

Centre County PAWS, Inc.
Board Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2018, 6:30 – 8:00 pm
PAWS Adoption and Education Center

Board Members/Staff Attending: Dave Abler (presiding), Lisa Bahr, Kris Clark, Bob Conn, Brian Eppley, Chris Faust, Reenie Ferretti, Bill Harvey, Ginny Ishler, Ginny Newman, Heidi Petruzzi (recording), Yvonne Riley, Joan Ritchie

PAWS Members and Guests Attending: Kaye Winters (arrived later)

Dave Abler called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Member Questions and Comments

No members were present.

Action Item - Approval of September 25, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes - Heidi Petruzzi

Ginny N. moved to approve the minutes. Bill seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Officer Reports

President Report – Dave Abler reported that Monica may arrive late. After discussion, Tuesday the 11th of December at 6:30 was agreed upon for the annual budget meeting.

Vice President Report – Yvonne Riley did not have a report this month.

Treasurer Report – Reenie Ferretti discussed investing a portion of excess planned giving funds and reviewed the finance committee's thoughts on potential distribution among investment vehicles. She distributed a handout showing current and proposed investment distributions and asked Board members to think about the handout in preparation for a future vote on investing excess planned giving funds.

Recording Secretary Report – Heidi Petruzzi did not have a report this month.

Staff and Committee Reports

Director of Finance Report – Brian Eppley emailed and distributed the financial report. Expenses were lower in September because of the way some bills arrived, so October's expenses probably will be higher than usual. There was a loss for the month, but this was offset by the arrival of excess planned giving monies. Donations related to the Fur Ball continue to arrive. There was a large feral donation in September. The cat adoption income is a little confusing due to the distribution between adoption fees and donations, but the key is to look at the income categories as a whole rather than individually in order to compare the statistics year to year. The uncategorized income for September was for volunteer T-shirts. The income from the CDs is now at the bottom of page three of the financial report. PAWS is a little behind last year in terms of excess planned giving, but that probably is a result of the Fur Ball being later this year.

Brian distributed a proposed list of five facility improvements and three staffing changes for the next year. Each section of the document is in order of preference/priority. Most immediately, the flooring at PAWS has become a safety issue. It needs to be replaced while PAWS is closed, so if it is not done over the winter break it will have to wait until next year. Next year would be too late in terms of safety. The flooring quote is from Spicer, the company that did the recent exterior improvements in a timely and satisfactory fashion. The Winter closing dates also are good for Spicer since the holidays are a slack time for them. The new floor would be a higher grade product than is currently installed. Spicer would lay the new floor over the old one after evening out the old floor. Since the flooring is a safety issue, Brian would like to use some of the excess planned giving funds to install the flooring this year rather than next year. This project would have been proposed for the 2019 budget, but is under discussion now due to the timing constraints. Kris C. moved to support the installation of new, high quality, commercial grade flooring. Joan seconded the motion. In discussion, it was determined that Spicer and PAWS would work together ensure that a high quality laminate is installed. The new flooring would be placed in the administrative wing and rooms, medical rooms, hallway, bathrooms, everything up to the kennel entrances on the dog side, and everything up to the cattery entrance on the cat side; it would exclude the lobby. The motion passed unanimously.

The remaining items on the improvements list are for the 2019 budget. Electricity is a big expense for PAWS. Hite conducted an energy audit on all of the lights and suggested improvements such as installing occupancy sensors in some areas and switching to LED lighting. PAWS possibly would be eligible for an available rebate and Hite estimates indicate that the lighting would pay for itself in about 5.612 years. Ultimately, the lighting improvements would save energy and money even though there is a high initial cost. Kris C. suggested looking into grants for nonprofits trying to go green in order to decrease expenses further and Bill pointed to a project supported by the Kendeda Fund called "Grants to Green" as a starting point. Most of the labor for the lighting project results from installing the occupancy sensors. Any rooms with animals would not have sensors since the cats and dogs would activate them. The new bulbs would last longer than the current ones, not only due to the technology, but also because the sensors would decrease how often some lights are activated. With safety in mind, the estimate also includes the installation of better lighting in the parking area and electricity in the large play yard.

