

BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY
ANIMAL CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

Mr. John Ed Jorden, Chairman

November 15, 2023

The Animal Control Committee of the Bossier Parish Police Jury met on this 15th day of November, 2023, at 12:00 a.m., in the Police Jury Conference, Bossier Parish Courthouse, Benton, Louisiana. Mr. John Ed Jorden, Chairman, called the meeting to order, with the following members present:

Mr. John Ed Jorden, Chairman, Mr. Glenn Benton, Mr. Bob Brotherton, Mr. Jimmy Cochran, Mr. Chris Marsiglia, Ms. Julianna Parks, Mr. Philip Rodgers

Others present for the meeting:

Mr. Jerome Darby

Ms. Stacie Fernandez

Mr. Jim Firth

Mr. Butch Ford

Mr. Kevin Gay

Ms. Julie Gill

Ms. Pam Glorioso

Ms. Monica Grappe

Ms. Rachael Graves

Mr. Charles Gray

Mr. Eric Hudson

Mr. Patrick Jackson

Mr. Nguyen Kha

Mr. Mac Plummer

Ms. Megan Ramos

Mr. Doug Rimmer

Mr. Tom Salzer

Mr. Keith Sutton

Mr. Rod White

Mr. John Ed Jorden called the meeting to order. Mr. Jorden expressed the importance of coming to an agreement regarding the animal control issues. Mr. Jorden introduced Mr. Patrick Jackson, Parish Attorney. Mr. Jackson states that there is no juror consensus on what to do with vicious and nuisance animals. The law mandates that Bossier Parish deal with vicious animals by statute, which is, after 2 attacks, the animal is deemed vicious and after 1 human bite, the animal is deemed vicious. The general fund, which is unrestricted, was designed to handle these types of obligations. Unfortunately, the criminal court fund has depleted the general fund. Mr. Jackson states that we have carved out \$250,000 of the 2024 budget to deal with vicious and nuisance animals.

Currently, when these animals are picked up, they are taken to the Bossier City Animal Shelter, who we have a contract with. Bossier City Animal Shelter is always full due to animals not being euthanized. When they did not have room at the shelter, we started housing dogs at our highway department, with the highway department employees caring for the animals. We can no longer keep dogs at the Highway Department due to the kennels not being compliant with the US Department of Agriculture.

The police jury members talked with Mr. Jackson and asked him to come up with a solution until the Bossier City Animal Shelter had space for the animals. Mr. Jackson spoke with several veterinarians, with none of them wanting to euthanize the animals. Mr. Jorden found a vet that is willing to euthanize a limited number of animals. The vet is very hesitant and concerned about flak from the general public due to him euthanizing animals. The deal that was arranged with the vet was, he would hold the animals for 15 days, if there is not any room at the Bossier City Animal Shelter. The cost for keeping a dog for 15 days is \$1600.

The City of Bossier came to the police jury and said that in order to continue using their shelter, then the police jury would have to pay one third of the cost, which is nearly \$600,000 more than what we are paying now. The police jury does not have the ability to fund the Bossier City Animal Shelter without a dedicated source of income or layoffs of employees.

Mr. Jackson has let the City of Bossier know that we are not going to be using their shelter in 2024. Currently, the plan is to hold the animals for 15 days at the vet. After 15 days, if the animal is not claimed, then the animal will be euthanized. The rule is to hold the animals for a minimum of 72 hours. If there is a bite or a suspicion of rabies, then the animals are required to be held for 10 days.

Ms. Parks proposed an idea to have the animals registered at Bossier City Animal Shelter while they are being held at the vet or at a foster home. This would help when owners are looking

for their lost pets. Mr. Jackson states that if the police jury does not enter into an agreement with Bossier City Animal Shelter, then we are not going to be able to use their facilities or services. Mr. Jackson states that we can work with the vet to get the animals' pictures posted and the vet has all the contacts to the rescue organizations. All animals must go through a series of tests and vaccinations in order to be held with other animals. There is a flat fee for the medicine used on the animals and a per day storage fee for the animal. As of now there is a plan with a budget for the use of the vet, but it is not going to work in total.

When we went from agreeing to pick up nuisance dogs and vicious dogs, then the majority of the dog calls became vicious. Upon arrival to pick up the animals, it was determined that many of these animals were not vicious. Many of the animals that are picked up are nuisance dogs. There is not enough room for these at the Bossier City Animal Shelter. There are two designated spots for vicious dogs, and there has never been any issue with the shelter accepting these animals.

Mr. Jorden discussed the idea that the citizens of rural areas vote on a millage that would be designated for animal control. Mr. Jackson states that if the police jury wants a more robust animal control option there are two choices, ask the voters to vote on it, or layoffs of employees. Mr. Jackson suggests leaving it up to the voters to decide, but he is unsure if we have missed the deadline for it to be on the ballot in April. We would have to figure out how much a shelter costs to operate and determine the millage amount for the voters. He states that we would have to form an animal control district to handle this. He does not anticipate that the voters would vote for this.

Mr. Jorden said that the main reason that he brought this up was to discuss whether we are picking up vicious and nuisance dogs or just vicious dogs. Mr. Eric Hudson, Parish Engineer, states that he spoke with Mr. Jorden regarding this the other day. As of now, through the end of 2023, we are picking up vicious and nuisance dogs. In order to help us document these calls, Mr. Hudson said that he needs the Sheriff's Department to go out on the call and deem the animal as a vicious animal.

Ms. Stacie Fernandez, Parish Treasurer, states that the current 2024 budget is for the minimum plan that was already agreed upon. We have \$250,000 built into the budget for animal control. Mr. Jackson states that he has \$250,000 for the upcoming year. He will be working with Mr. Hudson on the procedures of picking up the animals. He states that we will not be able to pick up every animal that we are called out on, because the budget does not allow it. We are going to have to focus on vicious dogs. The problem that Mr. Jackson is having is that there is no consensus with the jury on what to do. Right now, we are not accepting animals for drop off of animals. We are only picking them up.

Mr. Rodgers asked Mr. Kevin Gay, Highway Superintendent, how much it would cost to build an outside shelter with the basic requirement, at the highway department. Mr. Jackson states that we could build a certified kennel but does not think that this is good solution.

Mr. Rodgers suggested that the police jury see if the upcoming plan we have in place is working. He suggests putting a date on when to evaluate if the 2024 budgeted plan is working. Mr. Salzer says that he agrees with Mr. Rodgers working within the \$250,000 budget, but they need to set parameters for the number of days that the animals are held. He suggests 3 days on vicious and 5 days on non-vicious animals. This would start on January 1, 2024. Mr. Jackson says that he must talk with the vet to see if he will follow these guidelines or if we are going to have to find another option.

The Animal Control Committee voted for 3 days on vicious and 5 days on non-vicious animals as followed, and it will be voted on in the regular meeting by all the jury members.

AYE: Benton, Brotherton, Cochran, Jorden, Parks, Rodgers

NAY: Marsiglia

Meeting is adjourned.

MEGAN C. RAMOS
INTERIM PARISH SECRETARY

JOHN ED JORDEN, CHAIRMAN
BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY