

January 30, 2020 (Recessed)

**MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED MEETING**

The Burke County Board of Commissioners held a recessed meeting on Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. They met in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, Burke County Services Building, 110 N. Green Street, Entrance E in Morganton, N.C. Those present were:

COMMISSIONERS:	Johnnie W. Carswell, Chairman Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman Jeffrey C. Brittain
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:	Wayne F. Abele, Sr. (Unable to attend.) Maynard M. Taylor (Out of town.)
STAFF:	Bryan Steen, County Manager J.R. Simpson, II, County Attorney Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board
STAFF ABSENT:	Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carswell called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: To approve the agenda.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Johnnie W. Carswell, Scott Mulwee and Jeffrey C. Brittain
ABSENT:	Wayne F. Abele, Sr. and Maynard M. Taylor

ITEM FOR DECISION

BOC - Acceptance of Needs Assessment for Animal Services Center

Information from the agenda packet:

Last year the Commissioners hired an expert firm, PNP Design Group / Shelter Planners of America, to analyze the staffing and operations at the County's Animal Services Center located on Kirksey Drive in Morganton and to prepare a report. A public input session was also held last year at the Foothills Higher Education Center, which was facilitated by Michael Barnard, President/CEO of Shelter Planners of America. Mr. Barnard will summarize his findings and respond to questions from the Board. The Animal Advisory Board's next meeting will be held on January 29th. They will review the report and provide any recommended changes or an endorsement.

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Note: At its January 29th meeting, the Animal Advisory Board voted to recommend the Commissioners accept the Needs Assessment for the Burke Co. Animal Shelter, as presented (13,914 sq. ft. facility with an estimated cost of \$4.8 to \$5.9 million). A copy of the Needs Assessment is attached to the meeting minutes for future reference.

Michael Barnard, President/CEO of Shelter Planners of America, presented an overview of the Needs Assessment. Highlights of the presentation reads as follows:

Needs Assessment Study



This space is intentionally left blank.



- Most experienced animal shelter design firm in the nation
- Over 30 Years of Experience- nation wide
- More than 750 Shelters, 350 Animal Control
- Only firm with actual Shelter operation experience
- Pioneered “New Generation” design concepts



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Shelter Design Evolution

- **1940-1960** : Primitive “Dog Pound Designs” Dark, damp, noisy, located near dumps, sewage treatment plant or cheap as possible
- **1960-1975**: Larger shelters better built, but kennels are still dark, noisy, damp
- **1975-1985**: Bill Meade, our founder, begins designing “improved” shelters with brighter, easy to clean kennels, heated floors, proper sloped floors, but still simple design
- **1985-1993**: Bill Meade, our founder, begins to move shelter design to reflect more concern about healthy kennels, proper air exchange, disinfectable materials, noise control, better drainage systems. However, most shelters were still economical, plain public facilities
- **1993-2014**: SPA initiates the movement towards a “New Generation” of shelter designs. We originated the first:
 - “Adoption Display Rooms” - “Cat Condos”
 - “Cat Community Rooms” - Jumbo Dog Kennels”,
 - “Positive Ventilation Cat Cages” - “Quick Clean Kennels”
 - “Cat Fresh Air Porches” - “Courtyard Kennels”
 - “Convertible Kennels” - “Individual Drainage Design”
- We remain the only shelter design firm that has first hand working knowledge of daily shelter functions.

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Shelter Design Goals

1. Our goal is to create your facility utilizing the best practices in humane animal care.
2. Reduce stress in animals through better separation and flow, sound proofing, comfortable kennels and cages and natural light.



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Shelter Design Goals

3. Prevent disease by having medical isolation and quarantine areas, enhanced HVAC systems, proper drainage, high quality cleaning equipment and quality laundry and grooming facilities.



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Shelter Design Goals

4. Create a warm and welcoming facility for the public to visit with good sound proofing, natural light, color, odor control, private get-acquainted rooms, landscaping.



