

**ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONROE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
300 W. CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112**

APRIL 7, 2026 – 6:00 PM

AGENDA

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1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes of January 6, 2026 Meeting
3. Public Input on Animal Welfare
4. Presentation by Kym Price (Carolina Street Cats) – TNVR Numbers and Impact on the City of Monroe
5. Presentation by Ben Hau (Humane Society of Union County) – Dog Numbers
6. Budget Discussion
7. Adjourn

Next Meeting: July 7, 2026 @ 6:00pm

**ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONROE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
300 W. CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
JANUARY 6, 2026 – 6:00 PM
MINUTES**

The Animal Welfare Committee of the City of Monroe, North Carolina, met in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 300 West Crowell Street in Monroe, North Carolina at 6:00 p.m. on January 6, 2026 with Chair Bob Yanacsek presiding.

Members Present: Chair Bob Yanacsek, Vice Chair Jennifer Loria, Member Barbara Rooney, Member Emma Sullivan, and Clerk, Angie Carnes

Members Absent: None.

Staff: Assistant City Manager (ACM) Lisa Hollowell, Police Officer Jordan Gerhardt, Police Officer Carlos Melchor-Flores

Visitors: Council Member David Dotson, Kymberly Williams, Michelle Ammons, Dana Domrongchai, and Jackie Adams

Item No. 1. Call to Order and Item No. 2. Welcome and Introduction of New Chair and Vice Chair. Chair Yanacsek called the Animal Welfare Committee Meeting of January 6, 2026 to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present. Chair Yanacsek introduced himself and Vice Chair Jennifer Loria as this was their first official meeting as Chair and Vice Chair. He also announced there was an opening for one more member and he welcomed applications from City residents who would like to participate.

Item No. 3. Approval of Minutes of October 22, 2025 Meeting. The Minutes from the October 22, 2025 Regular Meeting were presented for review and approval. Chair Yanacsek made a motion to approve the October 22, 2025 Minutes. Vice Chair Loria seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Item No. 4. Public Input on Animal Welfare. Chair Yanacsek invited individuals to speak and no one requested to speak.

Item No. 5. Presentation by Jackie Adams (Managing Director, Homeward Bound Guesthouse). Chair Yanacsek introduced Jackie Adams and invited her to give her presentation. Ms. Adams introduced herself as the Managing Director of Homeward Bound Guesthouse and gave her address as 3634 New Town Road, Waxhaw, NC 28173. She advised she wanted to give

context on why she was so passionate about dog fostering and why she started the Homeward Bound Guesthouse non-profit. She advised it was the first guesthouse in the US that did outreach and education on dog fostering. She advised that eight months ago, she saw a news article that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg shelter was full and was asking for foster families to step up and she applied for it. She soon received an email about a mastiff-mix puppy named Hercules who was dropping weight quickly due to stress in the kennel, so she took him home and every time she tried to pet him or anybody tried to pet him, he would flinch. She advised the person who had Hercules before her was a homeless man and Hercules was taken away from him when multiple people recorded him in public striking him on the head with his leash. She stated that she worked with him, talked to him gently, and then witnessed this huge dog that so many strangers were afraid of who in the beginning would crawl in her lap trying to seek safety then bloom and blossom, and she was able to find him an amazing family nearby with two other dogs. She stated this ignited a love for fostering and she saw this transformation happen over and over again and she was happy to continue fostering dogs, but the only problem was she kept receiving more and more emails from the shelter that they were at capacity and were going to start euthanizing dogs, so she started pulling more dogs and then had two foster dogs and then had three foster dogs and then thought to herself this is a systematic problem and wasn't going to be saved by just fostering one more dog. She advised she decided she needed to do what her 15 years of corporate learning and development training had taught her to use her skills and apply them toward this, so she started researching and found this wasn't just an our-area problem or just a Charlotte problem, this was an across-the-US problem. She advised shelters across the US were on average at 90%+ capacity, so she thought this wasn't going to change by just her fostering, that she needed to start doing outreach and education on why dogs were ending up in the shelters and why fosters were so critical in helping these dogs find homes. She stated that during her research, she found Dr. Lisa Gunter, who is a professor/animal behavior specialist at Virginia Tech and in reading several of her reports online that dogs were 15 times more likely to be adopted if they were in a foster home than if they were in a shelter.

