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Cheyenne Animal Shelter Begins Path Toward Recovery

CHEYENNE, Wyo. – October 11, 2018 – The Cheyenne Animal Shelter Board of Directors met in special session on October 10 to begin formalizing changes resulting from a September 5th incident when the Shelter’s former CEO used pepper spray on a dog that had bitten a shelter employee to demonstrate how employees could use spray as a deterrent if they felt threatened by an aggressive animal.

At the October 10 meeting, the Board of Directors reviewed the position description and formed a search committee for hiring the new CEO. The CAS Board has already begun a search for a third-party consultant to conduct an audit of CAS animal care policies and procedures and propose best practices. The Board also recommended working with the Outreach and Workforce Development department at Laramie County Community College to facilitate training for nonprofit board members.

The Board of Directors filled vacant board officer positions after several resignations, filled several vacant committee assignments, and formed two new committees. A newly established committee was tasked with developing a crisis management plan using a FEMA incident command structure, with the goal of having the plan in place by the end of January. The Board also engaged a PR firm to develop a crisis communications plan. The second newly formed committee is an Animal Welfare Committee. This committee will be chaired by board member and local veterinarian, Dr. Samantha Vernon. It will include several shelter staff members and Hud Darrah, the former Director of Canine Education and Behavior for the Kansas City Pet Project. The Animal Welfare committee will review existing policies and procedures and work with outside entities to ensure CAS follows the most compassionate handling and care guidelines for all animals.

These initiatives are the first steps in the Board’s plan to meet three new policy directives from the Cheyenne City Council, changes that were added to the City’s contract with the Shelter. These directives included conducting an independent audit of policies and procedures, implementing board training, and developing a crisis management plan.

“We appreciate the passion we’ve been hearing from concerned Cheyenne community members and our City Council,” said Tammy Maas, president of the CAS Board of Directors. “We have already taken significant steps to address these concerns. We know we have a lot of work to do but we are determined to look forward, not back. We will be sharing the results of our efforts with the community over the next several months.”

The Cheyenne Animal Shelter was founded nearly 45 years ago by a concerned group of local citizens eager to provide animal welfare services to the homeless and unwanted animals in the community. Each year, the Shelter cares for over 6,000 pets including puppies and kittens, cats and dogs, rabbits, birds and a variety of other critters. To learn more visit: <https://www.cheyenneanimalshelter.org>