

*Lowndes County
Board of Commissioners*



*Ashley Paulk, Chairman
Joyce E. Gossett, District 1
Richard C. Brax, District 2
S. Robert Carter, District 3*

Post Office Box 1340 • Tallahassee, FL 91603-1340 • Phone (228) 871-2400 • Fax (228) 245-5222

October 15, 2010

Ms. Mary Greene
Georgia Department of Agriculture
19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, SW
Room 123
Atlanta, GA 30334-4201

Ms. Greene,

I appreciate your kindness in visiting Lowndes County and meeting with me personally to discuss your agency's concerns related to activities at the Lowndes County Animal Shelter. After your visit, I began an in-depth investigation of the charges. I met with all the staff individually and asked a series of questions, as well as Dr. Tim Thornhill, related to euthanasia documentation, access to drugs, humane treatment of animals in our control, and other operational issues.

As a result of my investigation, Lowndes County has made the following changes to operational policies and procedures.

• **Documentation of Records**

We are establishing teams of two individuals to conduct euthanasia. Rather than allow everyone to perform this task, we are selecting those best suited to do this and those with the most experience. One individual will maintain the records during the workday. After hours, the animal control officer on duty or the director will record procedures. All activity recorded after midnight will be recorded for the next day. On the following day, the director will review the activity for the prior day and maintain the record for review. We have expanded the information contained in the 'euthanasia record' in an effort to improve our accuracy. The drugs used during euthanasia are premixed and measured in 10cc syringes to allow for easy accountability. Both attendants will confirm the amounts at the beginning and end of each session. The director maintains the reports under lock and key.

• **Control Access to Drugs**

We are seeking cost for both video and electronic locks for the Tech room. This room is used for euthanasia.

By installing video, we can eliminate discrepancies on the method used during euthanasia or any other procedures. The electronic locks will record the time and individual entering the room. These records will eliminate rumors or innuendos.

• **Humane Treatment**

I have given both verbal and written counselling with both Linda Pateliski and Michelle Shultz regarding any procedures not performed by the veterinarian. By policy, only Dr. Thornhill or a licensed veterinarian can perform medical procedures. The previously referenced video will eliminate such activity or claims. A record of Dr. Thornhill's visits is maintained, as is his direction by phone for animal care and any medication. Dates and times of the visits and calls are recorded and those records are also maintained by the director under lock and key.

• **Veterinarian Care**

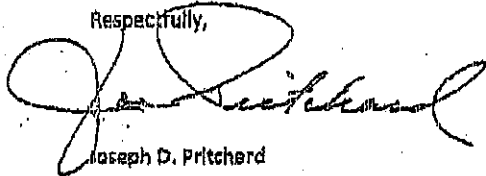
Dr. Thornhill will review all animals to determine any care given while the animal is property of Lowndes County. It should be noted that the mission of the Lowndes County Animal Shelter is to humanely collect and maintain animals that create concern to the public safety and welfare. Animals that are eligible for adoption will be housed for an appropriate time. If the adoptable animals are not claimed during the specified period, those animals will be euthanized by a humane method specified by law.

• **Employees**

I believe personality conflicts are a significant portion of the claims of violations and improper activity. The personality conflicts are creating issues between Lowndes County staff and agents of the Department of Agriculture. I am reminding my staff of our policy of addressing issues through the 'chain of command'. Many of the issues addressed could have been addressed by proper adherence to policy procedures. I would request all reports or claims from the Department of Agriculture be forwarded to my attention so that immediate attention can be applied to the concerns of your department.

Please accept my appreciation for the courtesy extended by you to Lowndes County by allowing us to address the items of concern listed above as well as some discussed in our meeting. I can assure you of cooperation and attention regarding all matters related to the adherence of the rules and laws associated with our animal shelter.

Respectfully,



Joseph D. Pritchard
Manager

Linda Pateliski, Lowndes County Animal Services Director