

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT OF ALLEGATIONS
MADE BY AMY LOWE AND JASON DERN
IN DECEMBER, 2007**

**PREPARED BY: CAPTAIN TIM SHANKS, GREAT FALLS POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

DATE: JANUARY 16, 2008

INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary of the investigation, findings and action taken regarding the allegations made by Amy Lowe and Jason Dern against the Great Falls Police Department and animal shelter personnel. Amy Lowe is a current animal control officer, and Jason Dern is a former animal control officer who resigned in November of 2007.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. No allegation regarding criminal conduct was substantiated; therefore, no criminal charges are contemplated. This will be reviewed by the Special Examiner.
2. Numerous allegations involve conflicts of interpersonal relationships. As complaints or issues are identified, the City will take the appropriate corrective action when necessary in accordance with applicable City policies.
3. Additional procedure and protocol deficiencies were identified. The Police Department has taken steps to address these and many other deficiencies since it began operating this shelter in July and will continue to work toward improving processes, procedures and protocols.
4. Additional training was identified as being necessary to improve management, operations, staff relationships and customer service.

BACKGROUND

The Humane Society of Cascade County (HSCC) had managed animal control and kennel functions under contract for the City of Great Falls since the early 1990's.

During the winter, spring and early summer of 2006, the Police Department, City Manager, City Attorney, Mayor, and other commissioners received complaints about the operation of the animal shelter.

On August 14, 2006, the HSCC was given notice that a team of City staff would be evaluating the operation to see if HSCC was in compliance with the contract (as allowed in the contract). The committee was formed and completed their assignment. There were some deficiencies noted and the HSCC was given time to correct the deficiencies starting on September 13, 2006. The noted deficiencies were corrected.

Some of these complaints came from Amy Lowe and other HSCC employees. The employees approached the City last year with information and allegations about the HSCC and their personnel. In an e-mail to a public official, Amy Lowe alleged specific

allegations against the HSCC. The following are some of the allegations Amy Lowe and two other animal control officers provided:

- There have been times when healthy animals have been euthanized and there were still kennels available.
- Animal control officers have been working without proper equipment.
- The director and/or kennel manager have let animals go to foster care before their mandatory stray time was up.
- Supervisors have been disciplining employees in front of customers and employees.
- Punctuality of employees.
- No training in animal handling for either the officers or kennel staff which results in bites and animals having to be unnecessarily euthanized and tested for rabies.
- Sexual harassment.
- Favoritism –some employees get reprimanded while others don't for same thing.
- Not having proper equipment or equipment in need of repair.
- Selective enforcement of the city ordinances.
- Supervisors do not support officers' decisions.
- Denying time for family medical emergencies.
- Allegations of theft.
- Increased tension in the workplace.
- HSCC did not make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
- Illegal drug use by employees on and off duty.

Many of these same allegations are currently being made by some of the same people against the Great Falls Police Department and are the subject of this investigation and summary.

During the latter part of 2006 and the early part of 2007 the City received several more complaints regarding the Humane Society's operation. Since the contract was due to expire, June 30, 2007, the decision was made to search for other entities that would be interested in providing the animal control and kennel service to the City. A Request for Proposals was drafted, advertised and released. Two proposals were received; one from the HSCC and the other from the Great Falls Police Department. At the June 19, 2007, City Commission meeting, the City Commission approved an extension of the HSCC agreement through July 31, 2007. After the approval of the extension, staff had discussions with Board members of the HSCC and, as a result of those discussions, staff recommended the City take over animal operations at the July 3, 2007 City Commission meeting.

The reasons for the recommendation were as follows:

1. The HSCC did not have a functional board of directors or adequate community involvement. At the time, there were only three active Board members out of a total of nine positions. This had been an ongoing problem, and the City knew of no plan HSCC had to correct it.
2. The HSCC has not had an executive director for over a year. Management and supervision was inadequate. The City had received a variety of complaints from employees about mismanagement and wrongdoing. The City was also receiving complaints from the public.
3. The City was about to start a new year of licensing with a new fee schedule and the City questioned whether there is an adequate record keeping system to ensure accountability for public funds.
4. Staff had attempted to work out the problems with the HSCC and proposed solutions had been rejected.

The HSCC agreed to manage the operation for a few days past the expiration date so the City could get through the 4th of July holiday.

