

Commission on Animal Care & Control
Minutes of March 18, 2021 Commission Meeting
Approved at the May 20, 2021 meeting

Commissioners Attending (6 of 9)

Cynthia Bathurst, Chair, private citizen
Charleen Propsom, private citizen
Heather Owen, private citizen
Ramona Griffin, private citizen
Josie Cruz, Chicago Department of Streets & Sanitation Member
Janna Kerins, Chicago Health Department Member

Commissioners Absent (2 of 9)

Paula Fasseas, Humane Society Member
JB Bruederle, Veterinarian Member

Commissioners Vacant (1 of 9)

Chicago Police Department (Vacant)

Also Attending

Mamadou Diakhate, Interim Executive Director, CACC
Susan Cappello, Human Resources Business Partner, CACC
Arthur Hamilton, Shelter Manager, CACC
Jennifer Schlueter, Executive Administrative Assistant, CACC
Members of the public – via livestream

Agenda Item #1: Determination of Quorum and Call to Order

C. Bathurst performed roll call, determined a quorum and called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Agenda Item #2: Public Comment – Public Comments are to be emailed to askcacc@cityofchicago.org in advance of the meeting.

A letter was sent to visitcacc@cityofchicago.org from Katie Campbell. S. Cappello read the letter out loud and the letter was forwarded to all Commission members. The letter will be attached to the minutes along with a response.

Agenda Item #3: Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes from the January 21, 2021 meeting were reviewed and approved by all in attendance.

Agenda Item #4: Report of Chairperson

C. Bathurst reported on the draft of the Commission report to the Department and the City. Asked each Commissioner to summarize 2020 and to provide information on what they would like to see. Also looking forward to getting a representative from the Chicago Police Department. J. Cruz provided a report for Streets and Sanitation; J. Kerins provided a report for the Health Dept; C. Propsom provided a report for Friends of Chicago Animal Care & Control; H. Owens provided a report for CRISP; R. Griffin provided a volunteer report; P. Fasseas provided a report for PAWS Chicago; J. Bruederle working on a report; C. Bathurst is providing assistance to CACC.

Agenda Item #5: Report of Executive Director

Interim Executive Director M. Diakhate reported on 2020 COVID policies and is moving to create a 2021 service delivery goal; focusing on the Invest South West Initiative; building a robust safety net to those who need the most help; ensuring that all Chicagoans are welcomed to CACC and that everyone shall be treated the same. Top priority is that we are continuing to increase our live outcome rate of 93%. Back in 2004 CACC had a live release rate of 30% but by working with our partners and maintaining and managing a healthy population by appointments and referring the clients to other agencies to keep pets in their home has changed that. CACC will be making sure that all visitors remain safe and healthy by keeping appointments. One of the most ambitious programs is to work with the Pets for Life program and the University of Wisconsin to help keep animals in their homes by doing Pop-Up Food Pantries and work with others to deliver pet food to those in need. Another new initiative is to provide training to staff and volunteers to provide equity and diversity training. We will be surveying the staff and volunteers to get ideas to better CACC, including the public. CACC wants to thank everyone for their support to CACC.

S. Cappello reported on the Vacancies and hiring. CACC has 22 vacancies: 8 full time are Executive Director, Operations Manager, Staff Assistant, Animal Control Inspector, 2 Animal Control Officers, Animal Care Aide I, Veterinarian (interviewed and in the vetting process); 14 part time are 11 Animal Care Clerk-Hourly positions, 2 Animal Placement Coordinator-Hourly & 1 Veterinarian-Hourly.

A. Hamilton reported on stats. Although it is difficult to compare year to year due to COVID, Hamilton reported on the live release comparison rates.

J. Schlueter reported on monthly pop up food pantries with Cook County, Rescue Food Pack Chicago and Friends of CACC; Volunteer program, survey going out to volunteers and volunteer welcome back orientations will begin in April to try to get everyone back in May; CACC added some new volunteer duties and some expanded volunteer duties; Friday, March 19th the Chicagoland Humane Coalition will be providing a Community Cat Program at 1 p.m. on Facebook live; St. Pitties Day promotion was great and looking to do an Earth Day Event coming up.

C. Bathurst thanked all staff and opened the floor for Commissioners to ask questions.

C. Bathurst asked about the number of ACO's CACC currently has. S. Cappello responded that we have 20 budgeted positions and 2 vacancies with three shifts.

C. Bathurst asked about the current number of volunteers we currently have. J. Schlueter reported that we went from 30 to 60 Volunteers at CACC. Volunteers will be allowed by shifts and by working with Human Resources, CACC will be more strategic in recruiting new volunteers. Just added the In Kennel Enrichment and looking to add Playgroups and Doggie Day Out for Volunteers.

C. Bathurst reminded everyone that the monthly stats are available online at Chicago.gov/cacc.

M. Diakhate reported that we are offering the service to scan stray animals and track these animals for the public.

Agenda Item #6: City Agency Reports

- J. Cruz (Streets & Sanitation) S&S is continuing to use their scanners on the dead animals that they pick up. Numbers of dead animals are going down possibly due to the snow although there is an uptick to dead squirrels. Recover dead animals on private property with the owners help.
- J. Kerins (Health) No report at this time.
- (Police) no report.

