



MINUTES

ANIMAL CONTROL BOARD

3rd QUARTER MEETING 2025

DATE: Wednesday September 24, 2025

Location: Michigan City Police Department's Community Room

Time: 12:30 pm

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 12:35 p.m.

Roll Call

Present:

David Cooney

Karen Edwards

Don Przybylinski

Chairperson / MCPD

Michiana Humane Society (MHS)

Michigan City Council Member

Absent:

Dr. Rex Bailey

{Vacant Position}

Quorum: Yes

Michigan City Animal Hospital

Director of Animal Control

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from 1st Quarter meeting dated March 2025.

Motion: Approve the 1st Quarter 2025 meeting minutes.

1st – Don Przybylinski

2nd – Karen Edwards

The motion was approved by all board members present - **Motion carries.**

Previous Business

- **Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Program Updates**

- Total cats processed through TNR during this period: 64 (35 female, 29 male).



- Monthly totals of cats trapped:
 - February: 5
 - March: 16
 - April: 6
 - July: 8
 - August: 11
 - September: 11
- Traps are placed at multiple colony locations throughout the city. Results vary depending on trap placement and timing.
- Trap Timing and Field Operations
 - ACOs reported higher success rates when traps are set early in the morning. One session achieved 16 of 16 cats when traps were set early.
 - When traps are set later in the morning (around 11:00 a.m.), fewer cats are captured because:
 - Cats are typically fed early and are less active later in the day.
 - Hot weather causes cats to remain in shaded areas.
 - ACOs requested flexibility to start earlier on trap days so traps can be deployed before cats are fed.
- Feeding Practices and Public Compliance
 - Public feeding of feral cats is a recurring operational challenge. Many caregivers routinely feed cats, often as early as 5:00 a.m., which reduces the effectiveness of trapping efforts.
 - Under the city's TNR code, caregivers are allowed to feed cats only within a designated two-hour window each day; feeding outside that window is not permitted.
 - Before TNR operations in a neighborhood, officers go door-to-door to inform residents and ask caregivers not to feed cats the morning of trapping so that cats will enter traps hungry.



- Door-hanger notices with instructions have been used successfully but are time-consuming; additional printed materials would be helpful.

- Capacity, Volume, and Colony List
 - More than 15 identified colony locations have not yet been addressed because staff are continually diverted to major “crisis” situations, including large “cat boarding house” situations.
 - Kennel space is frequently full, complicating intake and holding.
 - Staff believe the feral cat situation is worsening, with large numbers of cats and reports of some residents threatening to shoot cats out of frustration.
 - The board and staff discussed the need to develop a citywide list of colonies and caregivers to better estimate total cat numbers and prioritize TNR efforts.
- Veterinary Partners and Appointment Constraints
 - Freed’s Animal/Cat Shelter continues to assist the city with TNR and has an upcoming October session planned at a large “cat boarding house” property.
 - Freed’s is very busy and may not be able to provide more than one appointment per month to the city.
 - The limited number of available appointments is a major bottleneck, and staff emphasized the need to identify ways to conduct more TNR sessions, ideally multiple times per month.
- Costs and Community Funding (Public TNR Advocate)
 - A community member who runs a TNR program provided cost information:
 - Snip (Portage): approximately \$105 per cat, including flea treatment.
 - Dr. Anderson (LaPorte): approximately \$75 per cat.
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- Public Vet: about \$100 per cat, with some financial assistance options.
- She noted that these costs are significant given that the cats are technically unowned, though they are being fed by caregivers.
- She has done TNR independently for 14 years and has run a program for 8 years; funding is a constant challenge.
 - Typical strategies include community fundraisers (car washes, yard sales, donations) and modest contributions from caregivers (for example, \$25 per cat) to offset costs.
 - She reported that Snip's public rate is about \$90 per cat, which might allow treatment of 15–20 cats per month in some areas, though even intensive work in a small area (e.g., a five-house radius) only makes a dent in the overall citywide population.
- Data Collection and Vet Outreach
 - Suggestions were made to:
 - Compile a comprehensive list of colonies and caregivers within the city.
 - Contact local veterinarians to request their lowest possible cost per surgery and to ask whether each vet could commit to performing a small number of spay/neuter surgeries (e.g., five per clinic).
 - The board expressed appreciation for the information, and the community member offered to help with organizing and outreach.
- **Kennel Expansion Project**
 - The Chief reported on the status of the planned kennel expansion.
 - Project oversight is being handled by Andy Matanic, with city staff member Terry Borloff expected to perform much of the construction work internally.
 - External contractors will be engaged for concrete work and specialized tasks.



- - The department hopes to break ground “very soon,” and much of the work is expected to be completed by internal staff.
- Board members and staff noted that the expansion will be very helpful, given current overcrowding and kennel conditions.

New Business

- ACO On-Call Scheduling
 - ACOs raised concerns regarding their on-call rotation.
 - Conceptually, they proposed maintaining their regular full shifts but designating one weekend per month on which they would not be on call after hours.
 - The Chief explained that on-call scheduling is primarily an internal and union-related matter and indicated it would be addressed through internal processes rather than as a board action.