On July 5, 2007, the police department assumed management of the animal shelter. Captain Dave Bowen was assigned to the shelter as the temporary manager of the animal shelter. When the City took over operations of the shelter on July 5th the following things were noted:

1. The telephone had been disconnected.
2. Furniture had been removed.
3. The washer had been removed.
4. There were no cleaning supplies, cat food, or vaccines at the shelter.
5. There were no contract veterinarians to take care for the animals or to perform euthanasia. The past veterinarian that donated his service, no longer agreed to donate his service,
6. The swamp cooler needed to be urgently replaced (temperatures were in the 100's).
7. All cats came out of quarantine on July 5th, but there were no vaccines to immunize the cats. For 30 days prior to July 5th, the animal shelter was not accepting or adopting out cats due to quarantine because of disease.

Captain Tim Shanks and Lieutenant Bryan Lockerby were placed in the management role at the shelter.

One of the first steps the City of Great Falls took after taking over management of the shelter was to hire an expert on animal welfare, Kim Staton, of Animal Welfare Consultations. Kim is a Certified Animal Welfare Administrator. During the week of July 23-27, 2007, Kim was on site at the Animal Shelter. She reviewed all areas of operations, which included the facility, safety and health issues, animal vaccinations, customer service, budget/fee schedules, animal care, training, shelter sanitation, euthanasia, standard operating procedures, record keeping/computer information, dress code, lost and found, volunteer programs, and adoption. Kim offered recommendations

for improvement in every area of review. The report was submitted to the City, August 11, 2007. The City is currently taking steps to implement these recommendations. A summary of Kim Staton's recommendations that contains the status of the City's progress on each recommendation is available from Captain Shanks at the Great Falls Police Department.

ANIMAL SHELTER FINANCIAL REVENUE

The City has been trying to establish an accurate financial picture for the shelter so a budget can be proposed until another entity is located to assume management. The revenue that has come into the shelter over the last 6 months amounts to approximately \$67,897 from animal licenses, impound fees, adoption fees, animal control contract Malmstrom AFB, Guardian angels, donations, and miscellaneous. If these values remained consistent throughout a year the revenue to the shelter would amount to approximately \$135,794. When this amount is matched with the City's general fund subsidy the amount of total revenue would be \$250,794. This would be the approximate amount of money that the HSCC (records not available) would have received from the City during their last year of operation. In addition the HSCC was not making any type of payment for the use of the building. At the current expense rate it appears as if the overall operation of Animal Control and Shelter would come to approximately \$400,891.

ALLEGATIONS

For review purposes, the allegations will be placed in one of following six categories.

ANIMAL CRUELTY

ANIMAL SHELTER STAFF MISCONDUCT/INSENSITIVITY

EUTHANASIA

FOSTER CARE

TRAINING

FACILITY

ANIMAL CRUELTY

1. Bird/Pigeon Cruelty Incident (November 26, 2007).
2. Veterinarian used a heart stick method for euthanizing.
3. Leaving cat and kittens in the isolation room to die.

ANIMAL SHELTER STAFF MISCONDUCT/ INSENSITIVITY

4. Shelter staff is accepting donated food and letting it rot. Animal Shelter staff is no longer allowed to take donated food home for their personal pets.
5. The City is taking checks made out to the Humane Society of Cascade County.
6. The City staff does not scan animals.
7. Allegations against a police officer working at the animal shelter.
8. Shelter staff released cats outside the shelter.
9. The police officer working at the shelter took a dog outside unleashed and it was hit by a car. The police officer adopted the animal and then had it euthanized.
10. Sexual harassment and hostile work environment.
11. A dog was adopted out that Amy Lowe wanted.

12. Shelter personnel allowed a dog to go to Havre without proper paperwork and neutering.

EUTHANASIA

13. The City is euthanizing large numbers of animals. Unqualified kennel staff is deciding what animals to euthanize.
14. Specific euthanasia documents pointed out as evidence by Amy Lowe.
15. Shelter personnel euthanized a cat that had a license on it, and never told the owner.
16. Shelter staff euthanized a dog that should not have been euthanized. The dog should have been treated for mange.
17. A couple donated money for adoption fees. One of the dogs they paid the adoption fee for was euthanized.

