



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Office of the Mayor**

June 18, 2014

**CONTACT:**

Tom Dec  
203-977-5115  
tdec@stamfordct.gov

**City Releases Information Regarding Animal Control Facility  
Investigation, Announces Task Force**

STAMFORD, CT – The City of Stamford Human Resources Department announced Wednesday that it has completed its investigation of the Animal Control Center, and released key information from the investigation. The investigation began on April 18 after the City received allegations that the facility was adopting out dogs without informing recipients of the dogs' history of biting and aggressive behavior, which resulted in injuries to several people. Additionally, the City received complaints that the Animal Control Center failed to appropriately respond after receiving dog bite complaints from residents.

The investigation has resulted in the termination of Laurie Hollywood, Animal Control Manager, and the formation of an Animal Control Center Task Force to review the policies of the Center and work to find and recommend potential sites for a new facility.

The Stamford Police Department is continuing an investigation and thus certain details will continue to be withheld.

***Key Findings of Investigation***

1. Several people were bitten and injured, including one who was seriously injured and treated at the hospital, from dogs adopted out from the Animal Control Center. In violation of City policy dog owners were not given information about the dogs' prior history of biting and aggressive behavior. Despite two prior written warnings from the State, the Animal Control Manager adopted out dogs with a history of biting.
2. The Animal Control Manager on multiple occasions failed to report dog bites and injuries, and take action.
3. The Animal Control Manager caused a false official City record to be created to cover up the adopting out of a dog that had a documented history of biting.

Other findings include:

- In violation of City policy, the Animal Control Manager sent volunteers to residents' homes, without informing residents of their volunteer status or seeking permission from her supervisor.
- The Animal Control Manager practiced veterinary medicine without having a valid license, was investigated by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, and as a result entered into a cease and desist order with the State.

- The history of dogs at the Center was misrepresented to the public, including in published communications.
- In violation of City policy, the Animal Control Manager did not appropriately manage volunteers at the Animal Control Center, allowing them to assume responsibilities that should only be discharged by an Animal Control Officer.

### ***Investigation Timeline***

4/15/14 – 4/17/14 – The City of Stamford Human Resources Department, Director of Public Safety, and Chief of Police received multiple complaints regarding the Animal Control Center and the facility's operations.

4/18/14 – Human Resources and Stamford Police officially launched investigations into the Animal Control Center.

5/2/14 – Animal Control Manager was placed on administrative leave.

5/6/14 – Police Department sent letters to all individuals and organizations who had adopted dogs from the Animal Control Center since January 2011. In addition, calls were made to dog owners who the Police Department identified as owning dogs whose history indicated potentially aggressive behavior. One dog was surrendered to the Animal Control Center.

6/17/14 – Human Resources Investigation concluded with the recommendation that the Chief of Police terminate the Animal Control Manager. In addition, the Mayor established a task force to address the policies and procedures of the Animal Control Facility moving forward.

### ***Findings from Investigation – Dog Adoptions & Bite Incidents***

*NOTE: The names of bite victims are not being released at this time. Dog names have been replaced with pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the victims.*

Dog #1: "Alpha"

- Owner #1 brought in Alpha, an 84 lb mixed breed dog previously adopted from the Animal Control Center, because the dog demonstrated aggressive behavior and bit one person.
  - Owner #1 stated on the Dog Information Sheet, completed at the time of surrender, that the dog was returned because of biting.
- After being returned to the Center by Owner #1, despite a documented history of biting, the dog was advertised to the public in a flyer as "...harmless in his play." and "The good news is we know Alpha did SO well in a home environment and should transition very easily back to a home life style."
- Alpha was adopted out to Owner #2. In violation of City policy, the Adoption Contract for Alpha did not state Alpha's biting incident or aggressive behavior.
- Owner #2 called Animal Control shortly after adoption to report bites of multiple individuals, one of which was serious and required hospital treatment.
  - Owner #2 and parent of victim contacted Chief of Police, triggering investigation.