Ms. Adams advised she had just launched a dog fostering podcast called Dog Fostering 101 and it was actually the first podcast in the US giving practical tips and best practices on how to foster a dog. She advised when she was fostering Hercules, she was making so many mistakes, and he was so scared, she realized she needed somebody to help guide her through it. She stated she reached out to the non-profit Maddie's Fund and asked them if they would be willing to have somebody from their team be interviewed for the podcast, and now they were working with her and recommending their own resources for her to share at the end of podcast episodes.

Ms. Adams stated she said all this in order to talk about the committee's asking her at the last meeting how she had gotten into the school system. She advised when she was beginning this research and realized this was a systematic problem and was going to require outreach and education. She said she started thinking about the schools and how the youth were really open to hearing information and putting it into practice and thankfully she was able to get introduced to Brian Davis with the Union County school system, and he mentioned there was a career presentation group and she asked him if after talking about the careers in the animal shelters if she could then talk about how to choose the right dog whether you were adopting or buying from a breeder and how to make sure it was the right dog for your family (making sure it was the right energy level, grooming, all of the things that people don't necessarily think about) so the dog didn't

one day end up in a rescue or animal shelter. She asked if she could talk about how to read a dog's body language, not just to assume that a wagging tail was a happy dog but to give kids advice? She advised almost every class she had worked with had gotten it wrong because she would ask them true or false if a shelter dog was scared, one of the best ways to make it feel comfortable was to give it a big hug. She said most of the students said yes, but if it was a dog like Hercules that had a traumatic past, that was very likely to cause a dog bite and just getting some of that basic information out there was helpful. She said she started with these career presentations in the Union County school system and after she had done a couple of them, she contacted Brian Davis and asked him if he could connect her with any of the other school districts, so she was connected with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools and they asked her to come in for their conferences and there were 2,000 students attending per day. She stated she was getting a lot of valuable information and she started acting as a liaison between people the shelters.

She stated she was very grateful because of this committee meeting in October, she was able to follow up with the MPD Animal Control Officers and they shared with her some of the local laws and ordinances that had been changed through the works of this committee and that helped her keep people in the area posted and get them more invested in this topic.

Chair Yanacsek asked if there was anything she needed the City to help with and she said that was the last thing that she was going to say ... in order for this work to be sustainable, she would be applying for grants and one thing that would be extremely helpful is if it was not just her saying that there was a need, if there was some leadership from the City in some capacity that she could share with the grantors letting them know that this was something that was believed and supported by the City, that would be incredibly helpful. Chair Yanacsek stated he did know fostering was tough and that was one of the things that people didn't understand was that the fostering was not a forever commitment and there were some foster failures, he had several, and it was the best way to get a dog out of a shelter and adapted to a family life before they moved on and the committee appreciated everything she was doing.

Ms. Adams also advised she was doing her first event with the Union County Humane Society to have fostering classes which could be used to market to get new fosters and they were going to be using Homeward Bound Guesthouse so they had agreed to give it a pilot trial and there would be more experienced fosters joining in and it would be advertised and would have rsvp signups and her hope was that this could even be something maybe done monthly or at least quarterly because people just didn't know what fostering involved but if they came into a home where fostering was being done and could talk about what the experience was and what it looked like especially because our humane society was so amazing and she didn't realize that they offered you all the supplies so you could foster and you didn't have to foster for a long time necessarily and that they were so flexible.