FOSTER CARE

18. Shelter staff does not use rural Cascade County residents as foster homes. This caused the City to lose 14 possible foster homes.

TRAINING

19. Lack of training by staff

FACILITY

20. Mice in the building.
21. Poor equipment.

ANIMAL CRUELTY

1. Bird/Pigeon Cruelty Incident (November 26, 2007)

Amy Lowe alleges that a wild pigeon was picked up at Holiday Village mall, taken to the shelter, denied treatment and left to die. Amy contacted the City of Great Falls Attorney's Office and spoke with Chief Prosecutor Chad Parker. Amy alleges that Chad told her, if the allegations as she presented them were accurate, possible animal cruelty charges could be filed.

Amy Lowe alleges violation of:

45-8-211, MCA. Cruelty to animals -- exceptions. (1) A person commits the offense of cruelty to animals if, without justification, the person knowingly or negligently subjects an animal to mistreatment or neglect by:

(a) overworking, beating, tormenting, torturing, injuring, or killing the animal....

Investigation Steps Taken

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Cody Strandbakke, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director
Bethany Peterson, Office Staff
Chad Parker, Chief Prosecutor
Steve Vinnedge, MT Fish Wildlife & Parks

Findings:

- Based on interviews and statements of the staff, the pigeon did not appear to be injured; however it could not fly. The pigeon was released behind the shelter by an Animal Control Officer and monitored by staff.
- No one knowingly or negligently subjected the pigeon to mistreatment or neglect by overworking, beating, tormenting, torturing, injuring, or killing it.
- Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks recommends not handling wild animals or bringing them into the shelter. Staff was advised to let nature take its course.
- The pigeon was not taken home to be used for training a hunting dog.
- In an unrelated incident, a dead pigeon was taken home by a staff member. The pigeon had been euthanized by an ACO and placed in the freezer at the shelter.

Corrective Action Plan:

- No criminal conduct occurred; therefore, no criminal charges are contemplated.
- Continue developing policy and protocol regarding wild animals.

2. Veterinarian used a heart stick method for euthanatizing.

Amy Lowe alleges that a veterinarian used inhumane ways to euthanize.

Investigation Steps Taken

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Dave Bowen, Captain Great Falls Police Department

Michael Badgley, Police Officer

Findings:

- Animal shelter staff was faced with euthanizing animals at the shelter.
- Captain Bowen asked shelter staff for guidance and what has taken place in the past.
- Captain Bowen hired a licensed veterinarian to euthanize the animals.
- After the animals were euthanized, Captain Bowen was told by shelter staff, there was a more humane way of euthanizing

Corrective Action Plan:

- A different veterinarian was used for euthanizing the animals, immediately.
- The original veterinarian was never retained for services after the first day.

3. Leaving cat and kittens in the isolation room to die.

Amy Lowe alleges that shelter staff left sick cats and kittens in the isolation room to die without care.

Investigation Steps Taken

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Heather Bailey, Kennel Technician

Findings:

- The isolation room is designed and operated in the same manner that it was prior to the city assuming control of the shelter.
- Staff was never told to withhold medical care for domesticated animals.
- Medications of animals at the shelter is directed by veterinary advisors.
- The veterinarian dictates the correct dose and frequency of medication

Corrective Action Plan:

- The shelter continues to use veterinary services for advice on sick animals.
- Kennel staff is currently being coached, trained and shown what to look for in sick cats by vet advisors.
- The City of Great Falls has been examining plans to improve the facility for air circulation, ventilation, and quarantine capabilities.

**ANIMAL SHELTER STAFF MISCONDUCT /
INSENSITIVITY**

- 4. Shelter staff is accepting donated pet food and letting it rot. Under the HSCC management, animal shelter staff was allowed to take donated food home for their personal pets. After the new Operations Director was hired, she no longer allowed staff to take donated food home for their personal pets.**

Amy Lowe alleges that shelter staff is accepting donated food, not using it for shelter animals and is letting it rot. Amy feels shelter personnel should be allowed to continue to take the donated food home for their personal pets.