Review of Michigan City Animal Control Activities for 1st and 2nd Quarter 2025 presented by Chairperson Cooney:

1st Quarter Report 2025

Total impounds: 111

Dogs: 81

Cats: 29

Other: 1

DOGS

Returned to Owner: 48

Michiana Humane Society (MHS): 6



LaPorte County Small Animal Shelter: 6

Valparaiso Lakeshore Paws: 16

Other Rescues: 2

Fostered: 2

Deceased: 0

Euthanize: 1

CATS

MHS: 15

Fried's Cat Shelter: 0

LaPorte County Small Animal Shelter: 8

Owner reclaims: 0

Fostered: 0

Deceased: 5

Euthanize: 1

Other

One (1) Rabbit placed in Foster Care

2nd Quarter Report 2025

Total impounds: 114

Dogs: 80

Cats: 32



Other: 2

DOGS

Returned to Owner: 42

Michiana Humane Society (MHS): 15

LaPorte County Small Animal Shelter: 4

Valparaiso Lakeshore Paws: 8

ARK Rescue: 1

Euthanize: 4

Deceased: 6

CATS

Owner reclaims: 2

MHS: 10

LaPorte County Small Animal Shelter: 5

Fried's Cat Shelter: 7

Fostered: 0

Deceased: 7

Euthanize: 1

Other

One (1) raccoon to Humane Indiana Wildlife, one (1) bird to the MC Zoo



Discussion:

A board member asked why six dogs were found deceased during the second quarter.

- The Chief explained that causes are often unknown but may include vehicle strikes or being dumped while already ill.

- All deceased animals are photographed and scanned for microchips in an effort to locate owners, but many remain unidentified.

- The Chief noted that animal control activity remains high year-round; the kennel is occasionally empty but quickly fills again. He commended the three animal control officers for their efforts and workload management.

Public Comments:

- Kennel Conditions and Expansion Urgency
 - A member of the public asked when ground would be broken on the new kennel facility, citing:
 - Existing kennels are deteriorating.
 - There is insufficient space and a lack of runs.
 - Some dogs have been confined in small kennels for months.
 - The Chief responded that:
 - The original goal was to begin construction in July, but there have been delays.
 - After speaking with the project lead, they expect to break ground within a few weeks.
 - Much of the work will be done in-house, with some contracted components.
 - The project has been on the agenda for a couple of years and remains a priority.
 - He committed to contacting the project lead after the meeting to obtain a more precise timeline.



- Impact of Veterinary Changes on TNR
 - A board member reported that the Michigan City Humane Society no longer has a veterinarian as of that day, which will halt TNR through that facility and force reliance on outside veterinarians.
 - Concern was expressed that this change may worsen the feral cat situation, though staff and volunteers will continue their efforts.
 - The discussion included the potential use of mobile spay/neuter units, such as those used in the past (e.g., “Neuter Scooter”).
 - When mobile clinics visited previously, they made a substantial difference, but they require a large indoor space with restrooms, such as a school gym.
 - The shelter’s education room was used in the past but is too small for clinics serving 100 or more animals.

Board Comments:

- Staff Recognition and Burnout Concerns
 - Board members and the Chief recognized the demanding nature of the animal control officers’ work and commended them for doing an excellent job under heavy workloads.
 - Emotional and physical strain and the risk of burnout were acknowledged.
 - Pay and Parity Issues
 - A member of the public commented that animal control work is not a typical 9–5 job, that it is all-consuming, and that pay appears to be lower than average, contributing to burnout.
 - She suggested that improving pay would help morale and retention.



- The Chief responded that pay parity for animal control officers is already on the mayor's agenda.

- He noted that the department is in budget discussions with the city and has a meeting scheduled the same evening.

- The goal is to correct pay disparities and achieve parity effective in January of the upcoming year.

- Staffing and Coverage; Partner Reimbursements
 - The Chief stated that he has requested the addition of a part-time employee, through HR and the mayor, to help with weekend coverage.
 - He also requested amendments to the ordinance governing reimbursement for partner organizations, asking that:
 - Lakeshore Paws be added as a reimbursable partner in addition to Guardians of the Green Mile.
 - Humane Indiana Wildlife Rehab also be included in the reimbursement framework.
 - Board members reiterated their support for staff and emphasized the importance of completing the new building and continuing to improve cat management in the city.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

1st – Don Przybylinski

2nd – Karen Edwards

Motion carries.

Next meeting: Wednesday December 17th, 2025



Notes:

- *This meeting was very informative, covering several important issues related to animal control in Michigan City.*
- *Several action items were assigned to address these issues, and the board showed commitment to finding solutions.*
- *The board expressed appreciation for the hard work of Animal Control and their dedication to the well-being of animals in the community.*

Minutes Approved: 3/25/2026

1st/ AC David Cooney PC 248