

WILL COUNTY BOARD
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY
COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

May 12, 2011

8:30 a.m.

302 North Chicago Street
County Board Committee Room
Joliet IL 60432

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gould called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present were Members: Babich, Hart, McPhillips, Stewart, Zigrossi and Gould.

Absent were Members: Argoudelis.

Also Present: Will County Board Deputy Chief of Staff Melissa Johannsen.

Present from State's Attorney's Office: ASA M. Tatroe.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Hart led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Stewart, second by Ms. Hart, to approve the minutes from

April 14, 2011. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIES.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Sunny Hill Replacement Hires

A motion was made by Mr. Babich, second by Ms. McPhillips, to place the replacement hires for

Sunny Hill on the County Board agenda. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIES.

Request to Place on File Superintendent of School's Quarterly Report at May County

Board

A motion was made by Ms. McPhillips, second by Mr. Stewart, to place on file on the County

Board agenda the Superintendent of School's Quarterly Report. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIES.

Animal Control Presentation

Anastasia Tuskey used a PowerPoint presentation and a leaflet that was distributed to the committee members to help explain the services provided by Will County Animal Control.

Ms. Zigrossi arrived at this juncture.

Dr. Schild stated Animal Control's main priority is preserving public safety in relation to animals. Animal Control protects the citizens of Will County before it protects animals, although the department strives to do both. The department wants county residents and animals to coexist in a safe atmosphere. If an animal bites someone and the person seeks treatment at a medical facility, the incident is documented by a report forwarded to Animal Control. The department then investigates each incident, researching the circumstances of the bite and the animal's disposition. The report also documents if the bite was provoked or unprovoked and if the attack was vicious or not. After considering all factors, Animal Control acts accordingly.

Dr. Schild continued the presentation by explaining the department works primarily to prevent the spread of rabies from animals to people. By law, domestic animals must be vaccinated for the disease. The disease typically is transmitted from wild animals to citizens by domestic animals. There are currently about 100,000 domestic animals in the county that have been vaccinated for rabies. Despite the downturn in the economy, that number has increased during the past three years, although not at the pace experienced in the past. For humans, rabies is almost always a fatal disease. There is only one person who ever has been diagnosed with rabies and survived, a young Wisconsin girl who still is in a near-vegetative state. In Will County, the primary source of rabies is bats, and they are tested for the disease on a regular basis. Last year, nine bats tested positive. The highest number of bats diagnosed with rabies in a single year is 11. A bat can be in a bedroom and if someone is sleeping, it is possible to contract the disease without being aware of a bite. Bats have tiny teeth that can penetrate the skin and not leave a mark.

Ms. Hart asked how many domestic animals are diagnosed yearly with rabies in Will County.

Dr. Schild replied none. In the state of Illinois, there were two positive cases of rabies two years ago, one in Bureau County and the other in LaSalle County. Rabid skunks infected a horse in one case and a cow in the other. In the late 1980s, there were many rabid skunks in Will County, particularly in the Peotone area.

Dr. Schild explained the department's crown jewel is its spay and neuter program. An additional registration fee was instituted by state statute about six years ago for animals that had not been spayed or neutered. Will County is among a small number of counties that instituted the program. Out of the increased fee, \$10 was to go to a state fund to be used to create a program that would serve all of Illinois, but the plan never got off the ground. Will County already was collecting the fees and began its

own spay and neuter program. During the second year, Will County officials began patterning the program after one in Cook County. In the month of February each year, Will County contributes money toward the cost of any animal that is spayed and neutered during that time period. The procedures are done in Will County, and the veterinarian reduces the cost of the surgeries for the clients. The vets then verify that the animals have been vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and Will County Animal Control pays a portion of the fee. Although the program started slowly, it has become more popular, particularly during the current difficult economic times. During February 2011, a total of 1,075 animals were spayed and neutered as part of the program. Three years ago, the program was expanded. If a humane society or shelter will take a stray animal that has been picked up by Will County Animal Control, the department will contribute \$75 for the spay or neuter of any dog and \$50 for the same procedure for any cat.

Mr. Babich asked what should be done with a skunk that is caught in a trap.

Dr. Schild answered Joliet Township Animal Control should be called. Will County Animal Control handles all of the unincorporated parts of the county. Municipalities are responsible for their own animal control program, although the department has intergovernmental agreements with 11 municipalities throughout the county.

Mr. Babich asked if the department knew which dog breed was most likely to be involved in a bite case.

Dr. Schild answered the department did not track that data. There is a weekly meeting with the department's officers, and they go over all the bite cases. The species and breed are included in the report. In the dog-related cases, about 50 percent of them involve pit bull or Rottweiler mixes. As far as pit bulls are concerned, breed-specific legislation to control particular kinds of dogs is not allowed in the state of Illinois. The department does look very closely at the circumstances of each bite case, and if a dog meets the definition of a dangerous animal, the dog is declared to be one. If an animal is designated as dangerous on three separate occasions, Animal Control can declare it vicious. Vicious dogs can be maintained in strict confinement for the rest of their life or euthanized.

Other New Business

Ms. Sorbero stated the renovations at Sunny Hill Nursing Home are ahead of schedule. Depending on the Illinois Department of Public Health's final walk through, the space should be usable by September. The Health Department currently is going out to bid on furniture and beds. The air conditioning was turned on today at Sunny Hill Nursing Home. Although many people think it takes the simple flip of a switch to start an air conditioning system that is not the case in a large facility such as Sunny Hill. The system has to be manually turned and drained. The hardest decision that is made every year is when to turn the heat off and when to turn the heat back on.

Mr. Gould asked for May's capacity.

Ms. Sorbero stated it was 217 today and 222 on Monday.

Mr. Gould asked if everyone could meet at Sunny Hill Nursing Home at 11 a.m. on June 14 for the next meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Stewart, second by Mr. Babich, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 a.m.

All in favor.

MOTION CARRIES.