

Heber Valley Animal Services
301 S Main St.
Heber City, UT 84032
Animal Services Advisory Board Meeting
Tuesday, October 14, 2025
6:00 PM

DRAFT MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Mayor Heidi Franco (Heber City)
Police Chief Parker Sever (Heber City)
Deputy Chief Brandon Russell (Heber City)
Sheriff Jared Rigby (Wasatch County)
Assistant County Manager Heber Lefgren (Wasatch County)

Board Members Absent: Council Member JC Simonsen (Midway)
Clerk Bart Smith (Interlaken)
Mayor Ralph Severini (Hideout)

Staff Members Present: Animal Control Director Justin Hatch
Animal Services Coordinator Holly Argueta

Public Members Present: Heidi Black (Paws for Life Utah)

Meeting Start Time: 6:00 PM.

Presiding: Mayor Heidi Franco.

Public Comments: None.

Agenda Item #1: Consent Agenda

-Minutes from May 2025 and July 2025 meetings

Motion: Heber Lefgren made a motion to approve the May 2025 and July 2025 meeting minutes. **Seconded** by Chief Parker Sever.

Yes: Chief Parker Sever, Assistant County Manager Heber Lefgren, Sheriff Jared Rigby, Mayor Heidi Franco.

No: None.

Motion Passed: 4-0

-Proposed Budget Cycle for FY 2026

-Proposed 2026 Advisory Board Meeting Schedule

Agenda Item #2: Chief Sever/Justin Hatch Updates

-Animal Services staffing/schedules/shelter/animals

-Billing non-participating jurisdictions for animals not reclaimed?

***Oso: Malamute from Charleston**

- Justin Hatch explained that the Malamute had been picked up in Charleston Township by a Deputy and brought to the shelter. It spent 41 days in the shelter, costing the shelter \$440 total for care.
- Justin Hatch asked the Board if non-participating jurisdictions should be billed the final cost for an animal brought to the shelter from their jurisdiction.

-Chief Sever/Deputy Chief Russell: New Animal Services Badge

- Two Animal Services badge designs were presented to the Board. It was decided that the Animal Services employees would vote on which design to use.

-Standard Operating Procedure: Owner Surrenders

- Chief Sever and Holly Argueta explained the new Owner Surrender policy that the shelter would implement.
 - The new policy would require owners to wait three weeks before the animal would be physically surrendered to the shelter. The shelter would provide rehoming resources that the owner would have to utilize during the waiting period, in addition the shelter would post the animal on adoption pages through its Courtesy Posting Service.
 - Mayor Franco advised Holly to create videos to explain the new Owner Surrender process. She also asked Holly to send an explanation of the process to all the participating jurisdictions that would be published in their monthly newsletters.

Motion: Chief Sever made a motion to approve the new Owner Surrender policy. **Seconded** by Heber Lefgren.

Yes: Chief Parker Sever, Assistant County Manager Heber Lefgren, Sheriff Jared Rigby, Mayor Heidi Franco.

No: None.

Motion Passed: 4-0

-Progress on Standardized Fee Schedule/Updated Codes from each Entity

- Heber Lefgren stated that the County had not yet approved of the updated fee schedule. He said that he would recommend that the County's ordinance refer to Heber City's ordinance on the fee schedule.
- Mayor Franco asked for clarification on the following violations that did not have a definitive fee amount listed:
 - Bringing a Vicious Animal into County
 - Chief Sever explained that this violation would be encompassed by the "Possession of Vicious Dog" or "Aggressive Dog at Large" violations. He also stated that per the ordinance, even if a fine amount was not listed, the violation would still be a Class C misdemeanor.
 - Guard Dog Notices, Household Pet Daycare, and Horse Stable Regulations

- Chief Sever stated that he didn't feel any fee necessary for the Guard Dog Notices violation due to it not being something that needed to be enforced regularly. He reiterated that per the ordinance, a citation could still be issued if necessary.
- Mayor Franco asked if the Household Pet Daycare violation would be more of a business license issue. Chief Sever stated that it would.
- Justin Hatch stated that the Horse Stable Regulations pertained to Midway City's ordinances.
- Chief Sever stated that he and Justin Hatch would reach out to the other participating entities to remind them to approve or deny the new fee schedule. Heber Lefgren would send Chief Sever a copy of the language he would use in the County's new fee schedule ordinance. Chief Sever and Justin would also send that to each entity.

