

# Carter County Commission

## Minutes of:

### Law Enforcement Committee Zoom Meeting

February 2, 2020 6:00 PM

#### Members:

Mike Hill - present

Ginger Holdren - present

Robert Acuff - present

Daniel McInturff - present

Brad Johnson - present

Thomas Proffitt - present

Randall Jenkins - present

Isaiah Grindstaff - present

#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mike Hill at 6:00 pm. All present.

#### Approval of Agenda and Minutes from the last meeting

No motion was made to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting or the minutes from the last meeting.

#### 2. Discussion with Sheriff Lunceford on possibility of Sheriff Department Role Regarding the following:

- Neglected, abused, strays, and other needed loving care of animals
- Broken state laws such as running at large (non-dangerous)
- Aggressive behavior like biting
- Could the Sheriff's department answer all aggressive behavior calls?
- Could the animal shelter have one officer/employee that handles all the neglect and mistreatment calls?
- Could the responsibility of other state laws could be shared...like animal shelter goes on the scene first and sheriff's department is only called out if necessary?

Sheriff Lunceford addressed the committee saying that the Sheriff's Office has not and will not stop responding to a public safety calls but continued to say that the County cannot afford to have officers respond to all the calls about animals. It is not the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office to respond to all stray animal calls. Ginger Holdren informed Sheriff Lunceford and the committee that she brought these issues to the Law Enforcement committee to have a conversation and open discussion in hopes of finding a solution to the animal issue in the county. She stated that she has gotten multiple calls from citizens asking if there was animal control in the county because they saw news reports of the Animal Shelter Director saying there was no animal control in Carter County. Sheriff Lunceford responded to say that when someone is at risk, they will respond to those at risk but cannot respond to each call that comes in about a stray on someone's property. Dr. Robert Acuff stated that he believes that when a call comes into the 911 office the response needs to be clear about what is handled instead of informing that caller that there is no animal control officer and the Sheriff's office don't do that anymore. He believes the line of communication needs to be opened and the lines need to be clear what is and isn't going to be handled by law enforcement. Ms. Holdren stated that when the Animal Shelter came to the commission, they asked for 2 full time and 2 part time employees for animal control. Some believe that would be excessive and cost more than the county can pay. If the Sheriff's office



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is handling the calls that involve public safety could we have 1 or 2 animal control officers to handle what isn't covered by law enforcement. Chairman Hill stated that training put into place with 911 so that they can determine if officer assistance is needed. Shannon Posada, Director of the Animal Shelter asked to clarify with Sheriff Lunceford that for a period we didn't have animal control. Sheriff Lunceford answered that this was true because of the resignation of the officer. She stated that 911 is informing people who call that there isn't any animal control but to call the animal shelter. She would like communication with the 911 office for neglect and cruelty case, a deputy must write that up. Sheriff Lunceford stated that he has had a conversation with them, and it should clear up any confusion. Brad Johnson stated that the financial management committee has been given permission to look at and do research of neighboring counties and what is going on around us, this has taken time and a lot of facts have been found. The numbers will be presented at full commission. When a call comes in that someone has dogs in their yard, officers should not be dispatched to the residents. Calls that concern public safety are the only ones that should be responded to by our deputies. Dr. Acuff asked Attorney Hardin to explain the requests from the Animal Shelter Board. Attorney Hardin stated that he has, over the past years he has looked at several documents and put together the county regulations and state laws. What are chargeable and what is a misdemeanor what is a criminal offence. The existing regulations are modeled after state law. Dr. Acuff asked what authority would a "dog catcher" have with animal control. It would be against the law for them to go onto someone's personal property. Attorney Hardin stated that the county must make the decision if they want to have someone that can go out and chase stray dogs. If they want to respond they will need to have an animal control officer to go out and handle simple issues. When the issue becomes a public safety issue then the Sheriff's office will get involved. Dr. Acuff asked if the animal shelter has an officer would they be in partnership with the sheriff's office. Sheriff Lunceford stated that absolutely they would work with that officer.

**3. Other Old or New Business**

None

**4. Public Comments regarding any items discussed under item 2**

None

**5. Commissioner comments**

Dr. Acuff stated that he would like to commend Financial Management people and Commissioner Holdren for her leadership and the work she has done. This is a partnership between the county and the city with the county contributing \$140,000 + in the 2019/2020 budget. There will be a workshop that will involve the city to work on these issues. He also thanked the Sheriff for coming in and discussing the issues. Sheriff Lunceford reminded the committee that his office is always open, and he welcomes anyone to come speak with him.

**6. Adjournment**

A motion for adjournment was made by Ginger Holdren, second by Isaiah Grindstaff. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Gwen Crowe