Vice Chair Loria asked, with the humane society's fostering classes was that something that other rescues could come to or could send their fosters to for training. Ms. Adams indicated the guesthouse was her house and since she was a learning and development specialist she believed deeply in immersive learning, and her goal was to create an open space where people could come in and learn about fostering and she had a large conference-style room set up where people could come onsite. Vice Chair Loria stated Ms. Adams was essentially creating a network of fosters that

could tap into the shelter, tap into other rescues, etc. Member Sullivan advised she had visited it because Ms. Adams was fostering for the humane society and they went to visit and it was a really good space, and it was cozy and practical at the same time. The committee thanked Ms. Adams for her presentation.

Chair Yanascek indicated he wanted to check with the MPD Animal Control officers regarding how things were going because he had noticed a decline in puppy sales at Lowe's and asked the officers if that was their perception also. Officer Flores advised yes that with a lot of the recent changes throughout the last couple of years in the City's ordinances it had definitely changed things in that they were class 3 misdemeanors now and they could definitely push things a little harder when it came to animal cruelty. Chair Yanascek asked with the change in tethering, had any new problems developed from the ordinances because usually when one thing changed, something else tended to pop up. Officer Flores advised it was just getting people up to date on the new rules. Chair Yanascek advised he definitely noticed that during the shopping season he didn't see puppies in crates every day at Lowe's or Target, and it did make a difference and the committee appreciated the work that animal control was doing.

Vice Chair Loria advised the committee needed to talk about what needed to be put on the next agenda. Chair Yanascek asked if anyone had any issues that they'd like to have on the agenda. Council Member David Dotson advised the next meeting was April 7 and that would be in the middle of budget season, and was the committee wanting to try to get a little bit of money to expand the initiative that was started this past year, and that would be the time to start kindly asking the elected officials and reaching out. Chair Yanascek inquired how funding was going and if there was any remaining, and Vice Chair Loria advised there was a little bit, like 30 – 40 more Monroe City kitties were going to get their surgeries and their vaccinations. Kymberly Williams advised so far 73 Monroe City kitties had been spayed/neutered/vaccinated and how that was a great way to show that the City cared about the problem. Council Member Dotson advised to have the number of kittens or puppies because that was something that the public understood and that would be something maybe as a committee to draft an email from the committee itself and remember that the City Manager worked to find that money for the committee and that would be the point of contact. Chair Yanascek advised the committee could tie in the lesser number of unwanted cats would mean less money spent by the City to take them to the shelter, etc., and Council Member Dotson advised at some point it became a public health issue.

ACM Hollowell advised there were two different types of funding mechanisms through the City, one was through the community partners funding that she had sent to Ms. Adams so she could see when the application was due because that was already out there, and the other thing being talked about was a special appropriation that went for spaying and neutering for the City of Monroe and that came to Council Member Dotson and he worked really hard with the City Manager and the rest of City Council to get that in the budget and she stated if the committee wanted that again, they had the right person in the room and going through the budget process again, it would be important to hear about the number of city kitties that had been served.

Member Sullivan advised she had seen a post on Change for Union County where they had mentioned about somewhere creating an animal cruelty registry similar to like an offender list and hasn't researched it but she thought in Lee County and she believed that might be something

interesting to talk about. Vice Chair Loria advised their whole thought process was people that hurt animals were probably going to be people that hurt children and the elderly so they created an animal cruelty registry but she advised she felt like Monroe handled animal cruelty cases well. Chair Yanacsek advised he would do some research and look into that for discussion at the next meeting.

Vice Chair Loria advised that for the first year of this committee, the committee really knocked it out of the park. Chair Yanacsek advised the committee had done a lot and offered a big thanks to Council Member David Dotson and animal control, the citizens and the humane society did tons of work and the fosters and everyone in Monroe was blessed that we have people that really care about animals.

Kymerly Williams stated she wanted to add this was a wildly successful committee and thought it was very important and hoped to see the county follow lead one day, and Chair Yanacsek advised it would be nice to have Monroe lead the way.

There being no further business, Member Loria made a motion to adjourn the Animal Welfare Committee Meeting of January 6, 2026. Member Rooney seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm.

Bob Yanacsek, Chair

Attest:

Angie Carnes, Clerk