Investigation Steps Taken

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Michael Badgley, Police Officer

Findings:

- Hill's Science Diet Program has a Shelter Feeding Program whereby qualifying shelters receive all food free of charge but do have to pay all shipping costs. The suggestion to use Hill's Science Diet Program can be found in Kim Staton's report dated August 11, 2007. The Science Diet Program at the shelter was implemented per Kim suggestions.
- The Animal Shelter accepts pet food donations and distributes the donated food to rural animal shelters and established organizations that serve low income families for their pets.
- Under HSCC management, shelter employees were allowed to take donated food and supplies home for their personal animals as a "perk" of working at the shelter.
- Amy is not in agreement with the change in policy that prohibits shelter staff from taking the donated food home to use for their personal pets.

Corrective Action Plan:

- The Operations Director immediately stopped the practice of shelter employees taking donated pet food and supplies home for their personal animals.
- Inventory control polices and procedures are being developed for donated items.
- Discussion needs to be explored about any food donations that are not used by the animal shelter.

5. The City is taking checks made out to the Humane Society of Cascade County.

Amy Lowe alleges that the City is taking checks made out to the HSCC.

Investigation Steps Taken

Statements were obtained from the following individuals

Michael Badgley, Police Officer

Melissa Kinzler, Asst. Fiscal Service Director

Findings:

- The shelter did take checks written to the Humane Society of Cascade County for service provided by the shelter.
- Some checks were discovered at time of service and changed while others were not.
- Fiscal Services Assistant Director can not provide a list of checks with HSCC name on them.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Policies and procedures will address the proper name on any method of payment. Staff will be instructed that all payments need to be payable to the City of Great Falls.

6. The City staff does not scan animals.

Amy Lowe alleges violation of City ordinance 6.8.170 B, which states:” ... *if the animal is registered, has a microchip... the Animal Control Officer will attempt to contact the owner by phone and /or in writing.*”

Amy also alleges that two stolen Italian greyhounds were let go early because of not consistently scanning animals.

Investigation Steps Taken

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer
Jamie Bennett, Operations Director
Heather Bailey, Kennel Technician
Michael Badgley, Police Officer
Gloria Lamott, Foster Care Provider
Joni Muir, Hot Cha Kennels
Martha Frohboese, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

Findings:

- Scanners are available to all animal control officers (ACO)’s – in their trucks, and a scanner is available at the front counter for office staff.
- The current scanners are the same ones used by HSCC.
- City ordinance states that if the animal has a registration tag or microchip then the Animal Control Officer will attempt to contact the owner by phone or in writing.
- Historically microchip scanning has been the responsibility of the ACO.
- The Italian Greyhounds were impounded as a pair and brought to the shelter by an ACO.
- One Greyhound was scanned, and one was not by the ACO.
- The dogs were adopted as a pair, and surrendered back to the shelter as a pair.
- The dogs were then taken to a rescue kennel in Victor, MT by Gloria Lamott.

- The dogs were scanned by a veterinarian prior to them being taken to Victor, MT.
- The dogs were sent to another rescue organization in Idaho.
- Both dogs have been placed in separate homes.
- Both dogs had been scanned multiple times.
- It has never been substantiated by the City of Great Falls that the dogs were stolen from Colorado.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Policy and protocol will be developed that require all animals to be scanned. Animal Control Officers will scan the impounded animals. Office staff will scan animals brought or left at the shelter.

7. Allegations against a police officer working at the animal shelter.

Amy Lowe alleges that a city police officer working at the animal shelter, painted the operations director’s office, referred to euthanasia as “whacking”, and told shelter staff to kill squirrels if the squirrels were injured.

Investigation Steps Taken

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Heather Bailey, Kennel Technician

Michael Badgley, Police Officer

Findings:

- The Operation Director’s office was painted by the police officer, as well as other areas of the shelter.
- Authorization was given for the officer to do the painting.
- The police officer did use the term “whacking” when referring to euthanasia.
- The term “whacking” was used in front of a customer by the police officer.
- The term is inappropriate and insensitive and should not have been used.
- The police officer denies telling anyone at the shelter to kill squirrels if the squirrels are injured.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Shelter employees will receive training and direction in dealing with sensitive issues and word usage that may offend shelter employees or the customers.

