

**IN-PERSON MEETING OF THE
LOUISIANA ANIMAL CONTROL ADVISORY TASK FORCE**

**DECEMBER 6, 2023, 10:00 A.M.
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
VETERANS' MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
5825 FLORIDA BOULEVARD
BATON ROUGE, LA 70806**

CALL TO ORDER

The hearing was called to order by Dr. Brent Robbins at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Ashley Prejean, D.V.M.

Members present: Robbie Averett; Shelley Fontenot, D.V.M.; Brent Robbins, D.V.M.; Chalyn Fayard, D.V.M.; and Joe Stark, D.V.M.

Members absent: Chip Fitz and Henry Wimberly

A quorum was present.

Other LDAF employees present: Dr. Ashley Prejean, D.V.M.; Michelle Ribera, Assistant Commissioner; Amy McInnis, General Counsel; Todd Parker, Confidential Assistant

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Dr. Robbins made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2022, meeting. The meeting was seconded by Dr. Fayard and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

The Task Force discussed the Spay-Neuter program in response to Hurricane Ida and asked whether any progress had been made. There was mention of looking into the process of that program and to get another one started.

Amy McInnis, General Counsel for LDAF, reminded the task force that it was statutorily formed as an advisory body only and that the task force does not have any enforcement or regulatory authority. The task force does not have any authority in animal cruelty cases. The task force may promulgate rules and regulations, which parishes and municipalities may choose to adopt or not.

An update was provided on each item addressed at the last meeting. Animal control facilities still had the same common deficiencies on inspections this year. The search for unregistered facilities is ongoing. Updates to the LACATF website are ongoing. The ASPCA bumper pull trailer is awaiting a generator and will be completed soon. One of our mobile pet trailers was sent in response to the recent wildfires.

NEW BUSINESS

All animal control inspections for the year have been completed or are scheduled. The task force discussed the reasons that some of the shelters were closed, and these closures are typically from lack of personnel, funds, and lack of facilities. Many parishes do not have trained animal control officers. The task force discussed whether LACATF could make a recommendation to parish shelters to ensure proper training such as animal handling. ASV guidelines as a tool for shelters to use to better their facilities and training of individuals was discussed. How can the shelters be held accountable to be sure that the goal of animal care and welfare is achieved? The regulation states that the shelter personnel 'shall' annually attend training and specified which training is necessary. Dr. Prejean assists individuals that work in shelters that have no training by providing free training offered by NGOs and personal knowledge at the annual inspections. Data for who is getting training at these shelters needs to be captured on the self-assessment or by using the inspections. LACCA could also potentially provide some data regarding animal control training.

The task force discussed with LSART and the ASPCA about a possible regional pre-storm evacuation center/overflow center for coastal parish animal control facilities. This would free up space and staff at the animal control for the facilities to be able to aid their parish with household pets and strays. There would need to be a board or committee to help determine which parish could use the evacuation center. Criteria will need to be met for the parishes that will be able to use the shelter. The inmates would need to be trained. It would also allow for a centralized place for health certificates for transport. The task force discussed on availability of post-storm health certificates. The amount of money that ASPCA could provide has not been decided. ASPCA runs very efficient shelter operations and would likely need to be the entity that handles the administrative duties. The prison could also use the facility for different operations such as regular animal control, training for dogs, training for inmates.

Areas in which LDAF's minimum standards for animal shelters were lacking oversight as compared to the ASV guidelines was discussed. The unacceptable practices should be avoided. In our regulations, we have tethering as an acceptable practice which should be changed in our regulations. Overall, the consensus from the board was to provide this assessment to each shelter. Task force discussed regarding how to get these facilities to comply with the ASV guidelines and how the board can help make changes in these shelters.

The task force discussed shelter workers' lack of willingness to comply and the lack of local veterinarians willing to assist the shelters. LACATF can help in identifying shelters in need of veterinary aid and reaching out to veterinarians possibly through LVMA at the LVMA CE conference. The task force further discussed CE for veterinarians and the disapproval of the LBVM.

Also discussed was the disconnect between government officials and animal control. Scheduling in-person meetings with the parish officials with someone from the task force or the providing veterinarian was discussed. The task force discussed the letter regarding annual inspections that is sent to government officials as a potential aid to bridging the disconnect. Finding a list of veterinarians that would assist their local shelters would be helpful. The task force discussed the lack of enforcement ability of the board continued. Keep in mind that the LACATF board has assisted shelters and has moved forward, it just takes time.

The task force discussed educational opportunities for ACOs.

The task force discussed requesting local government funding opportunities. There may have been some legislative funding for animal facilities that needs to be investigated.

The task force discussed a comprehensive list of out of state rescues and their varying expensive requirements.

Task force members were reminded to complete their required annual ethics training and sexual harassment training.

The task force discussed board nominations for LACCA and LVMA, but not make any nominations.

The task force decided to meet twice yearly. No formal motion was made.

Motion: Dr. Fontenot made a motion to enhance our current self-assessment guidelines; Dr. Fayard seconded; and motion passed unanimously.

SET NEXT HEARING DATE

TBD- Possibly June 2024

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Ms. Averett moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Dr. Stark and was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.