

Facility Recommendations:

- **A general review of external appearance issues is recommended.**

THE weed noted in the front flower bed was removed as well as the letters on the front of the building. While visually attractive, it was difficult to maintain the letters due to weather fluctuations. Many had been replaced on numerous occasions. Demolition of the old facility will begin the fall of 2016. Asbestos removal was done in the fall of 2015 to prepare the old facility for demolition.

- **A general plan to address minor “above line of sight’ cleaning is recommended.**

The ‘dust bunnies’ on the beams in the lobby were removed and will be monitored weekly and removed as necessary.

- **A review of crematory operation and fiscal analysis is strongly recommended.**

A review of the crematory operation and fiscal analysis was conducted. It was determined that until the crematory isn’t needed, operation will continue. Further consideration will be given to operation of the crematory during off hours. The crematory is in full compliance with the Department of Environment Quality and inspected annually.

- **Consider a consistent, high quality food source for housed animals rather than using a variety of donated food sources.**

For years, the R-H SPCA has consistently fed Purina pet food products exclusively. The only exception is when an animal needs a special diet for medical reasons. Prescription Science Diet is then used for those animals upon the advice of a veterinarian. Other foods donated by the public that we can not use are given to the local pet food pantry at Anicera and other shelters in the area that are in need.

Shelter Personnel and Operations Recommendations:

- **Regular training in areas of management, customer service, euthanasia by injection, and compassion fatigue is encouraged.**

The R-H SPCA Board of Directors approved increasing staff retreats to quarterly from yearly. Two of these will cover compassion fatigue and two covering various other areas (one of the first ones will be customer relations). The shelter will be closed to the public for these workshops. In addition, the SPCA will continue to encourage staff members to attend relevant workshops as opportunity permits. With such a small staff, many of whom are part-time, scheduling staff to attend out of area training is often difficult without compromising daily operations.

- **R-H SPCA Board of Directors and management should regularly review policies for rescue and other partnerships, what are the purpose and goals of the partnerships and how the goals should direct partnerships. Any revision should be presented to R-H SPCA Board for consideration and approval.**

The R-H SPCA Board of Directors and management reviewed the policies and guidelines for rescue groups and other releasing agencies. We currently work with over 65 reputable, compliant rescue/releasing agencies and strive to increase the number daily. Since rescue groups and other releasing agencies are not regulated in the state of Virginia, it was determined our requirements are reasonable and prudent. We must be careful and research rescue groups as daily there are reports of rescue groups that are actually hoarding situations. We also find it reprehensible that a local rescue group brings in cats from out of the area and refuses to take back or take in animals within their own community first. We are open to beginning a mutually respectful conversation with the local community group referenced in the evaluation once their adoption and intake facilities are inspected and approved by the Office of the State Veterinarian.

- **R-H SPCA Board of Directors and management should review policies governing adoption and use of outside partnerships to facilitate the possibility of increased positive animal outcomes. Any revision should be presented to R-H SPCA Board for consideration and approval.**

The R-H SPCA Board of Directors and management reviewed adoption policies and guidelines. We also reviewed various shelter applications ranging from Winchester to Roanoke along with Karel Minor's shelter. As a result, the adoption application was revised to encourage a more open, humane education focused conversation with potential adopters. Verification of the current vaccination status of existing pets in the household will be eliminated and replaced with a dialog regarding the risks of unvaccinated pets in the household and the benefits provided by vaccines. We have setup an area in the lobby to facilitate a more relaxed open environment for discussion and to reduce the perception of a confrontational procedure.

We will continue to verify home ownership and seek landlord approval of potential adopters. This decision was made after talking with staff regarding how frequently rental property pet policies have been a concern and in discussion with several other shelters in neighboring localities. Even Karel Minor's shelter requires landlord information.

- **R-H SPCA Board of Directors and management should conduct a comprehensive review of behavior assessments, their use, the positive, negative, intended and unintended consequences of the current program and the liability and safety issues surrounding them, to be presented to R-H SPCA Board for consideration and approval.**

The R-H SPCA Board of Directors and management conducted a comprehensive review of the current behavior assessment and its use. Liability and safety issues surrounding the use of the assessment tool was also reviewed and given further consideration. The assessment currently being used is a modified version of Sue Sternberg's Assess-a-pet. This assessment is highly regarded in educated animal welfare organizations and serves the purpose of facilitating the appropriate placement of the pet.

It was very unfortunate that the primary individual conducting the assessments was not given an opportunity to speak with the evaluators before an opinion/ recommendation was noted in the evaluation. After careful consideration, it was determined the current canine assessment will continue to be utilized and a best practice would be to continually re-visit training for staff members performing the assessment. The evaluation, however, did help us to realize that some staff members did not understand all the factors that go into making a decision following a behavior assessment. This will be addressed in better training and communication with all staff.

- **R-H SPCA Board of Directors and management should review adoption, intake and other similar policies to potentially simplify and streamline client interaction. The goal would be to find middle ground between the desire to protect the public from animals that are not adoptable and the threat to animals for euthanasia resulting from the inability of the animal to exit the shelter. Any revision should be presented to R-H SPCA Board for consideration and approval.**

We are working to place any animals not able to be adopted into foster homes or rescue groups that can work with these animals and their special needs.

Technology and Outreach Recommendations

- **Create an electronic newsletter with a common look with internet presence to create a brand, include multiple templates and develop a distribution plan and calendar.**

We have been working on transitioning to an electronic newsletter. We now give subscribers the option of receiving the newsletter in either print or electronic form. It will take some time to completely transition to the electronic version exclusively. We are currently developing templates and an editorial calendar.

- **Redesign the current R-H SPCA website. Modernize to include web forms and web donation capability.**

The website was being updated even before the evaluation occurred. We have develop a new, more user friendly template. We have also added a donate button to the website so people can donate electronically. The transition to the new site will be completed in the fall of 2016.

- **Create and implement a media contract/press release calendar.**

A media contact list and calendar has been developed.

- **Proactively evaluate and improve outreach and partnership efforts.**

We are constantly looking for new partnership opportunities. Our primary focus is finding forever homes for the shelter animals; we work with 65+ outside groups currently and are open to working with more. .

Animal Care and Handling Recommendations

- **Investigate staff veterinary options and prepare pricing structure and operations plans for future planning purposes.**

Further consideration will be given to this recommendation. Currently there are two volunteer veterinarians serving the shelter weekly and on-call as needed. An on staff veterinarian and clinic is a part of our strategic plan.