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Lakewood Animal Safety & Welfare Advisory Board

June 17th, 2026 Meeting

Location: East Conference Room

Present: Board Members: Emily Christescu, Nancy Binder, Julia Garleb, Teresa Schleicher, Phyllis Dykes, Councilperson Angelina Hamilton Steiner, ACO Gary Crumley

Not present: Lise Stevens, Amanda McCready, Juleen Russell, Stacey Zigman

**Lakewood Animal Safety and Welfare Advisory Board Meeting
Minutes Wednesday June 17th, 2026**

- I. Welcome and roll call conducted by Board Chair Binder. 5 voting members present.
- II. Approval of May Meeting Minutes - Board
 - a. Unanimous verbal vote in favor of motion to waive formal reading of the minutes. Motion passes to approve the minutes.
- III. Lakewood Animal Control Update
 - a. ACO Crumley provides a printed report with a different format because of the new Shelter Pro software. He reports there are 2 dogs and a cat with her 2 kittens at the shelter, with 1 cat and 1 dog available for adoption. One kitten will be neutered on Tuesday and available for adoption. Board Member Dykes asks about the "rescued" and "adopted" lines on page two of the report; ACO Crumley says they represent the same thing but were likely entered into the system differently.
 - b. Animal Control and Shelter Name: Board Chair Binder mentions a resident who has concerns about the shelter operation and how the shelter name reflects that work. She notes from her research that the state doesn't dictate requirements of space/time for a shelter and the city doesn't have a definition of what the shelter is nor an ordinance about the shelter term. Board Member Christescu explains there is a difference between a Municipal Shelter and a Private Shelter. Councilperson Steiner suggests that the board could do some research on laws and data and how to proceed if the board wants to consider this process. She notes opportunities for public feedback like a community survey. Board Chair mentions publishing information about this on social media or on The Observer (with the city's feedback) if needed to provide more information on the topic of what the shelter does. Councilperson Steiner believes that our shelter exists to help and support the outcomes of Animal Control in our city by reuniting lost pets, etc. She asks how other cities do Animal Control and mentions Lakewood's Section 505 covers Animal Control and everything that is involved. Board Member Dykes has doubts over the public knowing what the Animal Control Shelter does and asks if it helps to differentiate and to educate the public. ACO Crumley explains that they take phone calls daily from people wanting to surrender their animals. He answers the phone "Lakewood

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Animal Control" because he believes that is what they truly are. He explains to callers what he believes the Shelter and Animal Control are and tries to point people in another direction for assistance if possible. Board Member Christescu explains that over 40 years ago, CCLAS was formed by concerned residents who fundraised and worked with the city to build an animal shelter. With that history plus the construction of a new multi-million dollar shelter/animal control office, she believes the community wouldn't respond well to the "shelter" term being dropped and suggests updating with the term "municipal" if a change needs to be made for clarification. Councilperson Angelina recognizes growing pains and the shelter's legacy and asks how we continue to meet the needs of residents and improve upon what we're doing. She suggests focusing on education. She asks ACO Crumley if the shelter/animal control has SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures). He replies that some SOPs have been drawn up but haven't been approved by his chain of command. Councilperson Steiner asks if the shelter/animal control has ever had written SOPs? Board Member Christescu is surprised the shelter has existed for over 40 years and hasn't had any SOPs when handling pets which are considered property and also handling sick or injured animals and wildlife sometimes requiring euthanasia. ACO Crumley explains that Captain Stone recently retired, so Captain McNeely is now his supervisor. Any new documents for the shelter/animal control will need to be reviewed by Captain McNeely, as well as the chief and the mayor. Board Member Christescu mentions involving the Human Resources department and the Union. Board Chair Binder would like to revisit this topic next month when the board has more members in attendance to review education and research. Board Member Christescu suggests looking at NACA (National Animal Care & Control Association) for a generic template for SOPs. Board Member Schleicher asks about wildlife trapping. ACO Crumley explains a trap can be loaned with a refundable deposit of \$50 (they hold the credit card but don't run it), ACOs show the resident how to set it for whatever animal they are targeting, they can trap over night and then call Animal Control to pick up the trapped animal the next day. If a resident chooses to remove trapped wildlife from their property, the ACO has to euthanize it per Ohio law. He notes that all 3 ACOs are certified in euthanasia. Board Member Schleicher expresses that clear SOPs and procedures would be helpful to her as a member of LASWAB.

IV. Committees & Initiatives

- a. Wildlife
- b. Ordinances / Admin
- c. Community Events: Board Member Christescu discusses the upcoming CCLAS table at Arts Fest and shares printed documents with information for volunteers and donations.

V. Communications - Social Media Posts / Articles

- a. Board Chair Binder shares a social media planning document. The board votes to approve the June posts. Board Member Christescu offers to message Board Member McCready for the June stock photos and will then contact the city to schedule.

VI. Public Comment

- a. Resident Bob Peck introduces himself and his partner, Valerie Schumacher. He wishes to speak on policy change for animals that have ID and shares photos of his cat, Millie. He explains that on Thursday, May 28th Millie escaped his property. In the past, she always made her way back home but this time she was nowhere to be found, so he got worried. Mr. Peck looked for Millie all night. The next day around 11 am, he was

contacted by ACO Gary Crumley explaining that Animal Control had Millie. He was overjoyed and happy that she was found. Mr. Peck was asked by Animal Control why she looked that way and he explained that Millie is 17 years old and on thyroid medication. Mr. Peck noted that Millie is an old and petite cat, and with her thyroid condition she weighs 4 pounds. Animal Control explained to Mr. Peck that they took Millie to the vet and that he owed Animal Control \$95 on top of the impound fee. Mr. Peck asked ACO Crumley why they didn't call him first (before taking Millie to the vet), noting that his name, address and phone number are listed on her collar. ACO Crumley mentioned Animal Control doesn't do that in case there is animal abuse. Mr. Peck asked why the vet didn't look up the info on the collar? Overall, Mr. Peck was relieved to have her home. Ms. Schumacher says Millie's collar was missing, but the ACO must've had it at some point because they contacted them. Mr. Peck was concerned about the vet bill he didn't consent to, so he asked Animal Control if he could get a refund to cover the cost of the missing tag and collar. Mr. Peck explains he was told good luck with that. Mr. Peck Bob talked to ACO Crumley again, and Mr. Peck mentioned his social media following and his reach online if he shared this story online. Mr. Peck explains that Animal Control then found the collar. Mr. Peck picked up the collar from Animal Control.

