

MINUTES
Pet Care & Humane Treatment Study Committee
Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, 10:00 AM
Room 110, Blatt Building

Members Present: Senator Vincent Sheheen, Chairman
Representative Steve Moss
Patricia Hill, DVM, SC Assn. of Veterinarians, Past President
Kim Kelly, Humane Society US, SC Director
Barbara Nelson, SPCA Albrecht Center, President
Josh Rhodes, SC Assoc. of Counties, Staff Attorney
Patty Van Sicklen, Am. Kennel Club, Legislative Analyst
Clint Leach, SC Dept. Of Agriculture, Asst. Commissioner
Rebecca Leach, SC Dept. of LLR, Dir. Of Bus. And Govt. Affairs

Staff Present: Senate -- Gene Hogan, Emma Hall; House -- Joannie Nickel, Rebecca Thompson

Chairman Sheheen called the meeting to order and reviewed the minutes and target issues from the previous meeting. He also informed the committee that he would be requesting data from the appropriate groups pertaining to county, municipal and private shelter facilities. He then recognized staff to explain new materials before the committee. Following this, he recognized the first speaker on the agenda.

Boyd Parr, State Veterinarian, Director of Livestock and Poultry Health, Clemson University addressed the committee on the interstate transportation of animals, a federally regulated activity. He referred to the Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) required before an animal is shipped out of state and offered some statistics related to that activity for September 2016. The Chairman asked for those statistics to be submitted to the committee. He also briefly discussed the need for a large animal veterinarian on the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (BVME) and the need to streamline the process to license an out of state veterinarian to practice in state during a state of emergency.

Next on the agenda was Shelly Simmons, Division Manager, Greenville County Animal Care. She first explained Greenville County Animal Care as an open admissions facility accepting animals from all of Greenville and Spartanburg counties - around 4,000 - 5,000 animals yearly. It is separate from the Humane Society and is a county agency backed by the general fund and some donations. She briefly discussed challenges facing the facility and came to three main recommendations for committee consideration: clearly defining “feral” or “community” cat, creating exceptions to the mandatory five day stray hold for litters of puppies or kittens and requiring owners to ID their pet beyond the mandatory rabies tag (i.e. microchipping).

Next to speak was David Miller, Deputy Solicitor, Second Circuit Solicitor’s Office, on enforcement and prosecution. Miller indicated the law isn’t necessarily inadequate for prosecution, but other factors typically surrounding animal cases complicate enforcement. More often than not, offenders in animal cases are unintentionally neglectful due to poverty or mental illness. Miller suggested the committee look into changes to abandonment and dangerous animal laws. The Chairman Sheheen requested Miller to submit language regarding these changes.

The final invited speaker on the agenda was Dennis Flory, City of Columbia Animal Control. Mr. Flory described how Columbia is handling some of the same challenges indicated by other speakers. He said the city has implemented a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program for feral cats and expects it to be successful in

lowering the number of community cats in Columbia. Chairman Sheheen then opened the meeting to public comment.

The first to speak was Kurt Taylor, Charleston Animal Society. He provided a handout detailing animal evacuations during Hurricane Matthew across the state, with a total of 574 animals evacuated safely. Taylor agreed a statewide tethering law is needed if it is adaptable to both urban and rural counties and coupled with training for law enforcement.

The final public comment came from Marshal Liger (BVME member). His testimony focused on the definition of “fowl” in current cruelty laws, which does not protect companion birds. He recommended the committee update the statute to include companion birds and submitted suggested language.

Upon completion of agenda items, Chairman Sheheen briefly discussed dates of future meetings then asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Hill offered such motion and the meeting was adjourned.