-Cost of Medical (Emergency Vet Care)

***Conan: GSD w/ Blockage (Chicken Bones)**

- Chief Sever explained that a black German Shepherd was admitted to the shelter. The dog experienced a blockage and could not pass stool. Paws for Life was contacted, but they stated they could not cover the entire cost of the vet care needed for the dog. Emergency vet clinics were contacted and gave an estimated cost of \$10,000 for emergency surgery to remove the blockage. Chief Sever, Paws for Life, and Justin Hatch made the decision to euthanize the dog due to the high cost of the medical care needed. The shelter asked a local vet to perform the euthanasia at the shelter. When the vet arrived, he assessed the dog and recommended euthanasia be postponed for 24 hours due to the dog not appearing to be in severe pain. The vet's advice was taken, and the medical issue resolved itself without intervention.
- Chief Sever stated that he would add a line item for surgeries in the next budget, in addition to working with Paws for Life for future medical cases.
- Mayor Franco recommended that Chief Sever check with the Utah Government Trust to see if they offered an insurance that would be comparable to the \$10,000 but would help cover more animals throughout the year. Chief Sever stated he would investigate it.
- Mayor Franco also suggested setting up a certain endowment and hosting private fundraisers to raise up to \$100,000 that interest could be earned from it in a restricted account.

Chief Sever shared the current budget dated from July 1, 2025 to October 14, 2025. He stated that Animal Services is under budget for the year.

- Mayor Franco requested to find a way to better the air circulation within the animal shelter if the budget continued this trend.
- Chief asked Justin to contact an HVAC company and get an estimate on something to help circulate the air better and improve the smell.

- Heber Lefgren asked if Heber City was receiving payments from Wasatch County. Chief Sever said he would check with the finance department to confirm.

-Adopted dogs returned for Biting: Rescue Only vs. Behavioral Euthanasia?

- Holly spoke about a dog named “Hank” who had been adopted from the shelter but would be returned the following day after biting the male adopter. The bite did not break skin or require medical attention. The shelter took the dog back into their care, as the adopters no longer felt safe with it in their home. The shelter contacted Paws for Life Utah to see if they would be willing to pull the dog into their foster program so a trainer could work with him.
- Chief Sever stated that if a dog had bitten hard enough to break skin after being adopted, it would not be adoptable from the shelter if returned. He said that Paws for Life could be contacted to see if they would take the dog into their care. If Paws for Life, or any other rescue, would not agree to take the dog into their care, the dog would be humanely euthanized for public safety.
- Justin asked if a second bite happened once the dog had already been transferred into the care of a rescue organization, would Heber Valley Animal Services be held liable? Heber Lefgren answered that the shelter is required to be transparent when an animal is adopted or sent to a rescue organization. If information was withheld, then Heber Valley Animal Services would be held liable if something transpired. Holly asked if information should be given in a written form or if verbal explanation would suffice. Heber stated all notes, including behavior, should be input into the shelter’s system. Once the animal was adopted or sent to a rescue, a report with all the information should be printed and sent with them. Holly stated that the shelter would add sending a report of the animal with them when being adopted or sent to rescue to the shelter’s Standard Operating Procedures.

-Other discussion or action items

- Chief Sever stated the new Animal Services truck had arrived and asked for the Board’s opinion on the graphic that would be placed on the vehicle. The participating jurisdictions would be added to the design.
- Mayor Franco asked if anyone wanted to vote on the design. No vote was taken.

Agenda Item #3: Paws for Life Update – Kari McFee

- Heidi Black stated that Kari McFee would no longer be with Paws for Life. Another staff member would be taking over for the time being.

Agenda Item #4: Summary discussion from Subcommittee of Facility Expansion

- Mayor Franco stated that the goal next year would be to get a planning budget for the next fiscal year to generate a design. In 2028, the cost would be assessed, and a General Manager (GMCG) would be hired.
- Heber Lefgren explained the basic needs assessment that was performed on the current shelter building and said that the current square footage of the building would likely need to be doubled.
- Heber Lefgren stated that there were many options available in the possible new design of the building, including some that could potentially foster an environment for a partnership between Animal Services and Paws for Life.