8. Shelter staff released cats outside the shelter.

Amy Lowe alleges that cats were let loose behind the animal shelter.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Michael Badgley, Police Officer

Findings:

- Cats were let loose behind the shelter. At the time the cats were let loose, the shelter was under quarantine (distemper) and was not accepting any new cats.
- At the time the cats were let go, an animal control officer was consulted, and stated that in the past, HSCC staff had let them go outside and fend for themselves.
- Cat food was left at the back door when cats were let go.
- The police officer believes this happened with four or five cats.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Continue to develop policy and protocols which deal with the shelter under quarantine and what to do with the animals that are brought to the shelter during quarantine.

9. The police officer working at the shelter took a dog outside unleashed and the dog was hit by a car. The police officer adopted the animal and then had it euthanized.

Amy Lowe alleges that the police officer working at the shelter took a dog outside unleashed and the dog was hit by a car. The police officer adopted the dog and then had it euthanized.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Michael Badgley, Police Officer

Findings:

- The dog had been impounded.
- The dog became friendly with the police officer.
- The police officer was going to take the dog home to show his wife.
- The police officer took the dog outside on a leash and was going to unlock his vehicle when he let go of the leash.
- The dog ran in the path of a car driving by the shelter.
- The dog was taken to a veterinarian and adopted by the police officer.
- Once the dog was adopted, in the course of two weeks the dog bit two people.

- The police officer took the dog to a veterinarian who agreed he should not have a dog that bites. The dog was euthanized.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Continue to develop policy and protocols for adoption of animals by shelter staff.

10. Sexual Harassment and hostile work environment.

Amy Lowe alleges that employees discussed inappropriate sexual relationships. Amy Lowe also alleges her supervisor made discriminatory statements by referring to her as “Miss Amy” and being “AWOL Officer” or “the Missing in Action Officer.” Amy Lowe questioned why schedules were changed and why a different animal control officer was assigned to the dog park committee in addition to Amy.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer
 Bethany Petersen, Office Staff
 Jamie Bennett, Operations Director
 Michael Badgley, Police Officer

Findings:

- The Operations Director’s policy changes were not well received by some shelter staff. Some of the changes included:
 - Time clock
 - No smoking in shelter vehicles or shelter building
 - Punctuality and attendance, and
 - Shelter staff assisting in policy and procedure development.
- Inappropriate comments and conversations did occur in the workplace.
- Some comments were taken out of context.
- Some of these comments were made by individuals now bringing these allegations.
- Individual perception(s) were factors.
- City policy prohibiting sexual harassment was distributed to all employees.
- E-mail was sent by Amy Lowe to Humane Resources and others claiming the Operations Director was referring to Amy as the ‘Missing in Action Officer’ or the “AWOL Officer.”
- The Operation Director denied making the statements about Amy Lowe being the “AWOL Officer” or “Missing in Action Officer.”
- Work schedules were changed because of the lack of available staff.
- The Dog Park Committee requested a different ACO be assigned to the Dog Park Committee. Amy Lowe was told she could also continue to attend.

Corrective Action Plan:

- The City will provide all staff at the shelter sexual harassment and discrimination training.
- Employees were directed not to engage in inappropriate conversations or make inappropriate remarks at work.
- Employees have been notified if the offensive behavior does not stop the employees have a responsibility to report it using the City's Sexual Harassment Policy.

11. A dog was adopted out that Amy Lowe wanted.

Amy Lowe alleges that a dog she wanted, and Amy had placed on hold, was adopted by another employee's relative.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Bethany Petersen, Office Staff

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Heather Bailey, Kennel Technician

Findings:

- The dog was adopted by another employee's relative.
- At the time of this incident, there was no formal employee adoption policy.
- The paperwork was not filled out properly for the adoption.

Corrective Action Plan:

- The shelter is currently developing policy, procedure and protocol for shelter employees to adopt animals.

12. Shelter staff allowed a dog to go Havre without proper paperwork and neutering.

Amy Lowe alleges that an animal was taken to Havre without required paperwork being completed.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Findings:

- The spay / neuter contract was not signed by the person adopting the animal.
- The dog was neutered in another county

Corrective Action Plan:

- Staff has been directed to follow the policy, procedures and protocols in place for adoptions and services.
- Continue to improve policy, procedures and protocols.