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Shelter Design Goals

5. Allow more opportunities for socialization between people and animals through animal Get Acquainted rooms, outdoor walks, cat condos, and community cat rooms.



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Shelter Design Goals

6. Focus on education and prevention through an environment filled with useful information, an education and training center for humane education, and spay/neuter program.



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Shelter Design Goals

7. Create a pleasant and effective work space for staff with sufficient office space and storage, conference rooms, file storage, adoption interview rooms, employee break room, proper flow, easy to clean, etc.



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Needs Assessment Study

1. **Purpose and Scope of Study**
2. **Review of Existing Facilities**
3. **People and Animal Levels**
4. **Building Space Program**
5. **Site Considerations**
6. **Recommended Features**
7. **Staffing**
8. **Operating Cost**
9. **Opinion of Probable Cost**
10. **Operation**



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Current Average Length of Stay

Based on Existing Housing Spaces			
	2018 Actual Intake	Existing Housing Spaces	Current ALS
Dogs	1,438	16	4
Cats	1,839	48	9.6
Other	33	0	0
Total	3,310	64	

Nation Norm is 10 to 12 days

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Existing Facility



Existing Building is well kept but does not meet current best practices for animal shelters. It is too small for the animal intake and we agree with the County it should be replaced.

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People and Animal Levels

- ***People population approximately 91,555 for 2018.***
- ***Animals received in 2018 was 3,310.
1,438 dogs, 1,839 cats, and 33 other species.***
- ***National norm, animal intake is 2-3% of the human population and Burke County is 3.62%.***
- ***Next 20 years, population is projected to increase by 10% to 100,745.***

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Disposition of Animals

Adopted or transferred- 798 or approx. 24%
National Norm - 60 to 70%

Returned to Owner- 255 or approx. 7.7%
National Norm- 10 to 20%

Euthanized- 2,245 or approx. 67.82%
National Norm- 20 to 40%

However, there is a strong push nationally to reach 90% Live Release Rate

Died in Shelter- 12 or approx. 0.36%
which is reasonable

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Historical animal intake data for past 5 years

Historical Shelter Intake Data					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Human Population	89,197	89,114	89,814	90,776	91,555
Dogs	2,160	1,838	1,657	1,747	1,438
Cats	1,955	2,161	1,896	1,711	1,839
Other	34	81	7	23	33
Total Intake	4,149	4,080	3,560	3,481	3,310
Intake percentage of human population	4.65%	4.58%	3.96%	3.83%	3.62%
% decrease of intake Per Population %	-	-1.6%	-13.4%	-3.3%	-5.7%

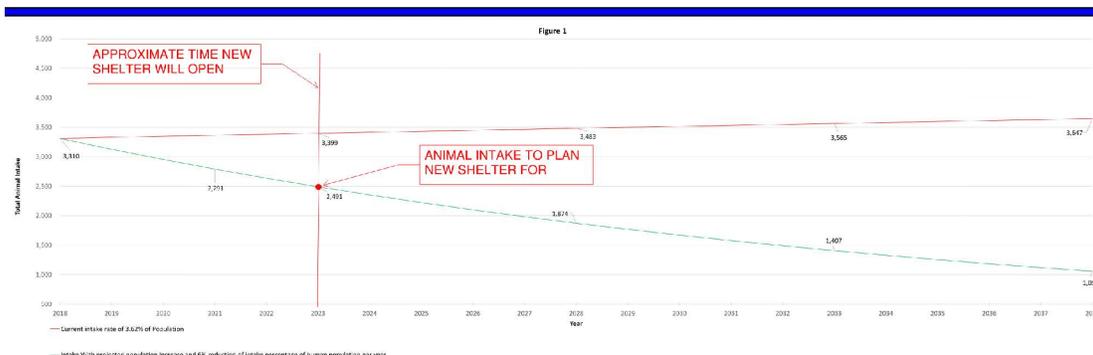
Note: Average decrease of intake as percentage of human population over the past 5 years is 6%.