PAWS has gone through several washers and dryers over the years, causing significant expense, frustration, and logistical issues. The set up at PAWS does not allow for commercial washers and dryers because the appliances require a concrete slab and specific clearances around the machines. The current cat laundry room could be upgraded, at considerable expense, to house commercial appliances, but it would be more cost effective to convert the laundry area to a cat community room and build a small addition to accommodate commercial laundry machines. Lisa would like to consider accomplishing the laundry project in 2019 and will get an updated estimate for the commercial machines as well as gather cost information for the addition in order for the Board to consider the project during 2019 budget discussions. During this process, Lisa probably will discuss the addition with Spicer and with the commercial laundry machine company.

The next item on the list is a third fenced play yard (unlighted) proposed for an under-utilized space behind the building.

The final facility improvement is paving the rear driveway and parking area. It is a big ticket item, but the cost is not fully known at this point so the administrative team will develop estimates to present to the Board. Sweetland Engineering kindly provided a complimentary blueprint plan for the potential set up of this area, including accessibility and turning radii. Paving the area would facilitate deliveries and increase parking. The number and type of parking spaces would depend on how much macadam is poured, given that some green space must be reserved for walking the dogs.

One or more of these capital improvements could be partially supported through named giving, particularly the fenced play yard and cat wing expansion.

The support staff proposals include, in order of preference, adding an Event Administrative Assistant, moving the Staff Assistant to full time, and hiring a Cat Adoption Assistant. Support staff is critical to the growth of the organization, especially as fundraising events grow larger and membership expands. The staffing proposal discussion is intended to allow Board members to reflect on the information before the 2019 budget discussions. Kris C. suggested having job descriptions available at that time.

These staffing changes would help with one of Lisa's long terms goals of having the PAWS doors unlocked and phones on as much as possible since members of the public arrive all day, every day. Eventually, she would like to have more official open hours. Having more staff members that work fewer hours, rather than a few staff members that work longer hours, allows for additional flexibility in terms of coverage. Lisa tries to make sure that every staff person has two consecutive days off each week since many positions are emotionally taxing.

Director of Operations Report – Lisa Bahr emailed and distributed her report. Lisa highlighted that the dog side had the highest number of intakes in a long time last month. As PAWS becomes busier and the weather eliminates outdoor areas, staff members and volunteers find that there is insufficient space at the facility on Sundays from 11-3, with all possible meeting spots filled, including offices, storage areas, closets, and bathrooms. Lisa does not have a solution to the overcrowding at this time, but staff members currently are trying to ease the congestion procedurally with tactics such as rescheduling adoptions. There are a large number of people that come to PAWS on Sundays to see multiple fostered dogs so it would be difficult to show the dogs at a different location. This issue could be something for the building and grounds group to think about and also a consideration with regard to long term future expansion.

The discussion about potential coordination with the Allegheny Welfare Clinic was postponed until Lisa talks to Kim again.

Lisa also highlighted the recent Centre County Gazette article about a proposed ordinance to “starve out” feral cats in Bellefonte and the tremendous community response in opposition to the proposal. Pet Recovery of Centre County posted information about the ordinance on Facebook and many community members noted that PAWS provides spay and neuter vouchers to anyone who lives or works in Centre County. Lisa and Donna Herrmann (Hundred Cat Foundation) co-signed a letter to the Bellefonte mayor opposing this policy and explaining best practices for communities dealing with feral cat populations. Lisa spoke to the Bellefonte Council about the issue of free roaming cats last Spring and offered to speak again. Bill wondered if PAWS should have a presence at the Bellefonte Council meeting when they hold a vote on the proposed ordinance. A similar policy was passed by Tyrone.

Polly Daniels and Lisa have a standing meeting about alters every Monday. Recently, Polly celebrated 10 years as a PAWS volunteer. In that time, she has scheduled almost all of the spays and neuters for PAWS animals as well as kept track of the financial and communication details associated with these surgeries. During busy periods, Polly spends about 20 hours a week on this part of the PAWS operation. Polly is easy to work with and is a wonderful volunteer.

The previously approved facility improvements are almost complete.

In a new initiative, Lisa is coordinating with a friend to expand the organization's efforts to work with volunteers with special needs. Currently, there are three long term PAWS volunteers with special needs.

An additional highlight is that PAWS recently adopted out several challenging dogs. Lisa feels strongly that this is due to a new template system instituted a few months ago to help adoption counselors speak articulately and effectively about dogs that they do not handle regularly. For first time, the backlog of difficult to handle dogs is cleared. Particularly, Captain 'Merica, Daisy, Duke, Ginger Lee, and Lizzy all were adopted after long periods at PAWS. There also are several pending adoptions of challenging dogs (Ruffalo, Lane, and Ball Park Frank). A big part of this success is the dedicated volunteers that invest time and training in these dogs.