EUTHANASIA

**13. The City is euthanizing large numbers of animals.
Unqualified kennel staff is deciding what animals to euthanize.**

Amy Lowe alleges that the City is euthanizing large numbers of animals and has unqualified staff making the decision.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

John Bailey, Kennel Technician

Heather Bailey, Kennel Technician

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

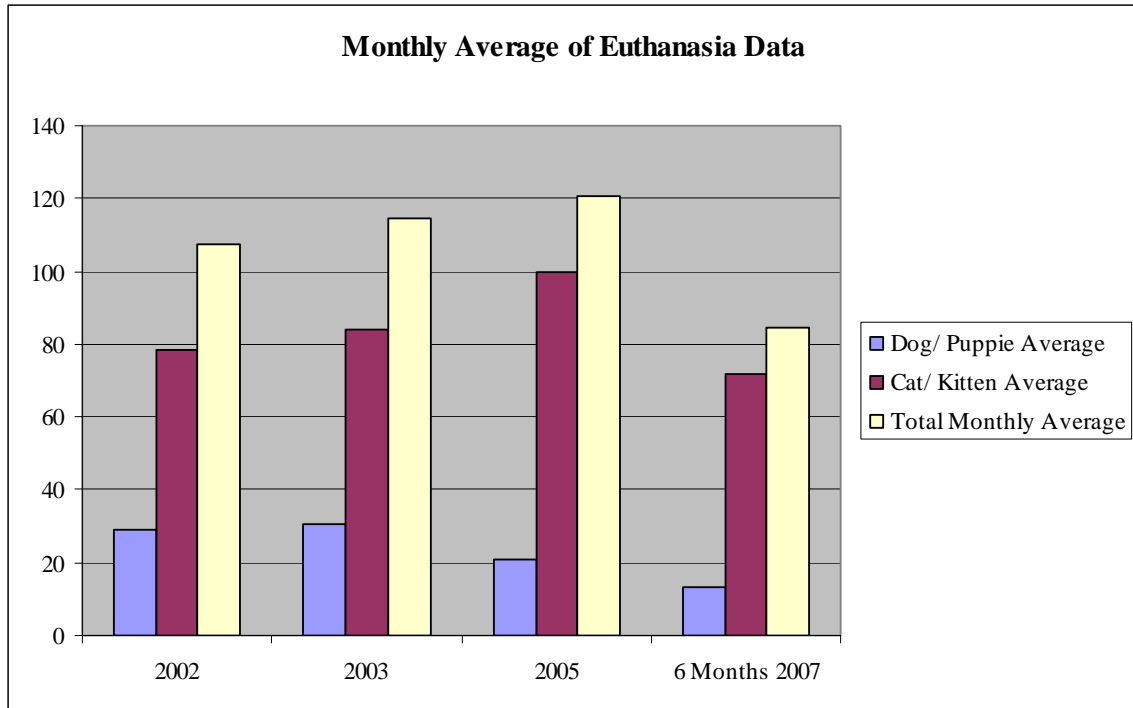
Michael Badgley, Police Officer

Findings:

- Comparison of Available Euthanasia Data:

Current data was not available from the HSCC; however, data for 2002, 2003, and 2005 was available. The annual report provided to the HSCC Board for **2002** shows that the HSCC euthanized a total of 348 dogs and puppies and a total of 943 cats and kittens. The monthly average for the dogs and puppies was 29, and for cats and kittens it was 78.6. The **2003** data shows a total for dogs and puppies of 368 euthanized; a monthly average of 30.6 and the total for cats and kittens was 1007 for a monthly average of 83.9. The data for **2005** shows totals for dogs and puppies of 248 a monthly average of 20.66 and for cats and kittens a total of 1198 or an average rate of 99.8 per month.

During the six (6) months of Police Department management the shelter impounded approximately 769 dogs and puppies and euthanized 78 - a monthly average of 13. The total number of euthanized cats and kittens was 429 - a monthly average of 71.16. This comparison shows that under the Police Department management fewer animals have been euthanized.



- Euthanasia criteria used:

The euthanasia decision process is normally determined in four ways.

