



**Indianapolis Animal Care Services Advisory Board
Minutes from Tuesday, October 15, 2024 Meeting**

Board Members

- Chris Roberson, City Council Appointee – Present
- Madison Weintraut, Marion County Public Health Department Representative – Present
- Dr. Taryn Condon, IndyHumane Mayoral Appointee – Not Present
- Brett Kruger, Mayoral Appointee – Present
- Kelly Diamond, Deputy Director of Animal Care Services – Present
- (Open position – Veterinarian)

Approval of August Meeting Minutes

- Chris Roberson brings up Approval of September Meeting Minutes with edit of removing Bylaws from minutes.
- Madison Weintraut motions to approve pending the update to attendance. Motion passes. Minutes approved.

Field Operations (Kaelyn Helson)

- Reviewed September statistics report

Bite Reports	93
Citations	126
Investigation Impounds	60
Total Reports	183

- There was a total of 1,922 Service Calls.
- Average response:
 - Priority 1 - 6 days, 1 hours, 17 minutes
 - Priority 2 – 10 days, 8 hours, 48 minutes
 - Priority 3 – 15 days, 13 hours, 56 minutes
 - Priority 4 – 5 days, 5 hours, 10 minutes
- Total average response time: 7days, 7 hours, 51 minutes
- 531 103c1 - Animal attack on another animal – we issued 26 this month vs 6 last month.
- 202 - Permanent ID required – Issued 10 this month vs 1 last month.
- 401 – Issued 17 this month vs 92 last month

Discussion:

- **Bret Kruger:** I have a question on the reports by ACOs is that an edited total? So that's not every report that came in. You've cancelled...
- **Kaelyn Helson:** I would like to clarify. I'm not the one who compiles these statistics so please whoever does, please assist me with that. But my understanding of how that statistic would be taken is that Those are the police reports that we write, which is not on every case that we do, cases that are going to have citations, follow-ups, things like that. But regarding I know we have spoken to the subcommittee about the completed runs. Depending on which report you pull, it will include some cancelled runs versus some will not, so I'm not sure. I was hoping to get with someone, but I apologize today, they got away from me.
- **Brett Kruger:** I just have a question. I guess of something that isn't reported and or isn't recorded on the report and that is is there is any way to track overall number of calls, complaints, emails. Various Request Indy, mac coming in from the public. Is that something that is tracked, is there any way to track that.
- **Kaelyn Helson:** I know that. We can see any and all runs that are in Chameleon. There's a report that shows the calls that came in versus end, like a separate column of calls that were completed. It would not include emails unless they become a complaint in chameleon, which not all do.
- **Bret Kruger:** OK and kind of the reason why I'm doing the deep dive on this is - out in the field today I ran into two cases on one day of citizens that basically felt there was no need to call IACS because nothing would be done. One of these was 2 dogs on three to four foot long log chains with padlocks around their necks. The chains around the neck. The padlock locking the chain. They were chained to the bumper/trailer/Non functional vehicle in the yard. They had no shelter. And the caller, the person who called Fido about this had known about it since the beginning of September and had taken it on herself to try to do things. The owners would not work with her. Fido went out today. Owners would not work with us. So there's that one. There was another one where we went out to a client who lives next to Windsor Village Park. That's very close to where the man was attacked by stray dogs. And she says she still sees strays in the area but doesn't feel, you know, she feels it's pointless to try to report them. And FIDO is currently getting probably 15 to 25 calls from the public per week to check up on care of dogs. Or to report stray dogs to us and a lot of the callers will say that there's... They're not getting. They don't feel like they're getting a response from IACS. Now I know that if there's an investigation or something, you can't and you certainly don't have the time to update every single one, but there certainly is a, at the very least there is a perception problem going on. That is something that needs to be addressed the public. You certainly don't want the public going if there's a problem with an animal, you certainly don't want the public going, "whatever you do, don't call the shelter". That's not where we should start from, right? It should be. They should feel comfortable reporting something they should feel comfortable that it's going to get addressed. It's going to get taken care of. I mean the live release rate for this month was great so they should feel comfortable that it's not going to end in a bad decision. I guess I just want to bring that awareness to everyone that - there's a lot going on out there that apparently isn't

getting reported because of this, and hopefully be able to start kind of an honest conversation about what IACS needs to do to either fix the perception problem, but also maybe start taking in more of these strays. Maybe moving to, you know, finding a better set point. More strays. It may knock the live release rate down a little bit. So what is our comfort zone there? When a metric becomes the end goal, it only shows how well you are or how well your organization is geared to achieving that metric. It doesn't show how well the organization is performing all of its functions as a whole. So I want us to keep in mind as a group - Live release rate is a great metric, but if we're not serving the community or the community feels we are not serving them, we've got to find metrics that show the community we're here to help. OK. And I'm not sure there's there's issues to it. I'm not sure there's questions there. It's more just, these are issues that I feel we need to talk about in some manner.

- **Sean Hicks:** Just to kind of go with what you're saying, because I think I agree with you at a certain point too, I've always kind of had my own opinion, not necessarily IACS opinion, but the Like the kill shelter or the live release rate, it's almost an unrealistic goal for an open admission shelter to try to. To, I mean, it's admirable to always strive to hit those numbers, but to make sure that we hit those numbers every single time it's that's just creating strain. So I kind of get what you're saying and what you're kind of talking about there. So I understand you.
- **Kelly LaRoche:** I would like to add something there that when we talk about our live release rate and I'm not going to speak for everybody else in this room, this is strictly myself. Because it's something that I have been heard a lot from the public, that all we care about is our live release rate and I can honestly tell you I do not look at our live release rate. I do not know what it is until I come to this meeting and look at this.
- **Kelly Diamond:** That's the same for all of us.
- **Kelly LaRoche:** I don't look at. I look at: Can we care for the animals in our building? Are they living in humane conditions? That's where that line is for me. If the live release rate goes up, which I believe that it will, as we improve the quality of life for the animals in the shelter, they're going to spend less time. Their length of stay is going to decrease and therefore we can get more animals in and out of the building, which is in the long run, caring for more animals and genuinely believe that that's what we're going to see. Over the coming months. But the live release rate, that's just a bonus. I mean, we are an open and take shelter. That's not our goal. It's not my goal.
- **Bret Kruger:** Good, and that's secondary to kind of my thrust. My thrust was the public perception that strays are out there, there's more of them out there. They're staying out there longer. They're not being taken in and they're reporting them is pointless because it's not going to be addressed. And the same with care and treatment violations. That's more to my point.
- **Kelly LaRoche:** And I think that you have a really good point that it really comes down to that balance of how many animals do we want to leave out there as strays and how many do we want to bring into our shelter? Because by doing that, or euthanasia rates are going to go up and where you know, where are we comfortable? Where the public comfortable? That's the question.

- **Kaelyn Helson:** That neighborhood in particular does have a large amount of roaming animals at any time. We did bring in one this week because it was injured by another animal that was stray at the time but is owned. It's an area where it's known that most of those animals do have home. But in general, with the perception we are Colleen and I are going to be meeting this coming this week. I believe trying to talk about a program in schools, we've sent in an ACO to a IMPD community day last a couple weeks ago at this point. So I think that there has been a renewed push to try and help that perception. I know that it was a lot stronger when I started and I'd love to see that increase again and that trust from the public because certainly especially - Yes, the strays are a hard challenge right now because they're, if they were to find a friendly stray at this point, it will not be responded to. But neglect in particular - Obviously, we always want people to report that and to feel comfortable doing so.
- **Brett Kruger** - And unfortunately that is not out there and the problem with the friendly strays is that they might be friendly to you and they might be friendly to me because we may know how to approach a dog, but to a child running and screaming down the street, playing in a park. That's a lot of excitement and the dog may start out as friendly, but it may escalate. Because it's excited, it may escalate because there's more than one dog, so I think I think there's also a huge public safety there with even with friendly strays that we need to find the balance on.
- **Kelly Diamond:** I think to your point too, we've long heard— I know these guys have heard it longer than I have, the comments from the public, like "No sense in calling IACS" and they're being told that by other people that shouldn't be telling them that. And so that's an issue too. And that comes along with, we know, misinformation or incorrect information for whatever reason that sometimes gets given when people do call in—not by ICS, but that just kind of perpetuates that as well. And so that's one of the things we looked at: What are we going to do? And we kind of felt like our options were mass euthanasia one day and continued mass euthanasia on a regular basis, or what we've decided to try because it's difficult. Neither one of them are great answers, and for us, we just decided we wanted to try the latter. We wanted to try a little bit of a reset to give ourselves a little bit of time to actually think about things. We know how things were going weren't working. They were doing managed intake with no plan, no ability, or even sometimes attempts to try to change processes, whereas now we're attempting and taking advantage of the opportunities we are having to step back and think about some things. We, you know, we have no crates now. The impact on morale in the shelter is absolutely huge. We are able to have a cleaner shelter. We are able to focus more on providing some humane care. We are actually able to have a moment to look at the applications for employment that come in and actually do interviews now. We couldn't do that before. So we're trying to take advantage of those opportunities, but also realizing there are a lot of things that each of our departments can do differently and better, and really thinking about those because we still don't have a lot of time to do that, but we have a little bit more time. And our medical team can actually do intake exams on the day that an animal comes in, instead of the animal waiting days and sometimes weeks before getting that. So it's just the option that we chose to try because if we just keep crating and crating or euthanizing and euthanizing, nothing is going to change and we're just trying to take that moment just to kind of step back and take

advantage of that. And that includes doing things like we've been talking about— increased outreach in the community with our ACOs, and that's enrichment for ACOs as well. Or working with the public and helping them keep their animals a little bit more than we have. Kind of revitalizing the Indycare program now that we have that stat there. We weren't able to do all of that before. We weren't able to really accomplish much of anything other than getting through the day. So there's no perfect answer, and we struggled with it. And we knew, you know, the easier way would be, ET, ET, and just trying to find that balance is tough. Absolutely. But we know there are a lot of things that we can do differently, and that's what we want to do now. We want to have that moment to do that little reset and then get out of this emergency intake status and just, you know, get back to something a little more manageable.

- **Sean Hicks:** And then just to back that up with data from this year, because it's almost counterintuitive with all the conversations that we've been having over the past couple of months, but our stray intake is actually the highest it's been since 2018, back when we started tracking some of this. We're at 58.3% of our intakes are stray animals right now. That's still a pretty staggering number.
- **Bret Kruger:** So it's high as a percentage, but not high in numbers.
- **Sean Hicks:** Yeah
- **Billie Bowling:** So to kind of piggyback on all of this— even in an emergency status, we still brought in 80% of the dogs we would normally bring in. So 4 out of every 5 dogs, right? So I think we brought in almost 320 animals. We bring in about 400 roughly 400 each month, right?
- **Bret Kruger:** In 2019, it was a little over.
- **Billie Bowling:** I'm talking about this year. Just this year in general. Now, when you talk about wanting to prioritize stray-friendly animals, we completely understand. We're on the same page—we need to respond. But when we respond to stray-friendly animals, that leaves neglect cases sitting for time. That leaves bite cases sitting for time, abandonment cases sitting for time, abuse cases, whatever. We're taking our minds off of those runs to handle these stray-friendly animals.
- **Bret Kruger:** How do we get you the time to respond to all runs in a fairly reasonable manner?
- **Billie Bowling:** People. Bodies, bodies. IACS still responds to almost 30,000 calls a year, and if we're fully staffed, we have 23 ACOs. It's tough. It's not that we're trying to make excuses. We're just being real about the situation. Yes, we understand that we should be responding to strays, but should we be responding to neglects first? That animal is trapped in those conditions day in and day out. Abandonments, left with no one to care for them. Abuses, getting the crap beat out of them by their owners. Bites, attacks. These are things that we have to prioritize before friendly stray animals. Whereas I understand that, you know, we need to respond to them, but we have to do it by priority.
- **Bret Kruger:** Yes, and you'll... one of my first examples was actually a care and treatment violation, so it's more just—I want anyone to be comfortable reporting an issue, and I want them to feel confident that it's going to get taken care of in an equitable, just, manner that's going to benefit the community and the dogs. And I think we all want that. So I want people to understand, I want to have this conversation. I want to have it publicly so that you all have a chance to put your case out there, right?

- **Billie Bowling:** 100%. And I think that I talked about it a lot last Advisory Board meeting—the perception of us is that we're these terrible people that just do terrible things, don't care about animals, this, that, and yeah—that is the perception of IACS. It's been the perception since I started in 2007, that has not changed. The reality is we're doing the best that we can. Everybody up here went on a 24-hour workday to transport dogs to Chicago to hopefully find them homes. What we heard is, we're taking them to the dogfighters, we're abusing these animals, this, that, and the other, trying not to euthanize them, going to a Mega adoption event, taking time away from our families to be criticized, to be criticized for it. We've had another adoption event since then, and we're having another one in a couple of weeks. We are working our butts off to make it possible to where we could start bringing in this flood of animals that we know is coming. But the reality of the situation is we have to handle neglects first. Those animals are trapped in those conditions and cannot get out of them.
- **Brett Kruger:** And I want the public to call you. I don't want the woman that I spoke to today to know about something since September 4th. So that's... it's the middle of October. That's over two months.
- **Billie Bowling:** But they hear all these negative stories and they just assume that what people are telling them is the truth when it is not.
- **Bret Kruger:** And I want her to be confident to call you. You know, it took her two months to call FIDO, and then they won't work with us. So I want her to be comfortable calling IACS from the get-go because we could have found out they weren't going to work with folks and had the dogs out of the situation by now.
- **Sean Hicks:** We want to earn and maintain that trust, so like you had mentioned with the community event that we're sending ACOs out to and stuff like that, we've got to be more proactive with our approach, getting out there and not making it animal control, making it like, for me, I always told people I wanted to be Sean from animal control. "Hey, I can call Sean for that," or whatever, and personalize that experience. Instead of just having that stigma that's up there. So I think that's one of the biggest things that our enforcement side is trying to shift to: doing the community policing and just handling things differently as far as perspective.
- **Bret Kruger:** And I think if you need resources, it may not be something you all can advocate for yourselves, but it's definitely something this end of the table can advocate for you, especially that one. So we, if resources are the problem, then we need to be having conversations constantly—resource, resource, resource—and getting that in front of people.
- **Sean Hicks:** I mean, just to kind of cap off this, this whole part is we still do want people to report. I mean we need that data, we need people to report, we need people to keep. I mean even if they feel like it hasn't come in yet or they're not getting the response they need, we have to have that to fall back on for reference. We want them to report.
- **Billie Bowling:** They're not part of the conversations that were having. Like we do want to give people the benefit of the doubt, we want to educate them first., then if they don't agree, then we have a different conversation because all audiences are hard to find. Like, before I worked at IACS, I couldn't tell you where they are and I'm sure a lot of people are the same. So I mean you don't know the conversations that we've had. So just assuming that we're not doing nothing. We may have had a conversation. Hey, we've got two weeks to fix these violations. We come back, they're still present. Then we're talking about a different story. You don't know the topic and you're just making the assumption.

- **Bret Kruger:** And that's not even something that the public needs a report back from you on. You know. It's not their business.
- **Kelly Diamond:** That's part of the problem though, because people expect that and then when they don't get it. Then IACS is not doing their job or they're ignoring me so that just kind of contributes to that as well.
- **Chris Roberson:** Colleen, we're you going to chime in before we move onto Kennel Reports?
- **Colleen Walker:** Yeah, but I was just going to say that in regards to the perception problem, it's something I've definitely noticed because there are a lot of amazing things going on at the shelter that I've been able to witness and post and do that kind of stuff. But I think that that's a very hidden part of the shelter. I think it's just kind of seen as a negative space outside of any sort of politics. Because there are people who can't even go into a shelter because it's so, you know, negative for them. So I know that for part of my goal is to be able to bring people into the shelter a little bit more digitally, while doing, you know, ride along with an ACO, community education with schools as well as you know even doing community days where we have people coming to the shelter and learning and talking to the ACOs. So there's a lot that's in the pipeline, but I appreciate you bringing that because I definitely notice it. A lot of times when you're not seeing the positive, you are always going to notice the negative. So hopefully getting more of the positive and actually educating people on what we do. That is something I'm really hoping to kind of achieve in the next year or so.
- **Bret Kruger:** Thank you. I like the multifaceted approach. I would say the other piece of this would just be to be able to move off that emergency intake status so people won't feel like there's no reason. Because a lot of them do know that they're not taking anything that isn't sick or injured.
- **Madison Weintrau:** To clarify on needing more bodies because I know that the number of ACO's that have been staffed, at least since I've been on the board, has been pretty consistent. But for calls and I know you are able to outsource some types of calls to FIDO. Do the bodies have to be employed by Animal Care Services, or how much of it can be volunteer-based?
- **Billie Bowling:** I would prefer it be IACS employees. You never know what kind of situation you're going to get into, and you put yourself at risk of getting hurt. We get a lot of posts on Facebook where people are saying they went over and someone pulled a gun on them. It's better for us to address it. Understand that we - Like we said, when we're not responding to friendly stray dogs we can actually focus our attention on these runs that we should be focusing our attention on first. And like I said, I don't want to see someone get hurt for going up and trying to take someone's dog or anything like that.
- **Kaelyn Helson:** Currently, like with our partnership with FIDO, I'm sending approximately 20 runs this morning out of our approximately 800 runs. By the end, I was struggling to find appropriate runs because, even with that partnership and a knowledgeable organization, being able to not put them in a dangerous situation or deal with repeat offenders or situations where citations are necessary is already near our limit with the current partnership.
- **Madison Weintrau:** Where do you go to recruit candidates for this? Are you able to go to job fairs, or where are you trying to pull from, or what can you do to?
- **Billie Bowling:** So, we did go to a job fair a few months back here at the City-County building. Mainly, the city does a lot of the recruiting work for us. We don't necessarily do that. I know we post things on Facebook and stuff like that. But who wants to come work for a shelter that is

always being belittled and criticized, and people say how horrible it is and how we treat our employees like dog crap? Who would want to work there? That is where we struggle. The perception of IACS has been this way since 2007. I'm the last person that started back then. The next closest person might have 10 years. It's a constant revolving door.

- **Kaelyn Helson:** We've also had, on a slightly more positive note, a lot of the staffing issues we've seen recently have been addressed. I mean, two people sitting at this table were ACOs or in similar positions that we hired on, and now they're serving in amazing capacities in other departments in the building. So, because we hire decent people, hopefully, we're seeing them move into other positions as well.
- **Sean Hicks:** I think, here in the near future, having a new shelter, having a new look, having somewhere that's state-of-the-art, stuff like that, that's going to start to draw in some very good quality applications. We're going to get people seeking us out more than us seeking them out. I'm excited for that down the road.
- **Bret Kruger:** Do you find that the Marion County residency requirement hampers hiring?
- **Sean Hicks:** I haven't worked in my position long enough where I'm going through those applications enough to weigh in on it one way or the other personally.
- **Kaelyn Helson:** I've seen it only in a couple of cases with really positive candidates where we felt we lost out because they weren't willing to move. I would say most of the time it hasn't come up too much.
- **Kelly Diamond:** I would say in other areas, we are experiencing that as a road block.
- **Amanda Carlyle:** Definitely medical.
- **Chris Roberson:** And there is a process to request an exemption from that requirement
- **Kelly Diamond:** There is, but it's not freely given as maybe we would all like it to be.
- **Chris Roberson:** Who in the city actually grants that exemption? Is it HR?
- **Kelly Diamond:** If it's a request, we float it up to the director and then she floats it up as well.

Kennel Report (Billie Bowling)

- Reviewed September statistics report

Intake	
Dogs	322
Cats	225
Birds	19
Livestock	0
Other	68
Total	634
Outcome	
Adopted	313
Returned to Owner	64
Transferred	176
Returned to Wild	4
Shelter-Neuter-Return	1

Euthanized	74
Missing/Unaccounted for in the system	4
Owner-Requested Euthanasia	0
Died in Care	14
Other	40
Total	690
Life Release Rate	
All Animals	88.06%
Dogs	92.81%
Cats	87.50%
Average Length of Stay	0 Days
Adoption Returns	19

- Started August with 324 animals in IACS care, 203 animals in foster
- Indy CARES diversions – unknown – focusing on training the new Indy Cares Coordinator and providing services at this time with the plan to focus on reporting statistics once the Coordinator is more trained. Leaders will work on guidelines for stats

Discussion

- **Bret Kruger:** So, it looks like strays are still booking 5 weeks out, and owner surrenders are 5 months out. Any plans or thoughts on how to get those times down?
- **Kelly Diamond:** I'm just trying to pull up to see where we actually are right now, because this is where we were at when we did the board update. In the last couple of weeks, we've been calling and moving up appointments, particularly for strays, and moving them up. Our Indy Cares team is now following up daily with anyone who has an appointment to see if they still need it, to try diversion again. As they free up those spots, they're moving up appointments. Our intention is to get back to where we are no more than two days for a stray, back to where we were before, and also using that time to work with the public more, helping them while we also help them in these situations.
- **Chris Roberson:** What support do we have for people requesting a stray appointment now? Is it true that Indy Cares really focuses on people who are requesting owner surrenders?
- **Kelly Diamond:** No – it's anyone wanting to bring in an animal, whether it's a stray or an owner surrender, we help them. In either situation, whether it's a stray or an owner surrender, we talk to them and explore what we can do to keep that pet in their home, because most people don't really want to surrender their animals. So, whatever services we can provide, and talking through that. For strays, it's kind of the same thing. Granted, it's not necessarily their pet, or, in some cases, they've had them for longer than just 20 minutes ago, but still talking to them about how long they can keep it. Are they willing to work with us in trying to find the owner. After a certain point, we get a lot of people who come in saying, "I would love to keep this animal if you guys don't find the owner." Well, we need to have a conversation about how we

can work with you about keeping it in your home and helping to find the owner. If we don't find the owner, then we can discuss other options. Then you know we've kept an animal out of the shelter just to then return it back to you. So a lot of the same kind of resources we offer. Particularly if we're asking someone to hold on to a stray, do they need food, do they need a crate, do they need? What is it to help them? So that they can help us as well.

- **Kelly LaRoche:** I will add to that that a lot of times the conversation that we have with people, they envision this dog running amok in their house like, "I can't do this." And sometimes just having that conversation saying, "Hey, the alternative is coming here. If I can give you a crate or you have a spare bathroom or a spare bedroom, that is 1000 times better than coming to the shelter." And then a lot of times, once they hear that and kind of put it into perspective, they're a lot more willing to keep that animal in their home, even if it's not, you know, free running with their other pets and their kids. We're not asking them to do that. We're asking them to keep that animal at the shelter for a little bit longer. People have been very accommodating with that.

Volunteer Report (Kelly LaRoche)

New/Training Volunteers	Sept 2023	Sept 2024	# Difference	% Difference
New Volunteers in Orientation	47	45	-2	-4%
Total # of Applications Processed	86	123	+37	+43%
Total # of Volunteers in Training	135	193	+58	+43%
Total # of Active Volunteers	205	298	+93	+45%
Volunteer Hours				
# of Hours Volunteered	1,942	2,448	+506	+54%
# of Hours Volunteered at special events	79	81	+2	+3%
Doggie Day Out Hours Logged	49	90	+41	+84%
# of External Service Hours	39	333	+294	+753% (8x)
Total Hours volunteered	1,981	2,850	+869	+44%

Community Outreach Report (Kelly LaRoche)

- September Special Events
 - Harrison Center First Friday – 8 hrs
 - Irvington Farmers Market – 10 hrs
 - Statehouse Market & Charity Fair – 12 hrs
 - Ales for Adoptable Tails – 18 hours
 - Vaccination Event with Dr. Swartzentruber – 17 hrs
 - Southport Arts Festival – 12 Hrs
 - Last Three events of the month cancelled due to weather.

- September External Volunteers
 - IU Indy Students – 106 hours
 - Friends/Families of shelter volunteers & Students – 7 hrs
 - IPAAW – 24 hrs
 - Fall Clean Up with DNR & IDEM – 181 hrs
 - McDole Family – 15 hrs
- About 30 pups went on Doggy Day Out. At least 2 met their adopters, and 4 volunteers adopted their DDOs.

Marketing Report (Colleen Walker)

- **Media Coverage**
 - Super Adoption Event
 - [Chicago Tribune – Super Adoption Event](#)
 - Emergency Intake
 - [IndyStar](#)
 - [Indianapolis Recorder](#)
 - [WTHR](#)
 - [WRTV](#)
 - [WIBC](#)
 - [Fox59](#)
 - [WISHTV](#)
 - Independent Agency
 - [WishTV](#)
 - [WRTV](#)
 - New Plan
 - [Indianapolis Recorder](#)
 - [WTHR](#)
 - [WISHTV](#)
 - [WFYI](#)
 - [IndyStar](#)
 - Pet of the Week
 - [WTHR – Pets of The week](#)
 - [Axios – Adoptable Animal - Tubs](#)
 - [Axios – Adoptable Animal - Stevie](#)
 - Other
 - [IndyStar – IACS Comment on Story of a Woman mauled by dogs.](#)
- **Social Media Insights – 9/1/24 – 9/30/24**

Site	Followers	Unfollows	New Followers	Engaged Followers	Reach
Facebook	78,500	125 (-7.4%)	342 (+ 5.6%)	836 (+128.4%)	174,600 (+14.8%)
Instagram	12,900	76 (-1.3%)	129 (-3.7%)	N/A	28,200 (+21.1%)
TikTok	73,300	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Best performing post: Pearl's Adoption Story

	FB	Instagram
Likes	3,100	1,337
Comments	58	45
Shares	92	63
Played	52,135 times	13,116 times

Discussion

- **Bret Kruger:** What do you think kind of grabbed people about that story? And do you think it's something that could be reproducible?
- **Colleen Walker:** 100%. It was a positive adoption story. It was basically just from the point of view of the dog. But I mean, it was just showing that dog's kind of happy ending at an event. So I think it shows that people really want these positive stories. A lot of our good news posts and stuff like that do end up getting a lot more followers. We just started doing adoption posts and stuff like that and posting which animals are going to rescue each week. So I think that people are very, very interested in these types of stories, and that one was also good because it's so wide-reaching. I mean, people were sharing it, and so we were getting engagement from different cities and different places. It was also... I mean, the audio that I chose was trending audio, so it was also kind of pulled in through that too. But I think it just kind of shows that people really do want to see these positive stories. Allowing volunteers that we have... they were people that were part of her story who were also sharing it and, you know, giving their own little two cents about it, which is great because it kind of gives that personal touch too. It's not just coming from IACS. Volunteers were talking about it on the post and stuff like that too, so those types of positive posts really generate more positivity around it.
- **Chris Roberson:** Do we have any way of tracking whether our social media activity links back to adoptions or fosters?
- **Colleen Walker:** I do not know if we have any because that would kind of come on the adoption end with the survey or anything on where did you find out? Because there's really no way to tell that from Facebook. So it would have to be a post-adoption survey.
- **Kelly Diamond:** I will add, kind of circling back to our ACO outreach, September 25th, we did have an IMPD Community Day in which we sent one of our ACOs, who actually worked in that actual area, to be a part of that and to kind of put a positive spin on his presence in their neighborhood and kind of interact with the community, which was very well received. Feedback from that officer as well. So those are the types of things that we want to obviously keep doing to try to get that positive spin and improve that perception.
- **Chris Roberson:** The only other comment I had back to the volunteer statistics is we've talked in the past about the rapidly increasing number of new volunteers and also the high turnover

within the Volunteer Group itself. So I just wanted to note for especially the Advisory Board members, our volunteer coordinator just recently started a small Facebook group and invited some of the more long-term volunteers to really just dig into and brainstorm ideas around volunteer retention. So we can maybe report on that in a future Advisory Board meeting.

Staffing Updates (Kelly Diamond)

Part Time Adoption Counselor vacancies	2
Adoption Coordinator vacancy	1
Animal Control Officer vacancies	5
Part time Customer Relations Officer vacancy	1
Enforcement Supervisor vacancy	1
Kennel Shift Lead vacancy	1
Full time Senior Animal Care Tech vacancies	2
Part Time Kennel Techs	3
Community Cat Coordinator vacancy	1
Foster Coordinator	1
Veterinary Assistant Vacancy	1
Veterinary Assistant II vacancy	2
Shelter Veterinarian vacancy	1

Discussion

Chris Roberson: So nothing panned out with the two resumes that we received?

Kelly Diamond: One of them, we're hoping to at least talk to, maybe about some contract work. The other we're still kind of looking at that one. Not necessarily shelter experience, but we still want to have the conversation.

Chris Roberson: So that is an option? To contract for a vet rather than hiring them full time?

Kelly Diamond: Yes, which is what we have DeBrotta on contract right now. we've got at least one other vet in the process of signing a contract as well to kind of fill the gaps,

Chris Roberson: How many hours is the contract with De Brota for?

Kelly Diamond: It's not for hours it's a set dollar amount for the year. So we work with him on that.

Chris Roberson: How often has he been able to make it in now on average?

Amanda Carlyle: Currently, he's coming at least every Monday because he fills his schedule up. He works at like 3 or 4 different clinics and he had filled those up so far in advance where he's waiting for a good time where he can start jumping in more. But I suspect within the next month or two he'll be here

a lot more often than not. Hopefully by then we'll also have the other contract vet, so we'll have double the trouble.

Chris Roberson: I mean, it seems like one challenge when it comes to recruitment in general is pay, but IACS isn't the highest paying job that somebody could find in the city. I think that especially applies and it's true for the veterinarian. Is, so is the same type of compensation constraint applicable when we're contracting with a vet as it is for what we're able to offer them to employ them, or can we pay a little more as a contracted vet? Because they're not subject to whatever type of salary is established by the city for the position.

Kelly Diamond: I think there might be a little bit more kind of latitude there within our budget as well, but that is actually set by BNS.

Chris Roberson: The contracted rate for this?

Kelly Diamond: Yes

Chris Roberson: And just real quick, back to the ACOs. I was having a little bit of a hard time figuring out how the movement amongst the ACOs affects the number that shows up on the table. So do we still have 5 open ACO positions given the promotion and the?

Kelly Diamond: No. So we have two of those have actually been filled and they start within the next couple weeks, which leaves three vacancies. Then we do have the one who is promoting into the Kennel Lead position. So that brings us back up to four, yeah.

Bret Kruger: And then with possibilities, your enforcement supervisor could potentially, if you're doing interviews, could come from your ACO pool.

Kelly Diamond: That is possible, yeah.

Bret Kruger: So we're looking at another one potentially there.

Old Business:

- **New Shelter Update:**

- **Kelly Diamond:** So a new shelter update. Currently we're working through the bid process as far as getting companies on board to provide the services to continue with the building. According to our construction manager, we're still on par for breaking ground before the end of the year. So that's still on schedule. And then we've just been ramping up our new shelter design meetings, just talking more and more about a lot of the details. I was in a 6 hour meeting last week, talking about which way the door should open and close. And again, where key card readers will be and windows will be. So just kind of working through all those final details and still some kind of shifting around some things from the design.

- **Chris Roberson:** Brett had asked, I think at our last meeting about the plans to share the design with the Advisory Board. Are there any?
- **Kelly Diamond:** No update from me. Yeah. So the one conversation with Director Brands also trying to figure out how and when we're going to reveal that to our staff.
- **Euthanasia Protocol:**
 - **Kelly Diamond:** So we did receive the initial draft of documents from Best Friends and the managers. We are currently reviewing those and then we'll get together and kind of work on our tweaks and our changes to that so that we can move forward and share that.
- **Playgroups, Dog/Dog Intros**
 - **Kelly Diamond:** So currently in discussion with a couple of trainers to work on both an initial training plan with staff and volunteers, as well as an ongoing training and new staff training. So just kind of talking through. Ideally we would like someone who can be with us during that process, not just in the beginning, but like I said, continue with training as we get new staff. So just kind of talking with a couple of different trainers and what they might be willing to offer and what kind of that plan looks like, yeah.
 - **Chris Roberson:** Are they showing interest in the willingness to be involved in that, OK?
 - **Kelly Diamond:** Absolutely.
- **Vapor Cleaning**
 - Has management been able to look into the suggestion of a vaporized hydrogen peroxide diffuser machine brought up in the last meeting?
 - **Kelly Diamond:** That's not something I've been able to look into just yet. I've not received any of the information either, the kind of guide other shelters that have done that.
- **Feeding Protocol:**
 - **Chris Roberson:** OK. I think this could be the last time we bring this up unless something changes in the future, but we've spoken at the last couple of meetings about the feeding protocol, the process for reporting underweight dogs. I was mostly curious. Have we been able to change the medical clipboard into a job form?
 - **Kelly Diamond:** Not yet.
- **Backyard Breeding Ordinance**
 - **Chris Roberson:** we spoke at the last meeting about just keeping the backyard breeding ordinance on as a standing agenda item. Just making sure that we're preparing for the educational side of it, registry, and enforcement side. I don't know who might be best positioned to comment on that, but just kind of current thoughts about ramping up for January 1st.
 - **Kelly Diamond:** It's actually not something that we've had a lot of time to discuss or, you know, devote
 - **Kaelyn Helson:** Education has started with the ACOs, though. We did have a meeting in one of our roll calls earlier this month. I believe right at the beginning of the month to start making sure that they're aware of it and starting to educate people, while we don't have anything official. Education material-wise yet to pass out to the public, making sure that they're starting to spread the word.

- **Chris Roberson:** That was actually where I was thinking might be like the easiest place to start is like getting some educational materials together. I think we started talking about that sort of right before Colleen was starting, and we didn't want to get ahead of her. Is that something maybe volunteers or somebody could work with Colleen on to get something that's like, IACS approved?
- **Kelly LaRoche:** Dawn, our Chief Communications Officer for BNS, she is working on materials.
- **Citywide Strategic Plan Update**
 - **Darcie Kurtz:** So just to sort of recap, the citywide animal-first strategic plan is a five-year plan. We've been working on it for just about a year now. We have undergone multiple steps in the process, including a citywide community needs assessment. We've done a comparative analysis of other communities who are doing pretty remarkable work that we could emulate, and then we put together the high-level framework, ran it by the community one more time. So we are kind of at the end of the beginning now, so to speak. We have got the high-level framework with the major goals, and under each goal, we've got several strategies to help guide our work going forward. We've got two more meetings coming up, one this Friday where, for each one of the strategies, we are going to identify the benchmarks—how do we know we've achieved that strategy? Where, you know, what do we need to have achieved to for us to know we are there? We've got about 30 people scheduled to come to this meeting. So it includes some of the people in the room, the steering committee, rescue leaders, some leaders in social services, housing, public safety, and government. That is this Friday, and then next Thursday we've got our meeting where we are going to, for each one of these strategies, we are going to identify action items, action steps for the first year. So what do we need to do next year to move forward with this? And then our final meeting is October 29th, where we are wrapping up with our planning consultants. And then that is, that is the end of the beginning, and then the real work begins, working the plan. I will say that my hope is that we can learn from some of the other communities that are doing a pretty good job at shelter and field operations that we look at in our comparative field analysis, but that's just one piece of it. That's one thing that gives me the most hope. But we've got a long way to go, a lot of gaps, a lot of issues to address, but we're getting down to the wire. We finished the first major milestone then the hard work begins starting to work this plan.
 - **Chris Roberson:** as you did that comparative research with other cities, did it did any other cities take this approach to developing a community wide strategic plan?
 - **Darcie Kurtz:** Not a lot of them, but maybe one or two of the seven that we've researched.
 - **Chris Roberson:** I'm just. I'm just thinking through and wondering what role the shelter played in The Community Plan, both in terms of its development and then kind of the ongoing work that was done pursuant to those plans.
 - **Darcie Kurtz:** Yeah, I mean, I will tell you in the three that I personally researched, I spoke with the leaders of the main shelter. So in Atlanta, the municipal shelter, it's a It's a nonprofit that runs both shelter in the field in Atlanta. And then in Fort Wayne spoke with the director there and then the leader in Cleveland of the Animal Protective

League. That is the sort of even though it's, it's all that one is also a nonprofit, but it's the go to place where, you know, the municipal shelter deals with stray dogs and bites, but they are the go to place for the community, for everything, for resources, they have cruelty investigators. So from my point of view, we really did try to reach out to the municipal shelter enforcement leaders as we as the main resource in the community.

- **Chris Roberson:** I'm just wondering and it's maybe something that we'll just have to think about sort of what role the Advisory Board and the future board of IACS plays in terms of being a strong engaged partner after the plan is completed and making sure we're all, you know, working together supporting each other.
- **Darcie Kurtz:** That's how we viewed it when we started. This is that ICS would be actively engaged in the strategic planning and I would hope that that is the case.

New Business

- **Adoption Events**

- **Kelly Diamond:** So as mentioned, we did the September 28th event where management spent 24 hours taking 34 of our dogs to an adoption event in Illinois where we adopted 15 of our dogs and had five of them pulled by local rescues. It was a long but rewarding day. That event resulted in the first mass removal of crates from the building, and we have been crate free for at least 30 days now and we intend not to set up another crate as well. We did the Bone Dry adoption event last weekend where we adopted out 20 dogs and six cats, and we're actually looking forward to continuing that partnership with them. They'd love to have us back after we do a little bit of a debrief and talk over some things that we can do differently and improve on next time. Then we received a last-minute invitation to return to the Coalyard Café for another adoption event, which will be the first weekend in November. So we're looking at that as possibly our last big adoption opportunity until next spring.
- **Chris Roberson:** Any questions or comments about that? It definitely feels like we're moving in the right direction in terms of doing more and more events. And I think related to the Volunteer subcommittee update, I think we're also doing a good job of, generally speaking, giving notice about the events. I mean, I think that's maybe the one lesson learned about the Chicago event. I think it was awesome, and I hate that people are critical of all the work that went into that. I do think that some of that comes from people not having known that it was being planned and in the works, and then, you know, they just start filling in their own blanks with sometimes really unfortunate judgments or conclusions.
- **Colleen Walker:** That post that went out, like, it was like the day before or something. I didn't know we were going to post it at all. Not because of hiding, but because the event was in Chicago, so my brain and my little social media brain was like, why are we going to be posting this event that's not even happening in this area? So the last-minute event posting of it, also because it wasn't in my radar to even put it out there. Which lesson learned, because I didn't think about it. I was reminded to post it and I was like, I didn't

even think we would be posting it. So there was no intent to hide it or anything. It was just a last-minute thing that happened.

- **Kelly Diamond:** And I wanted to mention that there was a potential we weren't going to do it due to some issues. So, and yeah, not only with that, but just a lot of things in general. I would just ask people to realize that when we're dealing with more people, more organizations, and different departments, we're at the mercy of a lot of other people's schedules. For that adoption event, they did not give us real information about it until the week before, which made it, you know, with everything that we had going on, more challenging. Like I said, we had some things come up that we might not have been able to do anything about. So yeah, it's not intentionally trying to hide anything. I mentioned it at least once, maybe twice, at advisory board meetings that we were doing the event, and it was communicated to staff and volunteers as well.
- **Sean Hicks:** Just to say, on a positive note, just from walking through the hallways and talking to people that are coming in the door, people are still coming in just from us advertising those events. So we're getting like that residual after traffic, which is nice for us because some people want to adopt a dog but don't think about us or don't want to go to an event like that. That's fine, we're still getting that traffic from it. So it's just positive in multiple different categories, even if the data isn't immediately there.
- **Bret Kruger:** Do you think the, you know, going out of state, do you think that got you...? You said some dogs were pulled, which kind of happened after Mega in the past, where there were organizations that would come and scoop up animals that weren't adopted during Mega, but going out of state—do you think that got you some contacts, some organizations that maybe would be willing to come forward and pull just outside of an event in the future?
- **Kelly Diamond:** Absolutely. I mean, I think the ones that did pull those animals are potential contacts, but I know that we did a lot of talking with a lot of the other shelters and rescues that were there and the event host as well, just getting our story out and talking about our shelter. They were very impressed by what we gave up and what we did personally to bring them there, and it just gained us some, you know, potential contacts and relationships that we might be able to grow going forward
- **Sean Hicks:** The whole Chicago thing, I mean, that was us seeing how immaculate one of those can be run. Everything there was absolutely perfect the way they had everything organized and structured. That was a learning opportunity for us as we're starting to do all these events, and without that event, I don't know if we would have had all the crates that we needed for our follow-up event. They donated so many wire crates to us that were in such good condition because ours had taken a beating from having them in the shelter for so long. So going to Chicago is how we were able to pull off the next ones here in Indy. If we didn't do that, it would have affected us on multiple levels.
- **New Rescue Coordinator: Justin Hardwick**
 - **Justin Hardwick:** I'm Justin Hardwick. I'm the new rescue coordinator for Indianapolis Animal Care Services. I've been in this role for a month and a half now. Previously I was an animal care tech and before that I was an animal control officer. It's been a lot to learn starting out. I'm just, you know, taking over a position that was run by Julie Zink for 15 years, so I'm trying to fill shoes like that. I'll never be exactly what she was, but

it'll take time. It's taking time for me to wrap my hands around exactly what this job is and how I can do the best I can at it. I've had amazing support from the staff and management. I've been working with Kelly LaRoche very closely, and it has made it seem way less overwhelming, splitting things into certain categories—things I take care of, things she takes care of. I really enjoy working with the rescues. The rescues are amazing. It's really just trying to network a little bit more and realizing how willing these rescues are to work with other rescues. A lot of them do my job for me when it comes to networking and just having a face to the name. It's been helping out a lot. Some rescues that have not pulled from us since I've started are starting to pull again. Once the word got out, they were like, "OK, you're there," They're, you know, it's not just an entity of rescue. Like there is someone Justin who is here, who can work with. And whenever I've been able to get them to come to the shelter and meet me, the communication has gone very well after that. It was a little struggle at first. But when I first started working, one of the most important things was working with the new rescues that have been coming on board since I've started have been the easiest ones to work with because that relationship was there. But now that I'm in this role and I'm rekindling the relationships that we've had with previous rescues, it's just it's starting to all like flow in and we're having a lot more options. And with all the you know we've had urgent days or we've had. We had a parvo outbreak where it was really important to get somebody these animals out of here. That's helped branch out all over the US with them. I have rescues who are coming from different States and I'm willing to pull. It's an animal here or there, but that's a relationship. And they've been reaching out and branching out to other rescues when they see how we post on Trello or Facebook that they're reaching out to even more people. So I feel like the longer we're in this role in the way we're doing it, we'll be able to. It's just seeing how many new contacts we've had and rekindling the relationships of the previous rescues have been it's been very, it's just super motivating. It's super, it's a lot of fun to work with.

- **Chris Roberson:** At a really high level, I have no idea, like how many potential rescues, maybe "potential" is the wrong word. How many rescues are there that we have some level of communication or interaction with and how many are in-state versus out-of-state? Just like gross kind of ballpark numbers?
- **Justin Hardwick:** In-state, I would say over 100. Out-of-state, I would say probably over 20-25, and a lot of them are rescues that we've seen based on our records that they have pulled from us, but I haven't worked with them yet. It might be just a dog here or there. There are some where we have situational pulls, like there's this rescue that might only pull one dog a year, but it's a super awesome pull. Like we had an Aussie that had a broken leg, and we had a rescue come out of state to take that dog. I don't expect them to pull multiple dogs, but those situations are very special. It's a lot of options and a lot of them is just consistency. Some rescues can pull regularly from us — I mean, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly — and some maybe two or three times a year. And it all helps, though. You know, that's one open spot, and we're very excited to have all these options. The new relationships have been very nice. A lot of them have been very motivated to help us. They see the situation, and they do want to help.
- **Chris Roberson:** Yeah, and those are mostly local rescues, I assume, if they're coming in?

- **Justin Hardwick:** Local, local to some of them, I would say almost like a 2-hour radius outside of Indianapolis as well. So all over the state. **So** that's been really reassuring. I feel like every week or two, we're getting a new rescue that's on board that has a potential contact for us.
 - **Chris Roberson:** We talked, I think before you joined, about doing some type of event for rescues, inviting them into the shelter. Is that still in the works?
 - **Colleen Walker:** We briefly talked — we haven't quite gotten there — but doing a rescue open house for the shelter, inviting them to the shelter, giving them a tour, and kind of just fostering that relationship a little bit more in person.
 - **Chris Roberson:** Any other questions or comments for Justin? We're so glad to have you. It's such an important role for the shelter.
 - **Justin Hardwick:** Yes, it's a very motivating position, and I have a great support system here at ICS. I feel very comfortable and I feel like everyone has my back and wants me to be successful. So it's been really easy to come into work every day and do what I can while I'm here.
 - **Bret Kruger:** I had one last comment, and it's maybe something that's kind of bigger than just Justin, and maybe something that the recommendation is... You know, for a shelter the size of IACS, with the intakes and the size of IACS, to have more than one person working rescue. To have more than one person working foster. To have actual teams on these because you've got adoption counselors, you've got an adoption team that's getting animals out of the building, but to have, you know, just a rescue coordinator, a foster coordinator. And I think there are even guidelines for a foster coordinator — it's something like 1 foster coordinator should be able to handle 100 foster families well. What is it, like 100? So from knowledge out here, it's something like one foster coordinator is supposed to be able to handle 100 foster families well and see to their needs. Is there any plan for the future about increasing staffing there? You know, we've talked about increasing ACO staffing, now I'm looking at the other side.
 - **Kelly Diamond:** There are plans to increase the foster coordinator team. We recognize that on days off, you know, someone has to pick up. So, there is definitely a plan for that. As far as plans for 2025, that's not been put into the budget thereafter. We have our wish list, definitely. Absolutely.
- **Best Friends Update**
 - **Ramon Villatoro:** Good evening. I've had the pleasure of working very closely with the shelter leadership staff and volunteers over the past few months on the development of the Workplace Culture Agreement. I joined Mike back in mid-June, and since then, I've hosted several workshops for shelter leadership, for volunteers, for staff. We focused on reviewing the importance of defining Indianapolis's workplace culture, and we also focused on reflecting on the current culture of the shelter and seeing what ways we can maximize what's working very well at the shelter and also addressing what isn't working very well. This initiative also addresses areas on how we can cultivate this workplace amongst all the different groups that contribute to the culture at the shelter. I'm very pleased to report that the final step in this process, with presenting the final Workplace Culture Agreement, is going to be carried out tomorrow and Thursday, as we present the final version of the agreement to staff. We'll also have the agreement posted

throughout the facility and even in some offices to serve as a reminder to the staff of their commitment towards cultivating this positive workplace culture. I've also dedicated a lot of time working with leadership and working with supervisors to have the volunteers on how do you operationalize the workplace culture? How do we put it into action in a positive way, and also, how can we bring the spirit of the workplace culture into our day-to-day interactions with each other? Another component, aside from the workplace culture, I've been focusing a lot of my time too, on working on professional development, leadership development with some of the leaders. I've been hosting a few one-on-one meetings with the leadership team, including supervisors, managers, and admins to provide guidance and support on improving their own development. Do you have any questions specific to the

- **Madison Weintraut:** Could you go into a little bit more detail about like the professional development training sessions you've gone into?
- **Ramon Villatoro:** Sure, it depends on who I met with, but it usually is tailored to what they need most. The general support that I've provided is more on how to give feedback, how to incorporate the culture into your day-to-day role, and also how to push them further on how they view their role as a leader in the shelter.
- **Chris Roberson:** This might not be a fair question. I mean, could you summarize maybe like the top two or three things that volunteers and staff could do to create a more positive workplace culture?
- **Ramon Villatoro:** Sure. I think the first step is just being kind to each other — that's the first step. It's being kind to each other and to show up and practice it in your day-to-day work. And this can start as someone in the kennels or volunteer or leadership — everyone contributes to the culture. And one of the biggest messages I've tried to lead with everyone I interact with is, you have a part to play in the culture and the success of the culture. You know, having a positive impact lies with your participation and with your actions that you bring day-to-day.
- **Bret Kruger:** What do you think the biggest hurdle is to keeping this ball rolling?
- **Ramon Villatoro:** I think the current crisis that's happening in the shelter and also in many shelters across the country is definitely impacting the culture and the work being done at the shelter. But I think also, it's just having that commitment, that dedication towards fostering and cultivating the culture from the leadership point of view, and also, I think, the staff and volunteers also coming into it and wanting to show up in a positive way to impact that.
- **Chris Roberson:** How important is self-care to that whole sort of equation, and have you kind of gotten into that with staff and volunteers too?
- **Ramon Villatoro:** We've touched on it a little bit during the workshops. So the workshops are very interactive, and the way that I structured the workshop — it's the same workshop I did for leadership, staff, and volunteers. They all have the same material. And a lot of the interactive portions in the workshops identify what makes a positive workplace, and that's when we talk about work-life balance and practicing excellent self-care practices so that you can show up fully in your role. We discuss it a little bit in that setting, but I haven't spent too much time focusing on that. But I do think that um, Shelter leadership. Staff, volunteers. I do think there's a lot of work that

needs to be done on promoting excellent work, life balance and that's something certainly I can do before I leave another kind of workshop geared towards that.

- **Volunteer Subcommittee Update**

- **Chris Roberson:** So we had a volunteer subcommittee meeting on October 10th at 6:00 PM a virtual meeting. We had about 14 attendees. We committed over the past couple of months to post these notes on the staff and volunteer Facebook page so I'll do that and just keep this. Really high level. So we had a lot of updates from Lauren. She's also emailed them out to volunteers and I think maybe staff about events coming up and things like that. We talked about some of the updates that we already shared and talked about tonight in terms of progress on the dog to dog intros and play groups. There was discussion about events and there was kind of mixed opinions. Some of the volunteers felt like things have been going much better from a posting and recruiting of volunteers help at events and others just wanted me to remind or just to reiterate how much they appreciate when they get advanced notice to be able to plan for attending and helping out events. There was a lot of discussion about the the budget, especially as it relates to IACS becoming its own agency. So thank you to Miana who took notes and then posted a link to the the Metropolitan and Economic Development Committee meeting in which Director Brands reviewed what you know, what the the new budget. Would be for the shelter what the proposed budget was at the time. We talked about the the vet pay rate and you know that whole contract issue that I just asked Deputy Director Diamond about a few minutes ago. There was discussion about animal transport, so I've talked to some of the ACO's about this in the past. My understanding is that a ACO's do continue to play a vital role in transporting animals to FACE and other clinics and volunteers are always looking for ways to help. I've I've been told in the past that ACO's really prefer to perform that task from a safety perspective. There's always concerns I think about volunteers transporting a dog to have a procedure. It's coming out of sedation and they're handling a dog that might be unpredictable. I don't know if there's any future discussion or brainstorming about how volunteers might be able to alleviate that responsibility from ACO's in a in a safe and reasonable way?
- **Kelly Diamond:** It's all of our staff can transfer. We don't just have ACOs transporting It's an OT opportunity for some of our staff members as well, so.
- **Bret Kruger:** I would say there is a safe way for volunteers to transport and that would be if they have a vehicle or access to a vehicle that is large enough they can transport by having the clinic put the dog in an airline carrier and then two volunteers transport the dog or it could just be one. Safer with two people always, but the dog stays in the airline. Carrier until it reaches IACS. And then it is taken out of the airline carrier by staff, so it is never handled. The volunteers are doing the transport, they're doing the driving.
- **Chris Roberson:** When they're getting to the clinic, who's taking the airline crate out of the volunteers' vehicle?
- **Bret Kruger:** The airline crate once it's shut, the volunteers could pick it up. You know, there's not a danger to them there. If that is a secure carrier. For the most part.
- **Billie Bowling:** We also got to be careful that we're not violating anything in the master agreement with the Union because that would obviously affect our staff's ability to get overtime, so we have to be careful with that.

- **Chris Roberson:** Yeah, and we don't want to create, like, more work for the shelter, right? I mean, probably pluses and minuses. I imagine, like if you're really short-staffed and you could use the help, that's great, but... You wouldn't want to also delegate tasks to a volunteer who then something comes up and they can't take the animal and then you're missing an open appointment or... I don't know. I guess you know, just communicating this discussion from the Volunteer Subcommittee meeting, if management can think of any ways that it would be helpful that volunteers be involved, being respectful of union boundaries and just internal kind of policies. I would appreciate it. And then really the last thing we talked about was doing some kind of holiday event or some sort of get together for the volunteers. That was a little more holiday themed as we head into November and December. And then the last update is we've been talking for a couple of months about inviting Kelly to attend a volunteer subcommittee meeting. That schedules have been a little bit challenging the past couple of months. But I think we're good for November. So we've been alternating virtual and in-person meetings. November 10th will be our volunteer subcommittee meeting in November and Kelly's able to attend that, so stay tuned. I'll post them on the volunteer age to remind everybody about where that will be held.

Public Comment:

- **Mianna Ruiz Public Comment (Not in attendance)**
 - Is a re-feeding protocol being developed after the loss of the emaciated stray (Hans) that came in at the end of August?
 - **Kelly Diamond:** Based on my conversation with Amanda, my understanding, we've always had a protocol, but what we have done since then is actually put it in writing with specifics with regards to what to feed and how much to feed.
 - **Chris Roberson:** And I followed up on that comment too. So just to clarify, that emaciated stray Hans died pretty quickly from his time of intake at IACS and a repeating protocol probably wasn't going to help him or save him. There's... I'm sure there's kind of other aspects of how he was handled that staff kind of debrief on afterwards, but nonetheless I appreciate IACS taking an opportunity to relook at its refeeding protocol and... you know, make improvements where they can.
- **Mianna Ruiz Public Comment (Not in attendance)**
 - Currently, IACS disposes of euthanized animals by bagging them up for transport to various landfills. Has this administration considered changing this practice by partnering with a local cremation business like the shelters in Johnson and Hamilton county? If so, when? If not, why?
 - **Kelly Diamond:** So, that is actually something that I... I haven't looked into. It's been on my radar for a bit. I'm definitely used to in other shelters, we actually pay a cremation service. So this was very different for me coming to a IACS and I will have to admit as well, it didn't quite sit right with me, so it has been on my radar. No, it's not something that I've had a chance to look into. I know it's not likely that we're going to be able to establish a no-fee partnership like I know at least one of the shelters that was

mentioned has. Where they don't have to pay anything, particularly due to our volume, but it's definitely something that I would like to look into and explore further.

- ***Gina Reyes Public Comment (Not in attendance)***
 - I saw on the news that you fired workers for checking My Case. Who in the world would argue that an animal going into the hands of an abuser is better than the animal being in the shelter? I can't even believe the absolute ridiculousness of whoever decided that My Case isn't acceptable to use-- it protects animals from abusers. Your job is to protect animals, and you're making it clear that you support abusers who want to come in and take another animal. Shame on you! And shame on you for firing an employee who had the animals' best interest at the heart of what she was doing.
 - ***Chris Roberson:*** I mean, and we can speak categorically to it. We've talked about and we have been including the public comments in the minutes for the meetings. So, you know, there's a public comment about the Mikey situation that we've talked about and we've agreed we can't keep talking about it every meeting. We'll step back and reassess in a few months.
- ***Kathern Silence Public Comment (Not in attendance)***
 - When are you going to hire a veterinarian? May have to get creative and offer incentives to have the person apply and get hired. The animals need and deserve to have care. Thank you. I know you are all work hard to help
 - ***Chris Roberson:*** There was a comment asking about when we're going to hire a veterinarian. Obviously we'd love to hire a veterinarian as soon as we can.
- ***Shandy Plicka Public Comment (Not in attendance)***
 - I'm extremely concerned about the policy of leaving so many stray dogs. While I am a long time volunteer and dog lover, I am going to take a pragmatic view. Stray dogs are a nuisance and danger to the community. They leave fecal material, may carry diseases, and can be nuisances people and neighborhoods. They can also be a danger to other animals and people. The citizens of Indy deserve to live in areas free of such nuisances, and also to keep people safe. Dogs can be unpredictable, so while an ACO may deem a stray low risk and leave it in the field, things can change and that animal could be dangerous at any moment. If we leave strays roaming, there is greater chance for mating of unaltered animals to continue the cycle. I realize IACS is in a difficult spot because you can't please everyone, but I think for the overall safety of the city, they should continue to pick strays, even if it means more humane euthanasia and lower release rate.
 - ***Chris Roberson:*** There's a comment about difference of opinion and perspective about how we're managing intake. So obviously there are valid points about strays being out in the community. I think they've been acknowledged. I hear shelter leadership saying they don't think this is like the perfect policy solution, but we have to try something different. And there are a lot of constraints that are affecting the decision about how we're prioritizing calls, etcetera.
- ***Jillian Y Public Comment (Not in attendance)***
 - I would like to know what is actively being done to improve the mental health of IACS Staff? I have offered to provide some in-service trainings for staff and haven't gotten a reply from Deputy Director Diamond. In my email to her I explained how there is

another active volunteer who is a psychologist and she very much wants to help as well. I would appreciate a response to my email and meeting with management to make the arrangements to conduct in-services.

- **Chris Roberson:** There was a comment about the mental health of IACS staff from Jillian, I think you had just mentioned you need to talk to...
- **Kelly Diamond:** Oh yeah, we've been in contact and we actually have a meeting scheduled.
- **Chris Roberson:** The general comment was wanting to know what ICS is doing to help support the mental health of its staff, so there's some discussions in the works about being able to offer mental health services.
- **Monica Griffin Public Comment (Not in attendance)**
 - My questions are about the data I handed out last month that I said I wanted to discuss today: 1. In 2018, IACS (the official Indianapolis open intake shelter) took in 14,657 animals. In 2019, IACS took in 15,292 animals. This year, 2024, as of August data, IACS on target to intake only about 8,600 animals. What's happening to the rest of those animals? Dying on the street? Rehomed by people who don't own them and real owner cannot find them? Being used for dogfighting or breeding? Where are they? 2. As 8/24, there will be approx. 3186 adoptions (excluding those who were returned or turned out on the street). 2018: 6173; 2019: 6997 adoptions. We are less than half of adoptions Those years. What specific steps is IACS taking to increase this rate? 3. In 2018, IACS, without manipulating intakes, had a live release rate for cats and dogs of 90.25%; in 2019, 89.41%. This year, with manipulation of intake, it is (as of August) 84.29%. How can you say your current model is successful?
 - **Chris Roberson:** So the... I mean, there is there's another comment from Monica just about stats. Which I don't know. I mean, Brett kind of substantively addressed that by... bringing up the number that she talked about.
 - **Bret Kruger:** I think that the important thing to note is the need is out there. We do need a higher capacity in the city. it's certainly not decreased. The need has certainly not decreased since 2019. So I think our big challenge is how do we meet the need that's out there and how do we do it in a sustainable manner. So I think that's where a lot of strategies need to come together.
 - **Chris Roberson:** Do you... Do you think it's fair like as I've thought through this issue. I'm just wondering, do you think it's fair to sort of think about this in terms of like... short-term and long-term? Because I... I find it very compelling to think about this in terms of addressing the root cause and preventing the overpopulation of dogs to begin with versus trying to build a capacity that would indefinitely sustain... the outrageous number of strays. Right?
 - **Bret Kruger:** I think for a while, playing the long game is always going to increase the numbers in the short game, so if we're playing the long game and we're working on spay/neuter, that doesn't help the population that's out there now. So in the short term, leaving strays on the street, we are going to see a population increase because those are going to breed. That's just, it's biology. So we are going to need some capacity. It doesn't have to be a sustained capacity necessarily if we can play the long game, but we are going to need some capacity to play the short game too. I don't... I'm not going to sit

here and pretend like I have the answer to that. But we are going to see an increase in need probably over the next couple of years. It's, you know, spay/neuter may have an effect in two to five years, you know, with... To bring it back to cats with T&R. It takes 10 years with T&R to get a large area, a metropolitan area under control, right? T&R is very much a long game. So it's... How do you meet the perceived need in the meantime?

- **Madison Weintraut:** I mean, I'm obviously very new to the game here, but I am curious. I mean, how? What the need is compared now from five years ago, because I know the staff that were presented in the public comment are from several years ago. That's where the comparison is. So has an impact been made by IACS and FACE and all of the community partners that are out there and I know it's not a 10 year dent probably, but maybe there has been a dent and I would be curious about that. I know there's no way to measure it, I know.
- **Kelly Diamond:** A really tough part. In the public comment. There were all these, you know, questions asked about all the negative, you know, like are they dying or are they being brought, you know, sold to dog fighters where on the flip side I ask, you know, maybe people were learning. How to, you know, call on Microchip and update their microchip and animals are getting back to their owner sooner or people are holding on to strays or people are trying to help in different ways or people are rehoming their own pets instead of bringing into shelters. So we just don't know, like, we can look at the number that we took in five years ago. OK. And so we've taken it maybe about half of that. Does that mean that other half is still out there? We don't know that. So it's so tough to really know where we're at
- **Madison Weintraut:** I do think it is important. To work on this long, long term strategy and I do think that this reset for the shelter is important. You're talking about the mental health of staff and ever since I've been here, all I've heard is about the culture at ICS and that everybody is so burned out. You guys have been drinking out of a fire hose for how long? And I do think that this is really, really important for you guys to be able to have a new strategy in place and your euthanasia rates are down this month from before the strategy was implemented, so I don't think this 80% goal is a euthanasia strategy. I don't look at it that way and I hear everything that you're saying, and I know that.
- **Bret Kruger:** The strays are out there, I can tell you. Three spotted today on my time out, and so they're out there. We're not addressing them. And we've got to be responsive to the public in that. I mean three of the comments from the public mentioned strays. I 's obviously something that's weighing on people that are concerned, mind. So there's got to be. There's got to be a little give and take. They need the space. I don't disagree with that. The public also needs safety and they need confidence that their needs are going to get met too. It's a balancing act that needs to be weighed.
- **Chris Roberson:** It's a balancing act with like so many different aspects to it. Right? Because. It's so multifaceted and complicated. I mean, one thing that I think we could and should do more of is trying to support people in the community who are willing to take on like an emergency foster, step in and help somebody who can't do it themselves to try to find the dog's owner, etcetera. But there are definitely going to be situations

where nobody can help. And the shelter needs to be able to take those dogs. Part of that is influenced by their ability to get dogs out the door, right? So doing the adoption events and having a robust rescue program. And like all interrelated.

- **Sean Hicks:** So just for a kind of a transparent moment for how that's relevant to everything that's going on today is we had hit that point today where it's, hey, we got more dogs coming in than we got space for. So, do we get crates? You know, what do we do? And that's even when we're on the emergency status. So on one end of it, we got the shelter that's over here. This is just like, oh, God, let's not go back. And on the other end of it, if you're the person that's pulling over trying to get a dog out of traffic, that's the big event of your day. That's what you're going to be talking about on Facebook. That's what you're going to be posting about. And then when you turn to that city agency and you're not getting the relief or help that you need, that tax-paid service isn't helping you out. I mean, how do we still get your trust? So it's a double-edged sword. Anyway, we get it and we understand that. It's tough, but at some point, you know, we got here and I think, Kelly LaRoche, you said it earlier. I can't remember exactly how you said it, but just improving the efficiency and the culture that we have is going to trickle down to the dogs eventually and get things out of here quicker. So building that relationship with the community, getting that relationship with our coworkers, with our employees, just making ourselves a less toxic environment and less toxic community, sometimes, you know, it's going to lead to better results inside of the shelter. It's going to improve our relationships with the rescues. It's going to help us on every single aspect and I think that's all we can really ask for as the city shelter—just becoming more efficient. We're never going to be perfect with the cards stacked against us, but just getting as efficient as possible with all things. That's where we want to go.
- **Madison Weintraut:** I am curious, like with the community assessment that was done with the other shelters across the US, if there was anything innovative that was done to help with strays that's not being done in Indianapolis. Just anything that we could be doing differently?
- **Kelly Diamond:** I think there are things that, not necessarily that had to come up from the strategic plan, but we know that there are things being done in other shelters across the country that we're just not doing because we haven't had the time to do them. There are other ways that we can help the individual that picks up a stray, there are other ways we can help the pet owner. We just haven't had the time or the bandwidth, and so some of the things that we're looking at being able to work on and focus on a little bit more now so that we can use the reset moment to its fullest.
- **Billie Bowling:** Well, I think part of it too is every decision we make comes with criticism, regardless of what it is. You know, if we close intake so we're not euthanizing, we're horrible people. We euthanize animals, we're horrible people. We end up on the news, we end up all over social media. You didn't give this dog a chance. Well this dog ripped one of our employees' arms off? Let's just say that, right? It doesn't matter what we do, we're always going to be the bad guy. It does not matter until we can change that perception and people can see that we're actually trying our best to... Yeah, the goal is 90%, we are working our butts off tirelessly to do it. We're doing 3 events in a month and a half time. The first event was met with such just disrespect, that we're giving

these dogs to dog fighters, like because we're going to Chicago. Why do you think that? It's a really nice area, but it doesn't matter because we're always putting fires out over here. We can't focus on what we need to be focusing on, and it has been a constant battle. Since I took over in February, it has been a constant battle. The reality is right now, we don't have crates in the building. Our staff isn't walking 11 miles a day, every day, four to five days a week, to the point that they go home and they just pass out. They can actually go home and enjoy their lives. Yes, we're taking criticism. We understand that and I understand there is a need to pick up strays, but right now when you have 16 ACOs, you gotta prioritize what you need to handle.

- **Bret Kruger:** So, I would, to go to Sean's point about getting more efficient, I would challenge you then, that there are better ways to use staff overtime than driving animals back and forth to appointments. So if overtime is needed, those runs, the cleaning, the things that only staff can do, let's have only staff doing those things and utilize our volunteers for the things that are just, I'm sitting stuck behind a train in traffic. You guys have the knowledge, you have the experience. Let's put you in positions where that is going to be the most helpful for the shelter.
- **Billie Bowling:** But I also think, keeping in mind that the transports are easy for them and I understand that at times, you know, we need to be out there focusing on the runs. But when you talk about every day going and getting screamed at because that threatened to be shot, this, that, and I know, you know, because you're out there, I know you know, it starts to wear on you. I can't tell you how many conversations I've had with staff. They come into my office broken. It is constant. This is something easy where they could just... Breathe and relax. It isn't the punch. It isn't just taking them away from doing this. It is something easy. That's why outreach, overtime. If you're... when you guys want to do it, let's do it. Adoption events last at Coal Yard. We had so many staff members show up because it is something fun. It is not the norm. And I understand that we need to get things together, and we will. It will take time, and you know, it's balancing things right now because we don't have the staff, because the perception of IACS is a horrible place to work. It just is what it is, regardless of our relationship with our employees. It is a horrible place to work because you have staff that is walking 11 miles a day. You have ACOs that are being spit on, yelled at. Doing 20 to 30 runs a day, seeing kids that are mangled, seeing people that are mangled to death, like these are things that they are seeing constantly. So giving them the opportunity to come in and just do a little transport... it's an escape. It is an escape.
- **Amanda Carlyle:** I would like to add that while I think we all agree that we would like to have more volunteer opportunities, the transports are very, very important because most of those animals are adopted, and that's kennel space and more lives we can save.
- **Sean Hicks:** It also frees up the employees, so it does help. And then there is an opportunity with the overtime, like you said, and that was one of the first things that I got to do when I came over to the kennel side as the kennel manager, was I just put it out as structured overtime. And it was a way more to try to provide relief for the staff too, because the beatings were just going to keep continuing while we were in that crate crisis, and it was just, here's the goal. Have this done by the end of the week. Come in, work as long as you want, leave when you want, as long as you're making

progress toward it. It's a chewable bite towards the goal by the end of the week, and it's just a way to, one, try to get a survivable paycheck for the people that are on our lower end. They're really not making a livable wage in my opinion. And two, it's just, come in, help, but relax. And that goes back to taking care of their mental health and things like that. We're going to oversaturate our overtime market if we're constantly saying, hey, we got 900 runs to be done, you know, come in and do more, do more, do more, do more. At some point, we gotta find ways to take care of them. And sometimes that is just by saying, come in for overtime, breathe, relax, try to have some of those rewarding moments because at the end of the day, they all work here because they want it to be a clean environment. They want to take care of these dogs, and they want to have that chicken soup for the soul that you get for working with animals, and we gotta find ways to give that to them. We can probably expand that, give volunteers included on certain aspects and improve upon that and become more efficient. So I see where what you're saying.

- **Kaelyn Helson:** And particularly, this is getting a little hyper-specific, but like our afternoon pickups are generally not picked up by overtime by the staff. I think that that, I mean, could be where more of this discussion is had. Maybe that's where we see if it works, how it works, because that's where we are scrambling. That's where we are sending staff out of the building consistently.
- **Chris Roberson:** Billie really wants the last word
- **Billie Bowling:** Nah, I just turned it off.
- **Chris Roberson:** Well, then I'll, I'll have the last word and that is to just say that I get it, like there is a lot of negativity in the community and the negative perception of IACS, it is real, but it's not the only perception of IACS. I think we tend to hear and pay attention to the people who kind of spew the negativity the loudest, especially on social media, and I know it's hard to ignore it. But like, I just want you all to know that I fundamentally believe that there are so many people out in the community that support you all, that appreciate everything that you guys do. And if you can maybe try to prioritize like the people who show up like Darcy and Brett, who are willing to have obviously like a really respectful and constructive conversation, sharing, you know, what they see in the community in a way that's not just like spewing more negativity and just adding stress and sort of beating you guys down so, ignore the online comments like we're here to support you, like we have your back and we all want to move forward together.
- **Bret Kruger:** So something I used to tell my teams when I was at an animal shelter, when we talked about euthanasia, I was lucky to be at a place where mostly we were talking about euthanasia for what I was manager over, which was cats. Most of the euthanasias were medical decisions we had out for behavioral cats, not a problem. But I used to tell my staff, you have opinions, you come to me because if we're not having the tough conversations, we are not doing this right. And tonight, we've had some tough conversations. And I think it's a path to doing things right. If we're not having the tough conversations here internally, for you all out in the public, we're not doing this right.
- **Colleen Walker:** I also just think that you're doing it correctly because, like you said, it was really respectful, but I think, especially online, things can get very heated and one-sided. So I genuinely appreciate you bringing it up in this regard and doing it the way

that you did, because I think it was constructive and I think it was productive, and I think it's something that is a great example of how conversations like this can also go.

- **Chris Roberson:** OK, so that will adjourn. Our next meeting is November 19th. We did get approval from the Council for the city to continue to have the meetings here for the remainder of the year because of space constraints and the ability to strive to streamline. So thank you everybody for coming.