

# THS Board Meeting (#9)

## Minutes

Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 6:30 pm

By Teleconference

**Present:** Shelley Austin, Malcolm Bernstein, David Bronskill, Martin Buckle, Krista Bulmer, Mark Dilworth, Kathy McDonald, Bronwen Morgan, Peter Newell, Emily Pang, Dominique Rousselle, Stephen Steele, Elaine Wong, Angela Young

**Regrets:** Chris Wood

**Staff:** Jacques Messier, CEO; Phil Nichols, COO; Dr. Karen Ward, Chief Veterinary Officer, Carol Boulding, Director, People & Culture, Tegan Buckingham, Director, Integrated Marketing and Development, Claudette Turner, Manager, Executive Department (Recording Secretary)

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Malcolm Bernstein called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

### **1. Regular Business**

1.1 THAT the Agenda be approved as amended.

Moved: Krista Bulmer      Seconded: Dominique Rousselle      **Carried.**

1.2 THAT the Minutes of the March 31, 2020 meeting be approved.

Moved: David Bronskill      Seconded: Peter Newell      **Carried.**

### **2. Operations Update**

Malcolm invited Karen Ward, Phil Nichols, Carol Boulding and Tegan Buckingham to provide an update on operations during the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of animal welfare, human resources and communications with a view to future sector considerations.

Dr. Karen Ward provided an overview on ways that the Society is delivering telehealth (remote health care) and telemedicine (delivery to a specific animal). The ability to provide this means of care was enabled by a temporary relaxation of CVO regulations to allow veterinary care providers to dispense medications remotely during the pandemic. This has been a huge benefit for public-owned animals and fosters, and is saving costs in both time and resources. Karen reiterated that this was a temporary relaxation of regulations, but recommended that the Society advocate for allowing telehealth and telemedicine to continue as are others in the sector.

Karen indicated that the Society has a good concentration of shelter veterinary expertise and hopes to provide consultations to other shelters in Ontario in the future which need this support.

She noted that there is a paradigm shift underway across North America that also encompasses animal social services. The Society is looking at robust support systems for keeping animals in their homes so that new homes can be saved for animals that really need them. This shift also provides for animals being kept in foster homes to the greatest extent possible and made available for adoption on a virtual and scheduled basis. These best practices build on the path THS has been on for several years of being more than an animal shelter, helping animals, people, and others in the shelter community.

On behalf of the Board, Malcolm thanked Dr. Karen Ward for her comprehensive overview of public veterinary and shelter medicine services during these uncertain times.

Phil Nichols and Dr. Mark Dilworth discussed the financial impact of COVID 19 on the veterinary community which is doing its best to keep staff and the public safe. They also discussed the risks, challenges and opportunities that have required staff to pivot to new ways of fulfilling the Society's mission. Amongst other, Mark mentioned that his practice migrated to a telemedicine model early on in the pandemic. Phil provided an update on intake, the border issue and its impact on rescue transport, and the dwindling supply chain due to animals across North America increasingly being at home or in foster homes. Phil also noted that many domestic shelters such as in Quebec, Northern Ontario, and Manitoba place considerable restrictions on the animals they do release for transport and do not have the animal care practices which conform to THS's intake policies/standards, thereby posing health risks to THS from a disease perspective. Malcolm then invited Carol Boulding to provide an update on human resources. Carol noted that she had been focussed on implementing the new payroll and HR system. She reported some staff will need to upgrade their computer and other skill sets to work with the new adoption system.

Carol noted that Maddie Kingston has been focussed on Volunteer Appreciation Week. She will now be working on drafting a new volunteer policy.

Malcolm asked Tegan Buckingham to provide an update on staffing, technology and fundraising. Tegan reported that Marketing, Fundraising and Communications staff are functioning well. Online

fundraising donations are doing very well. The Society has also been the beneficiary of a lot of product.

Malcolm thanked the Executive leadership team and complimented them on doing an excellent job under difficult circumstances.

### **3. *Financial Update***

Jacques Messier reviewed the Society's financial position. While revenues are above the previous year, they are below budget.

He noted that corporate and foundation donations are down significantly, and asked the Board if there were any corporations with which they are connected that he could follow up with personally.

He advised that the Society is eligible for the federal government's wage subsidy program and has applied for it.

Jacques reviewed cash flow projections to the end of the year.

Stephen Steele noted that the Society's financial position is currently stable, and noted that the Society has flexibility to take action later in the year if required.

On behalf of the staff, Jacques thanked the Board for their unflagging support which has gone a long way to maintaining positivity through these challenging weeks.

### **4. *Committee Reports***

**Governance/Executive Committee** – Malcolm advised that the Governance Committee's recent focus has been on the impact of the corona virus on staffing, operations and financials.

**AGM Update** – Claudette Turner advised that a letter had been sent to members advising of the cancellation of the Open House and the postponement of the AGM until later in the year. In light of the postponement, the Board agreed to continue accepting new membership applications received after April 16, 2020.

**Animal Welfare Committee** – Bronwen Morgan noted that subsequent to the approval of the Shelter Admissions policy at the March 31, 2020 Board meeting, the Intake policy has been superseded and should be withdrawn. The Committee plans to meet in early May. While the Foster policy was the next policy to be reviewed, as the role of foster caregivers has changed, the Committee will consider where its efforts are best directed.

**Volunteer Committee** – Martin Buckle advised that the Volunteer Committee has not yet met. With regard to the new Volunteer policy, he requested that it be reviewed by the Volunteer Committee so that its voice is heard as well.

**Advocacy Committee** – Martin Buckle advised that Government committee meetings are still on hold. While it is still possible to make submissions, the Society will wait for the Government’s changes to determine its next steps re BSL. Federal legislation has also not progressed. Martin will reach out to Jacques and Karen Ward regarding changes to the Ontario Veterinary Act.

Jacques will connect with Humane Canada regarding its knowledge of the cross border animal transfer issue.

**Board Recruitment** - Krista Bulmer reported that several candidates have submitted nominations for the Board of Directors. Candidates’ nominations will be reviewed by the Nominating Committee. A strategy will be developed when there is a clearer indication of when the AGM can be held.

**5. Next Meetings**

Tuesday, May 26, 2020, 6:30 pm

**6. In-camera**

The Board moved in camera at 8:45 pm and rose at 9:00 pm.

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

*Malcolm Bernstein*

  
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Malcolm Bernstein, Chair

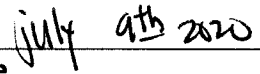
*Elaine Wong*

  
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Elaine Wong, Secretary

MAY 10 2020

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Date

*July 9th 2020*

  
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Date