1. *Length of time* – some animals stay without being adopted for a considerable amount of time. If an animal has been in the shelter for too long and has not been adopted, then there might be a need to create space for new animals coming in and a decision to put an animal down would need to be made.
2. *Becomes aggressive after time* – because of their confinement in a 3x3 “cell” for week and months at a time, often without much human interaction, dogs can become “kennel crazy”. They can turn aggressive and anti-social, making them unadoptable and in turn, they need to be put down. This is usually the number one reason that dogs get euthanized.
3. *Age & health* – If an animal is elderly or shows signs of poor health, it’s likely they won’t have as much of a chance to get adopted. The veterinarian is normally the one to make the decision if the animal should be put to sleep based on his professional assessment.
4. *Space* – The shelter has 44 dog kennels that are divided by a cinderblock wall of four banks, and also a pass-through gate for the animal to go from one side to the other. Because of the cleaning process (Virken chemicals, pressure washer, etc.), the dogs need to be moved from one side to the other each morning, and the shelter needs to be opened by 12:00 a.m. for viewing by the public.

The whole dog sanitation protocol takes approximately 8 hours each day and as a result, 10 - 11 kennels normally need to be left vacant for the animals to be shuttled, and also for space, so that after-hours captured or redeemed dogs can be placed somewhere. If all the kennels were full, there would be no space to put after-hours animals. As a result, contamination increases, adoption opportunities drop because the kennel is closed longer, and new animals can't be confined.

- Euthanizing decisions are made using the criteria listed above.
- Kennel staff was part of the euthanizing decision under HSCC.
- Some dog kennels have to remain open and available to assist in the cleaning process of the kennels and room for dogs that are impounded after hours or weekends.
- At the time that Kim Staton visited the shelter for a week, she reviewed the system and told staff that she was satisfied with the process that is in place.
- Euthanasia decisions are not taken lightly and are not performed in any arbitrary way.
- The system in use has not changed much since the City took over the shelter operations from the Humane Society. When the Police Department took control, kennel staff would consult with the Acting Operations Director about decisions and advise on the need for space. Once given authority, staff would contact the veterinarian and make arrangements for the euthanasia to take place on a specific date. They would normally be scheduled in the morning when the public did not have access to the facility.
- Since November of 2007, this system has only changed to the point that the Operation Director is now provided with a list of the dogs set for euthanasia. She then reviews it, checks the entry log and history on the animal, checks comments, then discusses options with kennel staff.
- No one on Shelter staff is currently licensed to perform euthanasia.

Corrective Action Plan:

- The Operation Director now makes all final euthanizing decisions after consulting with kennel staff.
- Paperwork is now checked, and re-checked before euthanizing is performed to make sure stray time is met.
- Continue revising and improving policy and procedure for euthanizing.

14. Specific Euthanasia Documents pointed out as evidence by Amy Lowe

Amy Lowe alleges that stray time requirements according to City Ordinance were not met before animals were euthanized.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

John Bailey, Kennel Technician

Heather Bailey, Kennel Technician

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Findings:

Recap of questioned euthanating			
Impound #	Hrs in shelter	Scanned?	Reason for euthanating
72664	72	No	*
72605	24	Yes	Advised by vet - mange
72773	23	No	Advised by vet - sick
72734	46	No	Advised by vet - sick
72733	45	No	Advised by vet -sick
72758	41	No	Advised by vet - sick
72737	276	Yes	*
72659	72	No	Feral cat
73087	48	Yes	Feral cat
73088	48	Yes	Feral cat

* Paperwork was not completed properly

- Paperwork was not filled out properly or misplaced in some cases, by shelter staff. This included the Animal Control Officers.
- Some original documents have not been found but copies were supplied by Amy Lowe to different entities.
- An euthanasia audit was completed.
- Some animals were euthanized before their stray time was met. Two dogs were euthanized before their stray time was met. Eighty-two cats were euthanized before their stray time was met. Some of these were identified by Amy Lowe, others were identified in the euthanasia audit.
- Some animals were euthanized with circumstances that would not allow entire stray time such as being feral and sick.
- There was no malicious intent on staff's part.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Continue to develop policy, procedures and protocols for paperwork.
- Continue to develop tracking systems for paperwork.
- Continue to develop policy, procedures and protocols before an animal is euthanized.
- City ordinance needs to be reviewed for exceptions to stray times.

15. Shelter personnel euthanized a cat that had a license on it, and never told the owner.

Amy Lowe alleges that a cat was euthanized that had a collar and license without meeting the time requirement and the owners being contacted.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

John Bailey, Kennel Technician

Bethany Petersen, Officer Staff

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Findings:

- The paperwork process on the cat was not filled out properly by the ACO.
- No attempt was made to contact the owner by the ACO.
- The cat was euthanized before the required stray time expired.

Corrective Action Plan:

- The Operation Director now makes all final euthanizing decisions after consulting with kennel staff.
- Paperwork is now checked, and re-checked before euthanizing is performed to make sure stray time is met.
- Continue to develop policy, procedures and protocol for euthanizing.
- All staff have been directed to complete the process and paperwork completely and accurately.
- Any staff member should be able to find the completed paperwork to be certain that euthanizing or adoptions have met the stray time.
- Continue to improve paperwork tracking to reduce lost or misplaced papers and documents.

16. Shelter staff euthanized a dog that should not have been euthanized. The dog should have been treated for mange.

Amy Lowe alleges that a dog was euthanized before the stray limit was met. The dog should have been treated for mange.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

John Bailey, Kennel Technician

Heather Bailey, Kennel Technician

Tim Shanks, Captain

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Findings:

- The dog was impounded and brought to the shelter
- The health assessment indicated it may have mange. The dog had hair loss and sores.
- Kennel staff and an ACO took the dog to a vet.
- The veterinarian examined the dog and found that the dog had full mange, bacterial sores, and was dying.
- The veterinarian asked why the dog had not been brought in sooner.
- The veterinarian euthanized the dog to stop it from suffering.

Corrective Action Plan:

- No corrective action needed.

17. A couple donated money for adoption fees. One of the dogs the couple paid the adoption fee for was euthanized.

Amy Lowe alleges that the animal shelter staff received a donation from a couple for the adoption fee for a specific dog. The dog was euthanized when it should not have been.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Findings:

- The dog the couple had paid the adoption fees for was euthanized.
- Shelter staff felt the dog was not adoptable and also met the euthanasia criteria listed in Item #13.
- The Operations Director explained that when adoption fees are donated a guarantee can not be given that any specific dog or cat will be saved. There can not be a guarantee because the dog/cat may not get adopted.
- The Operations Director talked to the couple and explained alternative options for what the remainder of their money could be used for.

Corrective Action Plan:

- The Operations Director will determine how much of the couple's donation remains. The couple has directed that the remaining money be used for spay / neuter of animals.
- Continue to explain to donors how the Guardian Angel program works.
- Continue to remind the staff about how individuals can foster, adopt or participate in the Guardian Angel program if they wish to save an animal.

FOSTER CARE

18. Shelter Staff does not use rural Cascade County residents a foster homes. This caused the City to lose 14 possible foster homes.

Amy Lowe alleges that the Shelter does not use rural Cascade County residents for foster care, losing 14 possibilities.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Findings:

- City ordinance does not allow home inspections in the county.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Work with Cascade County on developing foster program that would allow home inspection by City of Great Falls ACO's or a designee.

TRAINING

19. Lack of training

Amy Lowe alleges that the City does not provided adequate training.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Bryan Lockerby, Lieutenant

Findings:

- Training outside-of-the state has been provided to three ACO's, and one Kennel Staff.
- Conflict resolution training was provided to animal shelter staff.
- Inter-departmental report writing training was provided to staff.
- Legal training was provided by the City Attorney's Office.
- Kim Staton provided training to all staff on cleaning protocol

Corrective Action Plan:

- Continue to look for and provide other training opportunities.

FACILITIES

20. Mice in the building

Amy Lowe alleges that there are mice at the animal shelter, and nothing is being done about it.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Findings:

- There is a rodent control vendor contracted to take care of the mice problem.
- Door skirts have been installed.
- The vendor picks up the mice.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Continue to maintain the contract with the vendor.
- Continue to make building improvements.
- Evaluate the current practice of receiving food donations that need to be stored on a temporary basis.

21. Poor Equipment

Amy Lowe alleges that the ACO's have poor equipment.

Investigation Steps Taken:

Statements were obtained from the following individuals:

Amy Lowe, Animal Control Officer

Jamie Bennett, Operations Director

Findings:

- The City has purchased necessary equipment and supplies to operate the shelter.
- Some of the equipment for the animal control officers was backordered, such as gloves, and snap snares.
- The animal control vehicles are owned by HSCC and are currently being leased by the City.
- All animal control vehicles have been serviced and some repairs were made.
- City owned cell-phones were provided to the ACO's.

Corrective Action Plan:

- Purchases will be completed as necessary.