed.



***Chairman Rich responded:***

- It's a matter of communication. We aren't always going to like the answers, just like we don't always like each other's answers, but we're open. We express our feelings sometimes more than people would like but they are truthful.
- If there are problems, please communicate with us more. It makes our job much easier.

**X. Adjourn**

**Next Workshop: 4 p.m. May 20, 2024**

**Administrative Building F, 3rd Floor**

**Collier County Government Center**

**There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was concluded at 5:18 p.m.**

**Collier County Domestic Animal Services**

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**James Rich, Chairman**

These minutes were approved by the Committee/Chairman on \_\_\_\_\_,  
(check one) as presented \_\_\_\_\_, or as amended \_\_\_\_\_.