

Oconee County Animal Services Advisory Board

Minutes from:

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Animal Services Conference Room, 6:00 PM

1. Call to order by Melody Brooks at 6:00 pm. Board members present: Melody Brooks, Kelsey Fox, Terry Ruffin, and Fran Leathers. Approved Board member absence due to a personal emergency: Nancy Baumann (Secretary / K. Fox volunteered to record minutes). Also present: Crystal Berisko (OCAS, Manager), Nina Wingrove (Friends of OCAS, President), Nathalee Simoneau (The Oconee Enterprise), and other members of the public listed below.

2. October 2, 2024, minutes approved. Motion to approve by Ruffin, 2nd by Leathers. No revisions.

3. Public Comments

- Kim Keegan: Read a statement outlining her history with the shelter and Friends of OCAS and described concerns about the relationship between OCAS and Friends.
- Brooke Daniels: Read a statement outlining her history as an OCAS volunteer and described concerns with the treatment of volunteers, Friends of OCAS and the foster program.
- Ed Keegan: Voiced support for Kim Keegan's concerns.
- Mark Martin: Voiced concerns with the lack of events/adoptions at Pet Supplies Plus Athens.

4. Manager of Animal Services Updates – Crystal Berisko

- Budget

Current: Contract labor for the remainder of the fiscal year is under review for funding (2 positions).

Michelle Wall (adoptions at PetSmart): This will be funded through June 30th using the PetSmart grant balance (\$3,532) and the shelter's special revenue fund: advertising, other (\$3,068).

2026 Budget Requests:

Part-time Adoption and Rescue Coordinator (PS was a trial position, facilitated 158 adoptions), 28 hrs per week at \$17 per hour - total \$17,680.

Proposing to open a spay and neuter suite at the shelter or purchase a mobile spay and neuter unit. Berisko is currently obtaining details. Vet costs for spay and neuter will increase in 2025, approximately. \$15-25 per animal.

- Projects

Replace kennel doors (\$17,000) and add an interaction pen at the agriculture area (\$1,860 materials only, volunteer labor)

- Ordinance

Georgia House Bill 75 (Justice for Peanut and Fred Act) pertains to shelter regulations/treatment of animals. If the bill passes in its current state, shelters will be required to send certified notice to owners prior to euthanasia, would also require a judge or vet to approve euthanasia.

- Stats

Intakes: Cats 490 (18 Clinic)

Intakes: Dogs 414 (85 Clinic)

Adoptions: Cat 260

Adoptions: Dog 136

- Events

PetSmart National Adoption Week - March 24- 30th, volunteer sign-up on Givepulse.

Friends of OCAS: Adoption/community events at Pet Supplies Plus, Akademia, and United Community Bank | Rabies and microchip clinic at Union Christian Church | Kitten shower.

- Other

Berisko, reviewing new HW and flea/tick preventatives, will meet with the Elanco rep soon to discuss changes in the shelter program (reimbursement to provide the first dose free to adopters).

5. Meeting dates: 05/07/2025, 07/09/2025 (new term) and tentatively 10/01/2025.

6. New Business - Discussion about volunteering: Schedule volunteer training directly with Berisko or Kayla McAllister (Medical Officer), will learn ways to contribute during training (animal socialization, walking dogs, cleaning, organizing, events, and more). Berisko is working on a volunteer training portal (coming soon). Fear Free Shelter training is already available.

7. Closing Comments - Board members thanked Berisko and her team for their hard work.

8. Motion to adjourn by T. Ruffin at 7:09 pm, 2nd by K. Fox.