## Dog #2: "Beta"

- Owner #1 surrendered Beta to the Animal Control Center because the dog bit the owner's child.
- In violation of City policy, the Animal Control Manager completed paperwork so that Owner #2 could adopt Beta and did not mention the fact that Beta had bitten a child.
- Shortly after adoption, Beta bit Owner #2's child and Owner #2 called the Animal Control Manager. The Animal Control Manager failed to complete a bite report. The Animal Control Manager gave Owner #2 contact information for a volunteer dog trainer.
- Before Owner #2 was able to make arrangements with the volunteer dog trainer, Beta bit Owner #2's child a second time and Owner #2 called the Animal Control Manager. In violation of State requirements and City policy, a bite report was not made. Instead of sending an Animal Control Officer, the Animal Control Manager sent a volunteer to visit the home.
- After the second attack, Beta attempted to bite the face of Owner #2's child. Beta was surrendered to the Center. In violation of City policy, the Animal Control Manager did not notate the biting incidents on the surrender form.
- Beta was adopted out to Owner #3. The Animal Control Manager completed paperwork for Owner #3 to adopt Beta. In violation of City policy, there was no indication on the Adoption Contract that Beta had a history of biting.
- After receiving the Stamford Police Department letter about potentially aggressive dogs, Owner #3 surrendered Beta. Owner #3 reported that Beta became very aggressive shortly after arriving at their home and repeatedly bit multiple individuals and Owner #3.

## Dog #3: "Gamma"

- Gamma arrived at Animal Control Center after biting three police officers.
- The Animal Control Manager adopted out Gamma to Owner #1. In violation of City policy, the Adoption Contract did not mention the biting incident. (Owner #1 was aware, however, that Gamma had bitten the officers.)
- Four days later, Owner #1 returned Gamma, because it bit his wife.
- A volunteer at the Center adopted out Gamma to Owner #2. In violation of City policy, the Adoption Contract Form did not state Gamma's previous biting incidents. (Owner #2 did have knowledge of the police attack, but not the second attack.)

## Incidents Involving Dogs of Resident #1

- Police Department in April 2014 was called to a Stamford resident's home regarding a dog attack. The complainant called because the complainant was unhappy with City Animal Control's handling of an ongoing problem with the dogs of a nearby resident, Resident #1.
- Resident #1 had several dogs that attacked residents and other dogs on multiple occasions over a period of several months. These repeated attacks resulted in:
  - Injuries to multiple residents who were attacked by Resident #1's dogs.
  - Veterinary Hospital attention was given to animal wounds incurred after attacks from Resident #1's dogs.

- A restraining order placed on one of the dogs.
- A veterinarian submitting a complaint to State officials. The State subsequently met with the Animal Control Manager and issued a verbal warning to her about the need to address the aggressive dogs.
- In violation of the duties of an Animal Control Manager, State directive, and City policy, the Manager failed to address the situation despite repeated complaints and requests from multiple individuals.

### ***Findings from Investigation – Previous Warnings from State Animal Control***

*On two prior occasions, the State Bureau of Regulation and Inspection advised Animal Control Manager not to adopt out aggressive dogs.*

#### February 2008 Warning Letter

- In February 2008, the State Bureau of Regulation and Inspection sent a letter to the Stamford Animal Control Manager denying the Manager's appeal of a restraining order placed on one of the dogs at the Center (which had a history of biting) that the Manager wanted to adopt out.
- The Assistant Bureau Director concluded his letter by stating "The Department of Agriculture does not support Animal Control Officers knowingly placing dogs with a documented history of aggression back into contact with the public. This action could result in the municipality assuming liability should the dog become aggressive and bite again. While everyone in the field of Animal Control should do what can be done to better the lives of animals, the first responsibility of all Animal Control Officers is to the safety of the public."

#### June 2011 Warning Letter

- In June 2011, the State Bureau of Regulation and Inspection sent a letter to the Stamford Animal Control Manager, disapproving of the Manager's decision to retrieve a dog - originally adopted out from the Stamford Animal Control Center - in Naugatuck that had a documented history of biting.
- The State Animal Control Officer stated in the letter that "As you are aware, we have discussed the placement of biting dogs in the past. It is the responsibility of State Animal Control to bring attention to the municipality where public safety and liability may be of concern. The Department of Agriculture does not support Animal Control Officers knowingly placing dogs with a documented history of aggression background into contact with the public."
- The State Animal Control Officer added "The City of Stamford had no obligation to take back [the dog] for impoundment. This type of action could result in the municipality assuming liability should the dog become aggressive and bite again. While everyone in the field of Animal Control should do what can be done to better the lives of animals, the first responsibility of all Animal Control Officers is to the safety of the public."
- The State Animal Control Officer concluded "It is my responsibility as a State Animal Control Officer to report these situations. My responsibility and concern is for public and for the liability of the City of Stamford."

