

FULTON COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 29, 2025

Time: Meeting called to order at 5:28 p.m.

Location: Fulton County

CORRECTED COPY

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:28 p.m. by Board Chair Frances Webster.

II. Roll Call

Board Chair Webster led the roll call. Rebecca Guinn, CEO of Lifeline Animal Project, was present and introduced her team members, Chris Emerson and Belinda Bell, who participated in the shelter operations discussion.

III. Meeting Overview

The Animal Advisory Board convened to address key topics related to animal welfare in Fulton County. Discussion focused on shelter operations, board leadership updates, animal intake and adoption trends, and strategies for increasing community engagement.

IV. Key Highlights

- 22% Increase in Animal Intake (2024): Driven by the new shelter's visibility and capacity, highlighting the need for improved operational efficiency.
- Adoptions Increase: Nearly 1,000 more adoptions were recorded in 2024 due to enhanced outreach.
- Vice Chair Appointment: Vivian Dumford was nominated and confirmed as Vice Chair.
- Pets for Life Program: Expanded distribution of food and supplies supported community veterinary care.
- Adjusted Intake Hours: Implemented to reduce shelter overcrowding.
- Court Case Dog Protocols: Coordination challenges noted; discussions emphasized interagency collaboration.
- Public Engagement: The board stressed the importance of inclusive and transparent community policies.

V. Detailed Reports

A. Shelter Operations

- 22% rise in animal intake attributed to increased shelter visibility.
- Save rates and adoptions increased; nearly 1,000 additional adoptions in 2024.

- • Staffing and operational adjustments made to improve animal care.
- • Reduced intake hours implemented to manage shelter space.

B. Foster and Volunteer Programs

- • Foster placements increased by 75%, providing critical relief to shelter capacity.
- • Although total volunteer numbers declined, volunteer hours rose to nearly 14,000, indicating stronger engagement.

C. Field Services

- • Call volume increased, particularly in the City of Atlanta, leading to more dog impoundments.

D. Court Case Management

- • Lifeline emphasized the continued need for legal coordination for court case animals.
- • A new position, Court and Probation Investigator, is under consideration to assist with case resolution.

VI. Community and Public Outreach

- • Lifeline highlighted programs such as “Take 48” and “Friendly Finder”, aimed at reducing unnecessary intakes.
- • Public comments addressed policy reforms and support for marginalized communities.
- • The Board committed to improving the Animal Welfare webpage for transparency and accessibility.
- • A constituent survey may be developed to solicit community input.
- • Upcoming events, such as the Healthy Pets Program, were shared as key engagement opportunities.

VII. Board Business

- • District 5 Seat: One board seat remains vacant and under review.
- • Website Launch: A new webpage was launched but requires usability enhancements.
- • Shelter Program Review: Deferred to a future meeting due to time limitations.
- • Meeting Schedule: The Board is considering a fixed calendar to improve consistency and public participation.

VIII. Key Conclusions

1. Adoption and Foster Growth: Lifeline’s initiatives show measurable success.
1. Shelter Intake Strategy: Ongoing improvements are necessary to manage population levels.
1. Court Case Resolution: Continued partnership with legal entities is critical.
1. Transparency and Community Access: A priority for future planning.
1. Volunteer Engagement: Volunteer efforts remain a vital part of shelter operations.

IX. Next Steps

- • Complete program reviews and evaluate intake protocols.
- • Prioritize filling the open board seat for District 5.
- • Enhance public access to board materials online.
- • Continue community outreach and improve tracking for fosters and adoptions.