

The West Branch Animal Control Commission met on March 9, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Alan Beyer, Amy Lynch, Leesa Johnson, Ashley Olson and Gina Heick. Absent: None.
Also present: Melissa Russell, Parks & Recreation Director, Redmond Jones, City Administrator, Police Chief, Kory Hanna and TNR Representative, Ashley Carroll.

Minutes from the January 12, 2021 meeting were approved. * The Animal Control Commission did not meet in February due to extreme temperatures.

Old Business:

The Commission discussed License Renewal Options. What does the Registration provide? With the goal of it being less time consuming with less administrative work. At the beginning it was intended that we would know if something happened, we would know if that animal was vaccinated, but you are going to call the vet anyway. Chief Hanna said the Police Department would need a certificate anyway. If we did a "Forever Tag", the Ordinance would have to be changed, hopefully have better compliance. It was suggested to have a \$50.00 life-time fee. Unneutered pets would be \$150.00 life-time fee. There were questions regarding puppies and senior dogs. Chief Hanna suggested they could have the option to not be registered until the pet is one year of age. Redmond suggested the deposit could be on the high end and when the animal comes of age, or is neutered, they would receive a refund. Alan will put it into form that we could put to motion.

Alan stated the Animal Control Commission budget is \$3,000.

\$2,000 for stray animals

\$1,000 for tags, supplies, etc.

\$250 for the Animal Control Commission for banners, certificates, pennants, to buy something, etc.

This past year, with the TNR program, expenses were taken from the \$250 portion.

TNR has been closed for now, due to our overspent budget. We need to propose to the City Council what we want to do this next year. There have been 10 or 11 cats TNR'd. Agreed that colonies should be taken care of first. Need to watch and see if TNR has made an impact. Should be fewer complaints for noise, fights, and would not reproduce, as usually neutered males will leave.

Alan stated we need a dollar amount and number of animals we can do. He also suggested we take it out of the \$2,000 portion. Chief Hanna cautioned the commission to committing those funds to just TNR and that \$2,000 could be extinguished in just one call, especially if you have another hoarding situation. He is not a proponent of TNR because we require residents to abide by the lease law and this program returns the animals back out into the public. He wondered if we could apply for a grant, seek wider ranging statewide funding. Alan said that because of the size of our town, we would not qualify. Fundraising?

Alan thought our town could TNR about 20 cats maximum, or \$1,000.00.

Redmond stated it would be helpful to have some type of performance measure, say what you are looking for, to show there has been some progress.

Alan: Say we did 11 cats this year, next year we do 9. That could be one measurement. If it is working, we should have less. If we did a timeline of 2 years, that would be a meaningful measure.

Motion to do 10 cats that would come from the Animal Control Commission budget and continue to monitor. It may be on the April agenda to City Council.

New Business:

Dog Park rules and other issues.

Melissa Russell spoke to the Commission regarding calls she has gotten about the Dog Park.

Stating there is a fine line on what she can and cannot enforce. The calls she received were about the furniture (items left at the Park), sign (with some words that may be offensive), drinking parties and unregistered animals. Melissa offered to check the park and to patrol it more, and if she observed drinking parties, she will notify the Police Department. She wants people to feel comfortable about coming to the Dog Park which would hopefully increase its use.

Melissa will talk to Matt from Public Works regarding reseeding the North side of the Dog Park. May need to block it off, but users would still be able to use the park in a limited capacity. This would take approximately 4 weeks to complete.

Melissa informed the Commission that the High School is doing an Earth Day Project on April 30th and will be looking for projects, so if we can think of anything that needs to be done at the Dog Park, just let her know. Also suggested if the Commission has a project they want done, she may be able to budget for it from the Parks and Recreation's budget.

It was approved to replace the Teether Ball at the Dog Park.

Commission will discuss furniture at the next meeting.

Police Report:

Chief Hanna reported one dog bite to a human that occurred in February. The dog was declared a Level 3 dangerous animal and notice was sent to the owners. The dog must now be muzzled and leashed when off the property and is prohibited from attending the Dog Park. One more incident would be a court order for destruction.

Amy was approached by a group who is working on an Animal Shelter for Cedar County. They would like to come to our next meeting and give us some information. They are coming up with prices, and budget plans with the hope of starting construction this summer. The shelter would be located in Tipton. They would still need West Branch's support. Animals would no longer go to the West Branch Animal Clinic, instead, they would go to the new shelter. This would be a County run shelter, so the County would have more control.

Chief Hanna had concerns about pulling an officer out of town to drive to Tipton with an animal.

Amy stated that they are planning on having paid employees to go into towns.

Chief Hanna commented on some restructuring at the West Branch Animal Clinic and they may not be boarding animals over the weekend due to staff restraints.

The commission agreed that the West Branch Animal Clinic has done a great job over the years.

Alan agreed to check with the Animal Clinic regarding the Contract we have with them.

Next meeting is April 13, 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.