- b. Mr. Peck tells the Board that a few days later, Millie was not looking well. He was concerned about kennel cough and took her to the vet. The vet agreed there was a strong chance she picked up an upper respiratory infection and she was given antibiotics. This means he incurred more vet bills. He explains that night, Millie couldn't even walk anymore. She was very sick and they rushed her back to the vet for another \$200 visit. The vet examined her and said they had a tough decision to make and Millie was euthanized exactly 2 weeks after she was impounded. Mr. Peck notes that between the charges from Animal Control and vet bills, this experience cost him around \$500.
- c. Mr. Peck is advocating that if a pet is found with ID tags - the owner should be found. If there are abuse concerns, Animal Control should talk to the owner and ask about their pet's health and allow them the chance to show Animal Control paperwork and share the pet's history. He is here to advocate for Millie and propose policy change. ACO Crumley reiterates that he believes Millie's appearance looked like a neglect case. Mr. Peck states that if he had been called at 9 pm when Millie was impounded, he could've shown Animal Control all of her paperwork and vet information, which was from the very clinic she was taken to by Animal Control because of the neglect concern. He notes that Millie was wearing her collar when impounded and they could have given her the medication she needed if she was wearing the collar at the vet's office, but the vet says she didn't have the collar on during her visit. He believes that had she been wearing her collar, the vet could've helped and explained why she was that way. Mr. Peck feels that his cat would be alive today if she hadn't gone through that kennel. ACO Crumley replies that Millie didn't look well and notes that there were no illnesses going through the shelter. Mr. Peck says that Animal Control didn't follow any procedures and that they don't have any policies and procedures. ACO Crumley replies that Animal Control does have guidelines they follow, explaining that if they impound an animal that looks neglected, they take them in for care. Mr. Peck states that she was never neglected.
- d. Mr. Peck asks ACO Crumley where Animal Control found her and explains that if he was notified right away, he could have explained everything about her medication and taken her home. He expresses that Lakewood residents pay to keep our shelter/animal control

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open. ACO Crumley notes that Animal Control was concerned about the way the cat looked. Ms. Schumacher says effort should've been made to understand why the cat looked the way she did and suggests that ACOs should do their due diligence and make phone calls and pull records. Councilperson Steiner asks if an animal is found with a collar, is it standard to take it off? ACO Crumley says no and he does not know why the collar was off.

- e. Board Member Dykes asks Mr. Peck and Ms. Schumacher if they want a resolution to this and Mr. Peck says yes, asking if there can be a new policy: if there's contact info found with the animal then ACOs should contact those people. Councilperson Dykes asks which vet Animal Control generally uses. ACO Crumley explains that usually they take animals to Lakewood Animal Hospital, but sometimes they'll use other local animal hospitals after hours. He notes that Lakewood Animal Hospital did not recognize Millie when they brought her in. Mr. Peck believes a phone call could've solved this and notes he will be following up. Board Member Dykes says that an abused looking animal needs to be investigated, so how does a policy work around that? Mr. Peck explains that he doesn't want to see an animal abused but that owners could provide proof of their pets care and if a person cannot provide proof, then Animal Control can care for the animal until proof can be found. He notes that an abused owner does not have documentation about its ailment and cannot provide that type of information and would not advocate for their animal like he is. Board Member Dykes wants to know how a policy can be laid out to cover a very real situation. Ms. Schumacher explains there are examples around the country that already exist. Councilperson Steiner suggests the Board does research and works through this topic in a timely manner. Mr. Peck suggests a "common sense clause" that allows for proof of recent vet visits and documentation. Board Member Dykes asks what if I don't have proof? Mr. Peck responds that an ACO has to take the pet to the vet and the pet has to be cleared by a vet, if not it needs to be surrendered. He also suggests a property check. Board Member Christescu states this is something the Board can research and suggests looking at groups like NACA (National Association of Animal Control Officers) for templates. Ms. Schumacher believes the city of Lakewood should care for citizens and their pets, giving them the benefit of doubt.
- f. The Board agrees there should be set policies at the shelter and with Animal Control. ACO Crumley asks if any policy or ordinance, in case of initial neglect, does that cause more issues for us than it helps? He is asked if during the investigation process, was the owner contacted to get more information. ACO Crumley doesn't recall the timing and would need to double check. He notes that his officer was concerned about the condition of the cat and Mr. Peck got a call the next day. Mr. Peck believes he is now \$500 in debt and his cat is no longer alive because of a lack of policies. Councilperson Steiner tells the group that it is well within your scope as a Board to make recommendations to improve animal welfare. She suggests the Board research this topic and Standard Operating Procedures and make a recommendation, noting that ACO Crumley can work on things too and reconvene with the board. Board Chair Binder asks the Board if they would like to research Standard Operating Procedures and work towards a recommendation; a motion is made and seconded. The motion passes.

Motion is made to adjourn; motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm.