



**PENSACOLA
HUMANE SOCIETY™**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' HANDBOOK

Revised October 2021

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS' HANDBOOK**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Pensacola Humane Society is committed to improving the lives of companion animals in our community through advocacy, adoption, education and sanctuary.

INTRODUCTION

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Pensacola Humane Society, you occupy a key position in a organization that for 75 years has been dedicated to caring for homeless and abused animals and to promoting animal welfare in the Pensacola area. Since 1943 your predecessors have worked hard to build the Pensacola Humane Society into the organization that it is today.

A compassionate, skilled, and motivated staff led by the Executive Director, manage the operation of our adoption center at 5 North Q Street, 32505; the Barbara Grice Memorial Spay and Neuter Clinic; and the Pet Resource Center at 817 Beverly Parkway, 32505, which is dedicated to keeping pets out of shelters, by providing food and supplies, advice on behavior issues, and rehoming. Our programs and outreach continue to expand and evolve in response to the changing needs of our community and the current best practices in animal welfare.

It is now your turn to continue the tradition. Regardless of how long you serve as a Board member, you should be able to say when you leave that the Pensacola Humane Society is a better organization than when you arrived. The job requires dedication, patience and understanding. It will provide to you many satisfying, perhaps even joyous moments, but there also will be moments of frustration, sadness and hard work. It is all part of being a member of this wonderful organization.

This manual is intended to help you better understand your role and to guide you as you work to promote animal welfare in our community.

FACTS ABOUT HOMELESS ANIMALS AND SHELTER INTAKE

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), nearly one million animals are euthanized in shelters each year. As shocking as this number is, it represents a dramatic decline compared to previous years. At the Escambia County Animal Shelter the number of animals euthanized has decreased dramatically since 2015. While this represents impressive progress, we still have much work to do in becoming a no-kill community.

Typically, statistics show that the pets of the economically poorest 15% of households are the most at risk of ending up in shelters. These households are also the least likely to have their pets spayed/neutered and most at risk of having unwanted litters.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPAYING AND NEUTERING

The spaying/neutering of companion animals is the most humane and proactive approach to reducing shelter intakes and eliminating the euthanasia of healthy animals, or animals who, with reasonable

treatment, could be brought back to health. To be considered no-kill, a community must have at least a 90% live release rate. The Pensacola Humane Society is a leader in the no-kill movement and works in partnership with other animal welfare organizations, both locally and nationally, to make that goal a reality.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

(Information taken from newspaper clippings and corporate books)

Records indicated that there was a Humane Society in 1942. The original Articles of Incorporation were filed with the County and State on February 3, 1943. There is not much information from this period until about 1946. However, records show that in 1946 the Humane Society was located at Zarragossa and Devilliers Streets. It served as an animal shelter, conducted cruelty investigations, and picked up stray animals.

In 1947 the Humane Society began cooperating with the city for enforcement of the animal license law. Half of their expenses were paid by the city and half from donations. In December 1947, the property flooded and various officials decided that the site was too wet, recommending that the location be moved. In January 1948 the city finance and health committee discussed and approved construction for a facility on Alcaniz Street. Even with approval, things did not move quickly, and the Humane Society used an old wooden building provided by the city for a period of time. In September of 1948 this building was deemed unsuitable for keeping dogs and a push was on for the city to consider a new shelter.

In October 1948 the Humane Society submitted a proposal to the city which stated the Humane Society would supply \$2,000 if the city would appropriate \$3,000 to build a building on South Palafox Street. The details from that time to December 1948 are not known, but by December 1948 a decision had been made to construct a building at our present location, and bids had been solicited. By August 14, 1949, a new 31 ft. by 45 ft. masonry building had been built at our current location and the Humane Society opened for business.

In 1981 the City contracted with the county to provide animal control and indicated its intent to reimburse the Society for the gas used in its cremation oven.

Sometime after 1981 a decision was made for the Humane Society to adhere to a “no-kill” policy. Today, our bylaws clearly state that this policy is still in force.

During 1985 a building fund was started for the current building. With the help of many individuals, the Humane Society finally opened its new facility, which was dedicated in January 1988 and named the Lt. William Morgan Davidson Pet Adoption Center. The bricks making up the front patio bear the names of many of those who contributed and those honored or memorialized.

In 2013, we proudly celebrated 70 years of service to the companion animals in our community. We refreshed our logo and brand to modernize our image and committed ourselves to engaging our community in the effort to make all of Pensacola a no-kill community within 10 years.

In 2015, we supercharged that mission by fulfilling a long-time dream of creating a low-cost, high-

volume, high-quality spay and neuter clinic. Annually this clinic serves 6,000 pets and feral cats at less than half the price of a private practice veterinarian. Our clinic became the 145th spay/neuter clinic in Humane Alliance’s national network of Spay-Neuter Surgical Response Teams.

In 2020 PHS moved some of its administrative offices to 817 Beverly Parkway. This location now also serves as the PHS Resource Center. The Center provides food and supplies, information, advice, and resources for people needing help with their pets. The goal is to provide alternatives to surrendering pets and keep them out of shelters as much as possible.

In February 2023 the Pensacola Humane Society will celebrate its 80th anniversary!

AFFILIATIONS

The organization is officially registered as the Humane Society of Pensacola, FL, Inc., d.b.a. Pensacola Humane Society. We are a private 501(c)(3) that is NOT affiliated with the Humane Society of the United States or any other national animal welfare organization. We subsist on donations from the local community and exist to serve the local community. We currently receive no city, county, state, or federal funding. The one exception to this is a grant from Escambia County which assists qualifying low-income residents to obtain spay/neuter services at the Barbara Grice Memorial Spay and Neuter Clinic.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors governs the policies and affairs of the organization, and those decisions are executed through the Executive Director. The Executive Director, as the administrator of the Society, is authorized and directed to conduct the day-to-day business of the Pensacola Humane Society in consonance with policy established by the Board of Directors.

MISSION, PURPOSE AND STATEMENT OF NO-KILL POLICY SUMMARIZED FROM THE BYLAWS

MISSION AND PURPOSES

Mission and Statement

The Pensacola Humane Society is committed to improving the lives of companion animals in our community through advocacy, adoption, education and sanctuary.

Purposes

- 1) The purposes of the Pensacola Humane Society are to care for unwanted animals, maintain a shelter facility, increase public awareness of pet-related issues, and promote low-cost sterilization of companion animals.

“NO-KILL” Policy

The Pensacola Humane Society has a strict NO-KILL policy except

- a. to relieve the pain and suffering of critically ill or injured animals, or
- b. to euthanize vicious or socially unacceptable animals that create a danger to Humane Society personnel, volunteers, the public, or other shelter animals. The bylaws state the process for ensuring responsible adherence to this policy.

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of a Board member is to govern the agency and to set policy in consonance with policies and decisions made by the entire Board.

Governance - This encompasses overseeing the finances of the agency and ensuring the organization is living up to its ethical and legal responsibilities. Governance includes overseeing the work of the Executive Director, the financial reserve, the annual budget and the strategic plan.

Setting Policy - This requires having a strategic and long-range plan in place to carry out the mission of the Society. Setting policy involves all facets of the operation of the Humane Society; these policies should be in writing. The Board sets the policies; however, the management of the Society is carried out by the Executive Director. Individual Board members should not involve themselves in the day-to-day decisions of the Society.

You have the honor of contributing to our well-known and long-standing reputation in the community. As a Board member you are entrusted with individual responsibilities as a part of your membership. The obligations of your service are considerable, and they extend well beyond the basic expectations of attending meetings, participating in fundraising initiatives, and making monetary contributions.

One irony of your position is that Board membership does not convey special privileges, prerogative or authority. The Board must meet in formal session to make corporate decisions. Individually you are expected to meet high standards of personal conduct on behalf of the Humane Society.

General Expectations

You should commit yourself to:

- Know our mission, purposes, goals, policies, programs, services, strengths and needs.
- Perform your duties responsibly and conform to the level of competence expected and with care, loyalty, and compliance.
- Suggest possible nominees to the Board who are clearly women and men of achievement and distinction (such as you), who can make significant contributions to our Humane Society work.
- Serve in leadership positions and undertake special assignments willingly and enthusiastically.
- Avoid prejudiced judgment based on information received from individuals (staff, clients, families, and other stakeholders) and urge those with grievances to follow established policies and procedures through the appropriate Humane Society personnel.
- Keep informed of trends in the organization's field of interest.
- Bring good will and a sense of humor to the Board's deliberations.

Meetings

- Strive to attend as many meetings as possible. The Board cannot function effectively without the full and active participation of all its members. If you find that you cannot regularly attend, meetings, please notify the Board President to determine if you should remain on the Board.
- Prepare for and participate in Board and committee meetings, including appropriate Humane

Society activities.

- Ask timely and substantive questions at Board and committee meetings, consistent with your conscience and convictions, while supporting the majority decision on issues decided by the Board.
- Maintain confidentiality of the Board's executive sessions and speak for the Board or Humane Society only when authorized to do so.

Relationship with Staff

- Counsel the Executive Director as appropriate and support him/her through difficult relationships with groups or individuals.
- Avoid interfering in the day-to-day operations of the Humane Society. Any concerns should first be directed to the Board president.
- Avoid asking for special favors of the staff, including special requests for extensive information, without prior consultation with the Executive Director, Board of Directors, or appropriate committee chairperson.

Avoiding Conflicts

- Serve the Humane Society as a whole, rather than any special interest group or constituency. Regardless of whether you are invited to fill a vacancy reserved for a certain constituency or organization, your first obligation is to avoid any preconception that you "represent" anything but the Humane Society's best interests.
- Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest that might embarrass the Board or the Humane Society and disclose any possible conflicts to the Board in a timely fashion. *See our Conflict of Interest policy.*
- Maintain independence and objectivity and do what a sense of fairness, ethics, and personal integrity dictates, even though not necessarily obliged to do so by law, regulation or custom.
- Never accept (or offer) favors or gifts from (or to) anyone who does business with the Humane Society.

Fiduciary Responsibilities

- Exercise prudence with the Board in the control and transfer of funds.
- Faithfully read and understand the Humane Society's financial statements and otherwise help the Board fulfill its fiduciary responsibility.

Fundraising

- Give an annual gift according to personal means. A minimum annual gift of \$500 is suggested.
- Assist the development of committees and staff by implementing fundraising strategies through personal influence with others (corporations, individuals, foundations). *See our Roles in Development Activities policy.*

Volunteering

- To better understand the workings of PHS and be a positive force for PHS in the community, each board member is required to sign up to attend or volunteer at one event per quarter, or to assist at the adoption center or PHS Resource Center. A schedule of events and opportunities will be provided at each quarterly meeting. This may only take an hour or two of your time but helps build staff and volunteer morale and creates understanding of our impact in the community.

The effectiveness of the Board is enhanced when:

- 1) Every Board member accepts every other Board member with due appreciation of his/her strengths, and a tolerance of his/her quirks and weaknesses.
- 2) There is an easy familiarity of approach among the members of the Board with an awareness of one another's backgrounds and viewpoints.

- 3) Everyone concerned with a particular decision actually helps to make it.
- 4) The contribution of each person or group is recognized.
- 5) The Board has a sense of being rooted in some important tradition, and of providing continuity for a program, which has been and continues to be of importance.
- 6) The whole attitude of the Board is forward-looking, and there is a confident expectation of growth and development in the program.
- 7) There is a clear definition of responsibilities so that each person knows what is expected of him/her.
- 8) The members of the Board can communicate easily with one another.
- 9) There is a sense that the whole Board is more important than any of its parts.
- 10) There is a capacity to resolve dissent and discord or, if it cannot be resolved, to keep it in perspective in terms of larger purposes.
- 11) There is acceptance of, and conformity to, a code of behavior involving courtesy, self-discipline and responsibility.
- 12) There is an awareness of the fact that all Boards contain clusters or pairs of persons who tend to like or dislike one another, as well as some who may not be closely involved with others; but there is also a capacity to use these personal relationships as effectively as possible to achieve the larger purposes of the program.
- 13) There is an ability to recognize and use the informal authority of individual Board members which arises not out of their specific assignments on the Board but their influence, connections, wealth, age, or ability.

In case of internal conflict, the group has the capacity to examine the situation objectively, identify the sources of difficulty, and remedy them. Most important of all, the Board members share a clear understanding of and commitment to the cause which the Pensacola Humane Society serves.

We sincerely hope that you will find your time on the Pensacola Humane Society Board of Directors rewarding and enjoyable. We appreciate your commitment to making our community a better place for companion animals.

END

Amended and approved by Executive Committee October 4, 2021

Eloise D. Lautier, Board Secretary