### ***Animal Control Center Task Force***

Following the Human Resources investigation, the Mayor announced the formation of an Animal Control Facility Task Force, which will help to lead the City's efforts as it works to address the short and long term challenges at the Animal Control Center.

The Task Force's responsibilities will include:

- Reviewing current policies & procedures of the facility, in conjunction with City officials.
- Working with all stakeholders, including residents, interested volunteers, and City officials to ensure that the City maximizes the safety of residents and the welfare of all animals in the facility.
- Making recommendations to the Mayor about potential sites for a new Animal Control Center.

The Mayor appointed Eileen Heaphy, District 8 Representative, and Art Layton, former City Representative, to lead the task force. Heaphy and Layton were the key leaders in the formation of the Stamford Dog Park. The Mayor anticipates the full task force will be appointed before the end of next week.

#### ***Update on Current Operations of the Center***

The Animal Control Center will continue to operate and serve the Stamford community.

- The Animal Control Center continues to adopt out animals to new owners. 12 dogs, 14 cats, 2 rabbits, and one bird have been adopted out since the investigation began.
- Volunteers will not be permitted to volunteer until new policies and procedures are reviewed and put into place.

###

APPENDIX:

**City Animal Control Operations Procedure - Excerpt**

City Animal Control Operations Procedure 07-01 states, among other things:

The City of Stamford shall operate its Animal Control Shelter and its Animal Adoption Program in accordance with State Law.

The Animal Control Officer SHALL be responsible for making sure that all Animal Control Personnel, whether paid or volunteer status, document and completely brief any person interested in adopting a dog from the Stamford Animal Shelter. All information concerning the reason the dog is in custody of Animal Control; reason for quarantine, if any; **whether the dog bites or has bitten**, if known; the dog's disposition and any other information that is known about the animal SHALL be provided.

MAYOR  
DAVID R. MARTIN



CHIEF OF POLICE  
JONATHAN FONTNEAU

**STAMFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
805 BEDFORD STREET  
STAMFORD, CT 06901-1194  
OFFICE: (203) 977-4681 FAX: (203) 977-5583

May 05, 2014

Dear Dog Owner,

The City of Stamford is contacting you because our records indicate that you adopted a dog from the Animal Control Center after January 2011. We are writing to notify you that an investigation has been launched into allegations that the Animal Control Center may not have followed all state guidelines and proper procedures regarding the adoption of dogs.

Although the City is not issuing this notification because we have identified your dog as potentially aggressive, if you are concerned that your dog has or is exhibiting aggressive behavior or you have any questions concerning your dog, please contact the Animal Control Center at 203-977-4437 during normal hours of operation.

The City of Stamford Animal Control Center has a policy of accepting back into its care any dog that has been adopted. If you are experiencing unacceptable and/or aggressive behaviors and are reconsidering the long-term outlook for keeping your dog, again, please contact the Animal Control Center.

Finally, thank you for adopting a dog from the Animal Control Center. And, thank you for your patience and understanding.



---

Chief Jon Fontneau  
A/C James Matheny



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
165 CAPITOL AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

BUREAU OF REGULATION AND INSPECTION

ANIMAL HEALTH  
860-713-2504  
STATE VETERINARIAN  
860-713-2505  
ANIMAL CONTROL  
860-713-2506  
A.P.C.P.  
860-713-2507  
AG COMMODITIES  
860-713-2513  
DAIRY DIVISION  
860-713-2508

COPY

February 11, 2008

Laurie Hollywood  
Stamford Animal Control  
201 Magee Avenue  
Stamford, Connecticut 06902

Dear Ms. Hollywood:

Please be advised that the Department of Agriculture is in receipt of your request to appeal a restraining order that was placed on the dog "Clifford". This order was placed by ACO Mary Ann Kleinschmitt of New Canaan as a result of a biting incident that occurred on December 30, 2007. At the time of the bite, "Clifford" was owned by Mark Barber of 367 White Oak Shade Road, New Canaan, CT.

According to Section 22-358 (c) of the Connecticut General Statutes "Any person aggrieved by an order of any municipal animal control officer, the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any regional animal control officer may request a hearing before the commissioner within fourteen days of the issuance of such order." Because the fourteen day time period has elapsed, your request for an appeal is denied. The restraint order stands, "Clifford" must be muzzled when he is not on the owner's property. The "completion date" of January 30, 2008 which you refer to is in reference to the completion of the construction of the enclosure and does not pertain to the actual issuance of the order itself.

In your letter you stated "I believe he bit a woman while she was picking up her little dog, which he was going for, because he was protecting his property...." A review of the case report and all witness statements indicate that "Clifford" attacked the mini-Dachshund "Otto", had bodily picked him up by the middle and was attempting to kill him. There is no indication that the victim simply bent over to pick up her dog as you imply. The incident took place at 67 White Oak Shade Road and "Clifford" resided at 367 White Oak Shade Road. As he was a considerable distance away from his property, it is difficult to understand how this dog could have been protecting his property.

Laurie Hollywood  
February 11, 2008  
Page Two

The Department of Agriculture does not support Animal Control Officers knowingly placing dogs with a documented history of aggression back into contact with the public. This action could result in the municipality assuming liability should the dog become aggressive and bite again. While everyone in the field of Animal Control should do what can be done to better the lives of animals, the first responsibility of all Animal Control Officers is to the safety of the public.

Sincerely,



Wayne Kasacek  
Assistant Bureau Director  
Regulation and Inspection

MG:ecm

Cc: Brent Larrabee  
Chief of Police

Honorable Dannel P. Malloy  
Mayor

F. Philip Prelli  
Commissioner of Agriculture

Gail Shane  
Assistant Attorney General

Maureen Griffin  
Supervisor – State Animal Control



STAMFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT  
808 BEDFORD STREET  
STAMFORD, CT 06901-1194

February 1, 2008

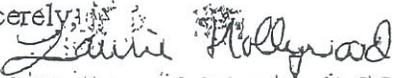
Laurie Hollywood  
Stamford Animal Control  
201 Magee Ave.  
Stamford, CT 06902

To Whom It May Concern:

I am requesting an appeal or specific change to a RESTRAINT ORDER that was placed on a dog now in my custody at Stamford Animal Control. I am asking for the removal of the muzzle in the bottom section highlighted on attached memo. The dog has been evaluated and tested by our professional dog trainer Rob Mullin. The dog is very well trained and excellent with people. He is extremely friendly with people and rolls over for belly rubs. He was in a dog training class with twenty people and dogs, both of different ages. He interacted well with every person and did well with a male pit-bull we introduced to him, not even a growl, bark, snap or lunge out of him. The pit-bull was licking his face as he lay on the ground stretched out. I believe he bit a woman while she was picking up her little dog, that he was going for, because he was protecting his property and he was not contained behind a fence. I am sure you received the report on the situation from New Canaan Animal Control.

I may have a home lined up for "Clifford" that sounds like the perfect fit. The property is surrounded completely with fencing, in addition they have a full kennel run attached to the garage with a dog door into the garage, and another dog door from the garage into the house. Their previous dog was a 130 pound Shepherd. They are aware of the significance of the restraint, and the responsibility that comes with owning this dog. They requested that I try to change or lift the muzzle part while the dog is in my custody, before they make a decision about finalizing the adoption. This dog "Clifford" is 7 years old, and is fat and healthy, and deserves to live out his life in a responsible home.

The RESTRAINT ORDER has a completion date of 1/30/08, so this is the request before the deadline is up to change it. Please respond. I will be back at work on February 11, 2008. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
  
Laurie Hollywood, Manager/ACO  
(203) 977-4437 or (203) 977-5166  
[lhollywood@ci.stamford.ct.us](mailto:lhollywood@ci.stamford.ct.us)

# RESTRAINT TRANSFER

## RESTRAINT ORDER

Date 1/23/08

Pursuant to Section 22-358, Quarantine of Biting Dogs, "The Commissioner, the chief animal control officer, any animal control officer, any municipal animal control officer or any regional animal control officer may make any order concerning the restraint or disposal of any biting dog as he deems necessary".

Dog Owner or Keeper Town of Stamford Animal Control (Lori Hollywood)

Address 201 Magee Ave Town Stamford, CT

As the owner or keeper of the dog described below, you are ordered to continually restrain your dog as of this date according to the conditions listed below because of the following bite incident.

Date of Bite 12/30/07 Date of Quarantine 1/30/07

Person Bitten LESLIE DEVOL D.O.B. 7/17/48

Address 379 White Oak Shade Rd Town New Canaan

Description of Dog:

Name CLIFFORD Breed GR. SHEPHERD-X Color BRN/BLK

Age 7 Sex MN License # 07-1700 Town NEW CANAAN

Conditions of restraint:

When the dog is on your property it will be led on a secure leash to a pen constructed according to the following specifications:

Structure CHAIN LINK W/CONCRETE POURED BASE Size NO LESS THAN 10'x10'x 6'

Material CHAIN LINK Completion Date 1/30/08

The dog is not to be tied, tethered or loose at any time. When the dog is not on your property it will be on a secure leash no longer than 6 feet, controlled by a responsible adult and muzzled securely. This restraint order will remain in effect as long as the dog is alive and is transferable to any owner or keeper other than the person listed above. Notification of transfer of ownership or residence shall be made to the issuing officer.

Section 22-358 of the Connecticut General Statutes also states, "Any person aggrieved by any order of any municipal animal control officer, the chief animal control officer, any animal control officer or any regional animal control officer may request a hearing before the commissioner within fourteen days of the issuance of such order."

Commissioner of Agriculture  
765 Asylum Avenue  
Hartford, Connecticut 06105  
860-713-2506



Municipal Animal Control Officer



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
165 CAPITOL AVENUE - ROOM G8-A  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

COPY

ANIMAL HEALTH  
860-713-2504  
STATE VETERINARIAN  
860-713-2505  
ANIMAL CONTROL  
860-713-2506  
ANIMAL POP. CONTROL  
860-713-2507  
AG COMMODITIES  
860-713-2513  
DAIRY DIVISION  
860-713-2508  
LICENSING UNIT  
860-713-2512

BUREAU OF REGULATION AND INSPECTION

June 14, 2011

Laurie Ann Hollywood  
Municipal Animal Control Officer  
Police Department  
805 Bedford Street  
Stamford, Connecticut 06901

Sent Certified Mail Return  
Receipt #7004 1160 0004 0259 9556

Dear Ms. Hollywood:

A situation has been brought to the attention of State Animal Control concerning a male, black and tan Rottweiler known as "Rex". It is my information that "Rex" originated in the Stamford Dog Pound as Impound #12 in 2010 and was adopted out to Dave and Patti Hill of Prospect on July 28, 2010. On March 9, 2011, "Rex" was under the care of a relative, William Brundage, while the owner was out of state. "Rex" bit Mr. Brundage on the left hand. Mr. Brundage was treated by a medical doctor and the bite was reported to Prospect Animal Control. The dog was quarantined and brought to housing at the Naugatuck Dog Pound.

While in quarantine, you were in touch with Prospect Animal Control and advised him that "Rex's" owner violated your adoption agreement and that "Rex" must come back to Stamford. Mr. Hill signed the dog back to Stamford Animal Control. On March 26, 2011 you drove to the Naugatuck Dog Pound, picked up "Rex" and brought him back to the Stamford Dog Pound. "Rex" was impounded again under Stamford Animal Control. I saw "Rex" at the pound during my inspection. I understand "Rex" has now been adopted out to a new owner.

During the investigation of the "Rex" bite case, I was again notified of a second dog bite case involving the Town of Darien and another dog placed by Stamford Animal Control. This dog had bitten two people in two different incidents, Kelly Nardine and Marie Joyner. This dog, a Malamute Mix, known as "Frank", was returned to Stamford Dog Pound for the quarantine. "Frank" was impounded again #362.

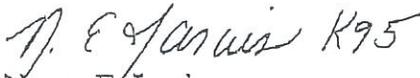
As you are aware, we have discussed the placement of biting dogs in the past. It is the responsibility of State Animal Control to bring attention to the municipality where public safety and liability may be of concern. The Department of Agriculture does not support Animal Control Officers knowingly placing dogs with a documented history of aggression background into contact with the public. The City of Stamford had no

Laurie Ann Hollywood  
June 14, 2011  
Page Two

obligation to take back "Rex" for impoundment. This type of action could result in the municipality assuming liability should the dog become aggressive and bite again. While everyone in the field of Animal Control should do what can be done to better the lives of animals, the first responsibility of all Animal Control Officers is to the safety of the public.

It is my responsibility as a State Animal Control Officer to report these situations. My responsibility and concern is for public safety and for the liability of the City of Stamford.

Sincerely,

  
Nancy E. Jarvis  
State Animal Control Officer

CC: Raymond T. Connors - Supervisor, State Animal Control  
Michael Pavia - Mayor of Stamford - Sent Certified #7004 1160 0004 0259 9563  
Robert Nivakoff - Chief of Police - Sent Certified #7004 1160 0004 0259 9570