Agenda Item #7: Commissioner Reports

- JB. Bruederle – No report.
- C. Propsom – No report.
- R. Griffin – Asked for someone to explain what the Chicagoland Humane Coalition is? J. Schlueter reported that this program is on FaceBook. This is a group of Shelters, Rescue groups and Humane Societies in the Chicagoland Area with an effort to provide public forums regarding animals. R. Griffin asked that community leaders are part of the coalition? R. Griffin reported that the HSUS Humane Care Expo is April 21-23 and has some sponsorships to the virtual program for CACC staff.
- H. Owen – Reported on CRISP Stats. This year, CRISP helped 38 people and pets and working on a way to track these referrals. OTAT continues to pull animals and thankful to the APC's who help out.
- C. Bathurst – Reported that Safe Humane Chicago Programs have been on hiatus due to COVID. Looking forward to getting playgroups restarted; court case dog program is on hold as there have been no new cases since last June. During COVID the Court Case Dog Program was focused on supporting the community with training support.

Agenda Item #8: Other Business

None

Agenda Item #9: New Business

C. Bathurst - We will be looking into an in-person Commission meeting.

R. Griffin is asking for an intro to show who we are, this dog is for adoption, good adoption story, intro to staff.

Agenda Item #10: Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m. The next virtual meeting is May 20, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

Members of the Commission,

Thank you for taking the time to read this. My name is Katie Campbell. I rescue stray and feral dogs (and sometimes cats!) from the streets of Chicago. I am also a volunteer with Lost Dogs Microchip Hunters.

I want to bring forth a few concerns I have regarding CACC, and hope that it will give the commission the chance to think about, and address these concerns while always looking to better the systems we have in place for the animals of our city. But first, please let me thank CACC for allowing the assistance of Lost Dogs Illinois to research microchips and get owned pets home where they belong. It is extremely heartwarming and helps keep kennel space open.

First, when will CACC transition back to pre-COVID intake operations? Since CACC is open-access, the system of "appointments only" can be and has shown to be burdensome on some individuals. There have been instances where people have been turned away at the door because they didn't have an appointment. We should be celebrating and encouraging the public to help lost animals. Not turning them away. On February 25th, a homeless man came to CACC to surrender his pet and was told he had to make an appointment and come back. Certainly, we have to agree that surrendering a pet, on top of losing your home and job are extremely stressful situations. By no means, should he have been asked to leave and come back. While requiring appointments to decrease the spread of COVID is understandable, we also need to remember a few things: cars, computers and cell phones are all privileges. Not everyone has access to these things. If someone comes to CACC without an appointment, they should be asked to wait in their vehicle until they can be serviced but not turned away.

Next, who is the liaison for CPD and CACC? CPD was gifted microchip scanners by Safe Humane. Unfortunately, many citizens have gone to police stations and have been told they don't scan dogs, they don't have scanners or they cannot help. There is a disconnect in some districts and officers who do not feel like it is their job to scan for chips. Can someone follow up on this? Districts that notably give the public a hard time are 005 and 008 districts. If a citizen has a hard time, who can they reach out to for resolution? Since Chicago relies on CPD to assist with animals while CACC is closed, has anyone considered donating slip leads to districts? Will CACC consider having an on-call officer for overnights?

Another concern is Pet Wellness checks. When an ACO responds to a Pet Wellness Request, the documentation for those requests is minimal. As a citizen, if I am calling in a concern about the well-being of an animal, I expect documentation to include body condition score, pictures, licensure of pets, etc. Mamadou and I spoke on this topic and it is a matter of the system that CACC uses not allowing space for these responses. Can the commission follow-up to ensure that changes can be made?

Fostering relationships with the public is important. Has CACC considered having their ACOs assigned to specific areas regularly? This way, neighbors can get to know their ACO, assimilate a face with the name, and get more comfortable with the presence of CACC. I understand that staffing may limit this, but it's food for thought. In the hospital, we often take the same patient assignments for consistency of care. Having the same ACO in an area may help.

Lastly, Chicago Animal Control and Friends of Chicago Animal Control are not listed as sponsors under the Cook County TNR Ordinance. However, CACC has been allowing a select handful of citizens to trap cats, request TNR procedures and then pull under FCACC for release. I am highly concerned considering CACC states that they 1. Do not accept community or feral cats, 2. Are doing so without following the proper guidelines of Cook County Feral Cat Ordinance and 3. Are exercising this privilege for only a few people at the cost of taxpayers. The cats that are being released are not being reported to Cook County, there is not contract/paperwork for Colony Caretakers, therefore there is no accountability. We have a responsibility to the animals that we assist to ensure that it is being done properly and humanely. Releasing cats without caretakers is not ensuring this. Why is this taking

place? I'm sure there are many people who TNR in the city who would also love the luxury of this free service as well. Is this also cutting into the time that the veterinarians could be using for all of the other animals in the care of CACC?

*Thank you again for your time,
Katie Campbell*

*Have a heart that never hardens,
a temper that never tires,
and a touch that never hurts.
Charles Dickens*