- Heber stated that the overall expected budget would be approximately \$3.5 million. A budget for the design aspect of the building needed to be coordinated first, which Heber estimated would be about 6.5% of the total cost.
- The option of utilizing property tax fees was discussed. Heber explained that for county property tax fees to be used successfully, ownership of Heber Valley Animal Services would need to be transferred to Wasatch County from Heber City. The use of impact fees to fund part of the new shelter construction was also discussed. Heber stated that another option would be for the County to take over the building and lease it back to Heber City in a 100-Year lease. He said that the cleanest option would be for Heber City to create a revenue bond to fund it, which would require each of the participating entities to pay for a percentage of that bond.
- Mayor Franco stated that the Board would consult with Heber City's attorney to see what option to fund the new shelter would be best.
- Sheriff Rigby suggested that a general timeline be created that could be shared with all the participating entities. Mayor Franco agreed and added that the timeline should follow the Board's goals. She asked Heber Lefgren if he would take on the task of putting something together.
- Heber said that if the Board could agree to raise the budget for the next fiscal year to fund the design, and then all entities could agree to use reoccurring funds, it might be possible that money would cover their percentage of the revenue bond. This would likely reduce the revenue cost for consecutive years.
- Mayor Franco requested that Chief Sever meet with the Bond Council and discuss possible options.
- Heber suggested that all participating entities be notified of the funding for the new shelter design and ensure that the percentage they would pay be added into their fiscal budget as reoccurring.
- Mayor Franco reviewed the timeline, with a goal that construction would be finished in 2030. She also recommended that outreach to other rescue organizations and donors be done, to see if any would like to participate in funding the new shelter.
- Sheriff Rigby asked if all the entities still wanted Heber City to take the lead on Animal Services, or if the County taking over needed to be discussed. Chief Sever stated that it would make more sense for the County to take over because Animal Services was a county-wide function but felt comfortable with the voice that each entity had in the Board regardless of who the actual Chair would be. Mayor Franco advised that the Animal Services Board should be taking on the new shelter project. Chief Sever proposed to coordinate with Sheriff Rigby to create an RFP that the Board could approve.

Agenda Item #5: Participating Jurisdictions Updates – Issues, Codes, Needs, Budget, etc.

-Hideout: None.

-Interlaken: None.

-Midway: None.

-Heber City: None.

-Wasatch County: None.

Agenda Item #6: Miscellaneous Items – Call for Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Mayor Franco listed the items discussed in the meeting:
 - Justin would get quotes for an air circulation system that could be installed in the shelter.
 - Chief Sever would check with the Finance team and ensure that each entity was paying their portion for Animal Services.
 - The shelter would start posting and implementing the approved Owner Surrender policy.
 - The new Animal Services badge designs were approved but awaited staff input.
 - The County would present a template to Chief Sever with their language to adopt Heber City's standardized fee schedule for animal violations, then Chief Sever would send that out to the other entities.
 - Changes to the graphics presented for the new Animal Services vehicle were discussed.
 - Chief Sever would see if a line item for surgeries for shelter animals could be added to the 2027 budget.
 - Holly would create a new policy for adopted animals returned to the shelter for biting, and for transparency when an animal was adopted or transferred to a rescue organization.
 - Holly would create both an in-depth and a simplified timeline to be sent out to all Board members.
 - February 5, 2026 was selected for the next Animal Services Advisory Board meeting.
 - Chief Sever would create an RFP that would be posted in January 2026, so that bids could be discussed at the February meeting.

Agenda Item #7: Adjournment

Sheriff Jared Rigby made a motion to adjourn. **Seconded** by Chief Parker Sever.

Yes: Sheriff Jared Rigby, Chief Parker Sever, Assistant County Manager Heber Lefgren, Mayor Heidi Franco.

No: None.

Motion Passed: 4-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

I, Holly Argueta, Animal Services Coordinator of Heber City, hereby certify that the foregoing minutes represent an accurate and complete record of the meeting held on October 14, 2025. This document constitutes the official minutes of the Animal Services Board meeting.

Holly Argueta

November 21, 2025

Holly Argueta, Animal Services Coordinator