At the end of the day on Sunday, PAWS took in five 10 month old Szih Tzu puppies that were matted and had never been to the vet. Lisa called Centre Hall Pet Supply (now Hairy Dilemma) on her way home on Sunday and left a voice mail message asking if there was any way to squeeze in grooming appointments during the week. Hairy Dilemma called at 7:30 the next morning and offered to groom all of the dogs that day. The before and after pictures show how great the dogs look post-grooming.

Development and Marketing Report – Chris Faust emailed and distributed the development report. The Fur Ball was a wonderful evening. Chris F. gave a shout out to Kris C., who obtained about 80% of the items for auction and was sorely missed that night. Chris F. also thanked Bob, who was at the Fur Ball as a guest, for taking numerous photographs at the event. Pat Ellenberger brought four of her Pomeranian PAWS rescues to the Fur Ball so attendees could be photographed with them during the night. After crunching the numbers, Brian estimates that profits will be approximately \$44,300, but the food and bar invoices have not arrived yet so the figures are not final. Fred Metzger was recognized at the Fur Ball for his donation and support of PAWS. There were more sponsorships this year and auctions were similar to last year. The new “Snip and Stitch” auction items were a tremendous hit, very quickly raising \$2,000 for spays and neuters. It probably will be a permanent item at the Fur Ball auction, with an increased number of “Snip and Stitch” scissors available next year. The wrap up meeting will be next week. Chris F. thanked everyone for their hard work and she received kudos for her efforts.

Chris F. recently received a telephone call from a gentleman in South Carolina who is interested in donating a large sum of money in honor of his sister.

Nominating Committee Report – Joan Ritchie reminded everyone who is up for re-election (Kris Clark, Bob Conn, Bill Harvey, Joan Ritchie, Monica Wright) that they need to vocalize, at the November meeting, whether or not they want to remain on the ballot for a Board position. The preferences must be vocalized so that the decisions are in the minutes.

Personnel Committee Report – Dave thanked Yvonne for agreeing to chair the personnel committee. She does not have a report this month.

Membership Committee - Ginny Newman presented the PAWS Membership Development Proposal. She outlined the rationale and benchmarking data behind the proposal and laid out the proposed membership benefits, categories, pricing, and goals. The presentation also included an implementation plan. Ginny N. noted that the committee sought input from staff throughout the five month process to ensure that the recommendations are feasible.

The presentation and accompanying handout are intended to allow the Board to digest the proposal and potentially consider it for approval at the November meeting. Ginny N. also will present the proposal to an advisory group outside of the Board in order to obtain additional input.

Membership is important to PAWS, given that it is a member supported organization and all PAWS members have the right to vote at the annual meeting. The membership program is an opportunity to engage with the people who already are involved with PAWS and give them ownership of the organization as well as to provide an additional revenue stream. Currently, there are very few members. The new program would make membership easier and more appealing.

The committee looked for membership benefits that are organic to the organization and, with that in mind, developed a program that is easy to implement, has a variety of benefits, and automatically renews via PayPal or credit card. The new membership program will honor all current lifetime memberships; those members will continue to receive the benefits they were promised as well as additional benefits included in the lowest tier of the new membership program. However, lifetime memberships will not be an option in the future. Adopters will continue to receive one free year of membership.

The proposal includes three levels of membership with increasing benefits as the levels rise. In addition, there will be an annual membership event to celebrate successes, discuss future plans, encourage fellowship, honor volunteers, and present a named award. The vision is that this would be along the lines of a catered picnic in a venue where animals could be present. The expenses for the event would be covered by ticket sales and it would be organized by the membership committee. The highest membership level would include discounts to local businesses via a key tag, with key tags reissued annually to account for changes in membership and business participation. None of the discounts have been determined as of yet. The businesses would be listed on the PAWS web site. Potentially, the new administrative assistant could help track memberships and benefits. The increased merchandise program would impact the front desk staff and sales would only occur during open hours. Kaye noted that increased visibility of the program and its benefits should boost membership numbers.

Dave thanked the membership committee and they received kudos for their thorough research and detailed plan.

Bob moved to adjourn the meeting. Kris C. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm. The executive session was postponed until next month.

The next PAWS Board Meeting is November 27, 2018.