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Projected Animal Intake



- **Red Line:** Current intake rate of 3.62% of Human Population
- **Green Line:** intake with project human population increase and a 6% reduction of intake percentage of human population per year.
- **Approximate time new shelter will open: 2023**
- **Animal intake to plan shelter for: 2,466**

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“Will Holding More Animals or for Longer Periods of Time Increase the Number of Animals Adopted?”

At the request of Chairman Carswell, Mr. Barnard explained that holding animals in the shelter for a longer period of time does not correlate to higher adoption rates; getting people into the shelter to adopt an animal is the important thing. In response to a question from an audience member concerning the amount of time it takes to abate health issues that some stray animals have when they enter the shelter, Mr. Barnard said the numbers in the presentation are averages and the length of stay for an individual animal can vary greatly depending on their circumstances, and foster programs can be set up to assist with those animals.

Strategies for Improving Live Release Rate

- **Strong Leadership and Commitment**
- **Aggressive Retail Marketing**
- **Community Education Program**
- **Aggressive Spay and Neuter Program**
- **Trap-Neuter-Release Program for cats**
- **Transfer Program Improvement**
- **Proactive Return to Owner Program**
- **Improve Pet Identification**
- **Improve Facilities**

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Proposed Animal Housing

	Projected Animal Intake	Desired ALS	Number of Animals to be Housed
Dogs	1,081	14	41
Cats	1,385	14	53
Other			
Total	2,466		94

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Building Space Program

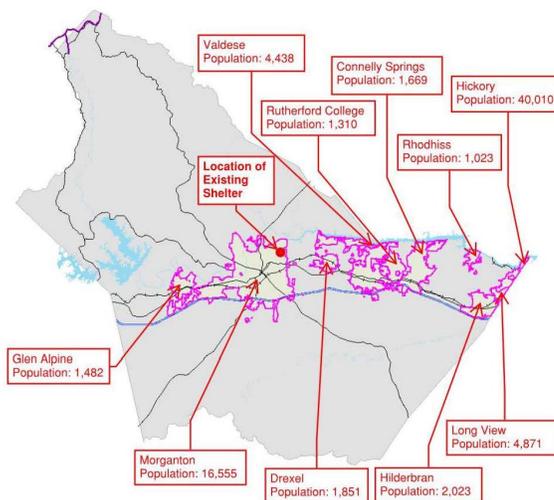
Summary:	Interior	Exterior
A. Administrative	3,236	
B. Medical Clinic	2,059	
C. Animal Housing (Interior)	3,554	
D. Animal Housing (Exterior)		2,227
E. Animal Support Area (Interior)	1,938	
F. Animal Support Area (Exterior)		900
TOTAL SF	10,787	3,127
COMBINED SF	13,914	

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Site Considerations

- Visibility
- Accessibility
- Suitability
- Parking
- Site Size



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Staffing

The present animal shelter staff consists of the following staff positions:

	Position	Number of Staff		Accumulated Total
		Full Time	Part Time	
1	Director	1		1
2	Coordinator	1		2
3	Technician	1		3
4	Animal Control Officer	7		10
	Total			10

This staffing level is below average compared to most shelters across the Country handling approximately the same number of animals and having similar adoption results. Burke County should plan increase the staff at the shelter.

Burke County is considering adding the following staffing positions in the future:

	Position	Number of Staff		Accumulated Total
		Full Time	Part Time	
1	Marketing	1		1
2	Animal Care Technicians		2	2
3	Education Coordinator	1		3
4	Veterinarian		1	3.5
5	Vet Tech		1	4
	Total			4

Also, in a new shelter that is a more pleasant environment, it should be possible to have a successful volunteer program. Volunteers can help with a wide variety of activities at the shelter to promote adoption.

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To implement adoption / marketing programs and increase the live release rate, Mr. Barnard recommended the County increase its staffing which is well below the national average.

Operating Cost

- Annual operating cost in 2018 was \$315,425**
3,310 animals = \$95.29 per animal
National Norm= \$250 to \$500 per animal
- The proposed new animal shelter will be larger and the operating budget should be increased to cover additional staffing that will be needed to increase the Live Release rate.**

Chairman Carswell asked, regarding the \$95.29 operating cost per animal, what is the County not doing that other shelters are to arrive at the national average cost per animal of \$250. Mr. Barnard said two (2) of the most prominent drivers for cost is staffing and medical care. Based on the County's high euthanasia rate, medical care was not provided.

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Opinion of Probable Cost

	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Building Cost -</i>	<i>\$3,633,249</i>	<i>\$4,282,044</i>
<i>Site Work-</i>	<i>\$363,000</i>	<i>\$642,307</i>
<i>Soft Costs-</i>	<i>\$599,486</i>	<i>\$738,653</i>
<i>Contingency-</i>	<i>\$229,803</i>	<i>\$283,150</i>
<i>Total-</i>	<i>\$4,825,863</i>	<i>\$5,946,153</i>

Does not include the cost of land

These are 2019 dollars and construction costs are rising

Chairman Carswell asked if the County builds a new Animal Services Center (ASC) in the next few years, will the equipment and materials in the building be out-of-date in five (5) years. Mr. Barnard said what is recommended in the report will last for the foreseeable future but cautioned that he cannot give a specific answer because of unforeseeable advancements in animal care services that may occur.

Commissioner Brittain asked are there minimum size standards for animal shelters and who makes that determination. Mr. Barnard said the minimum size of animal housing is regulated by the state, and what is recommended in the report is best practices as recommended by the Shelter Vet Association and other organizations (18 square feet per cat and two (2) compartment housing for dogs). Discussion ensued. Commissioner Brittain asked what procedures are recommended to occur in the proposed medical area. Mr. Barnard said due to state law, animal shelters cannot compete with private veterinary practices; as such, the area will be used for spay and neuter operations. Discussion ensued.

Vice Chairman Mulwee asked Mr. Barnard to explain to everyone why the cost per square foot is high compared to other buildings. Mr. Barnard said it is explained in detail in the report, but animal shelters are unique, very complex building types compared to other buildings, such as schools, office buildings, malls, etc. He said animal shelters have more walls (masonry) per square foot as compared to other buildings. Other examples of why animal shelters are expensive are due to more vast and complex plumbing, disease and urine resistant finishes and air conditioning, all of which is housed in a smaller sized building. Discussion ensued. Mr. Barnard responded to a question from Vice Chairman Mulwee concerning population demographics and noted that animal intake trends are decreasing. Mr. Barnard said when he designs a shelter, he designs it to be expandable as a best practice and because of potential increases in the animal population in the future. Chairman Carswell asked if pet ownership trends are increasing is that why the intake numbers are decreasing. Mr. Barnard reported nationally, pet ownership is increasing and as the culture continues to change, pet ownership numbers will probably rise. Mr. Barnard said they study irresponsible pet ownership not the

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number of pets in the community and noted every community is different regarding intake numbers. Discussion ensued.

Chairman Carswell said the Board has received a wide range of information and the animal advocates will give him their opinions as well. The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to keep in mind how much money is being spent, and noted he liked seeing a range of costs for a new facility. He said they are diligently looking at locations in the County for a new ASC (Animal Services Center) and a few properties look promising. Chairman Carswell said Mr. Barnard will complete a walkthrough of the sites in the future, after the Board discusses how they want to proceed with a new ASC.

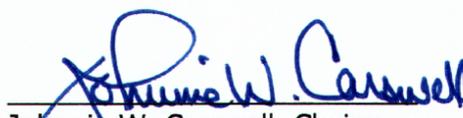
Motion: To accept the report as presented.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Johnnie W. Carswell, Scott Mulwee and Jeffrey C. Brittain
ABSENT:	Wayne F. Abele, Sr. and Maynard M. Taylor

ADJOURN

Chairman Carswell adjourned the meeting at 2:57 p.m.

Approved the 16th day of June 2020.


 Johnnie W. Carswell, Chairman
 Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:


 Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
 Clerk to the Board