

**List of recommendations for WAIF from volunteers, employees, former employees, donors, former board members, adopters, potential adopters, and other interested citizens. (check completed items)**

- √ 1. Hold open meetings (per bylaws and Oak Harbor agreement). Post meeting dates on WAIF's website.
2. Reinstate any volunteer fired or suspended (at their request per First Amendment guarantees) for questioning WAIF's policies.
3. Establish and maintain a real, ongoing fostering program (foster program is required in animal control contract)
4. Identify special needs dogs and foster them (old dogs, pit bulls, etc.)
5. Get housetrained dogs out of their enclosures at least 3 times every 24 hours for their elimination needs. Have someone on evening duty (past 5 p.m.)
6. Adopt a recognized criteria for evaluating dangerous or aggressive dogs (Best Friends standard, Merck Veterinary Standard). Use the criteria, rather than relying on impressions or misinterpretations of an animal's behavior. Very few dogs are actually dangerous; most are stressed or untrained.
7. Add a board member with direct oversight and authority for kennel management. Let board member attend progressive humane conferences.
8. Develop customer (adopter) satisfaction surveys (available online) and volunteer feedback forms. Never fire a volunteer who respectfully expresses a differing viewpoint or observation. Have board member review feedback forms and surveys.
9. Stop taking 'surrenders' until WAIF can comply with minimum quality standards as set forth by the San Francisco SPCA. If surrenders continue, first sit down with surrendering party and insure that the reason for surrender cannot be resolved (fencing, training problem). Establish a system of intervention first (volunteer fence builders, certificates for training sessions, WAIF sponsored training classes, etc., which can also generate income for WAIF)
10. Stop breed-identifying (guessing) without proof (registry papers, DNA) -- especially when it comes to pit bull/mixes. At WAIF in recent years, dogs labeled pit bulls or mixes (rightly or wrongly) have been viewed as largely unadoptable and killed (see chart). Don't rely on word of surrendering owner or animal control agent who may be guessing, too. Experts agree that it is not possible to identify a pit bull mix based on appearance. Also a pit bull mix is not the same as a pit bull.
11. Review website write-ups to insure they are positive and encouraging.
12. Provide new adopters with one free training class and help hotline.
13. Provide potable water for dogs (and cats) to drink. Don't make them drink dump water. Test water from the hoses.
14. Don't use aversive methods (such as squirting the dogs in the face with water) to remove dogs from an area needing cleaning. Teach the staff how to work with dogs to improve dogs' behavior by current non-aversive methods.
15. Provide an exercise program DAILY for dogs and cats (exercise program is required in the Animal Control contract). Don't rely solely on volunteer dog-walkers.
16. Develop and fully implement an intervention strategy for adult dogs and cats; have active intervention to reduce anxiety, depression, behavior-related issues that meet current approved humane guidelines. This is required in WAIF's euthanasia policy, but is not being done.
17. A.) CHANGE THE CURRENT EUTHANASIA POLICY SO THAT THE SHELTER MANAGER IS NOT THE SOLE AUTHORITY MAKING DECISIONS.
- B.) DO NOT ALLOW VETERINARIANS OR EUTHANIZING PARTY TO "RUBBER-STAMP" EUTHANASIA ORDERS.
- C.) HAVE A PROCESS OF REVIEW TO EXAMINE WHAT INTERVENTION WAS TRIED SO THAT EUTHANASIA TRULY IS THE LAST RESORT (PER WAIF'S BYLAWS)

If a dog or cat is to be euthanized for behavior or aggression issues, document the basis for the decision. Have euthanizing veterinarian review records and sign off that all possible intervention was tried and legitimate criteria for “dangerous” established before killing the animal. Show what was done in writing (fostering, training, intervention, etc.) Never kill a dog because it has become “depressed” – intervene first! BE SURE THE DOG IS INDEPENDENTLY EVALUATED IF THE CONDITION REPRESENTS A CHANGE IN THE DOG’S BEHAVIOR – VERY FEW DOGS ARE TRULY AGGRESSIVE.

18. Develop active, working outreach and transfer agreements with other shelters and rescues. This is routine practice at other area shelters.

19. Commit to moving toward no-kill alternatives and seek funding sources; visit programs that are no-kill and learn from them (such as Maddie’s Fund grant programs). Or be honest about running a traditional kill animal control facility. Change the by-laws, animal control agreements, and website to reflect the truth.

20. Quit using “liability” as an excuse not to work with other rescues, develop fostering, take animals to adoption fairs, or allow them off-site to meet the public.

21. Allow neutral, off-site dog meetings for potential adopters upon request, for any dog. Requiring dogs to meet on site is stressful and not recommended by PBRC in the case of pit bulls.

22. Bring small and old dogs indoors in cold weather prior to fostering.

23. Establish a stray hotline; run a regular ad in Lost Pet sections encouraging people who have lost pets to contact WAIF immediately (also post this on the website). Currently this only runs in Whidbey Examiner. People do not always associate WAIF with animal control. Their pet may be euthanized after mandatory hold, which is only about a week’s time.

24. Quit automatically killing healthy dogs identified as pit bulls or pit mixes after five/six day hold. Amanda Clase of the prestigious Pit Bull Rescue Central stresses that “Any dog regardless of heritage needs to be evaluated as an individual. A mixed breed dog may show the temperament of one breed more than another or it may show a temperament that is a blend of all the breeds involved in its background. Even purebred dogs may or may not show the precise temperament that is the ‘breed standard’ because temperament is based on a combination of genetics and environment. For these reasons, it would be impossible to develop an accurate informational page on ‘pit mixes.’ All dogs regardless of breed need to be managed in a responsible manner and if someone believes they have a mixed breed dog, they need to educate themselves on the attributes of any breed they may believe is included in their dog.” WAIF kills the dogs based on perceived breed or appearance.

25. Insist that Oak Harbor rescind BSL in favor of Dangerous Animal laws as these target irresponsible owners and do not persecute any type of dog merely for existing. No humane shelter should stand for or help enforce Breed Specific Legislation. There are successful alternatives available.

26. Reinstigate and maintain active outreach activities (monthly flyers for thrift stores, updated collection bin photos OF ANIMALS NEEDING IMMEDIATE ADOPTION and other previously established methods of outreach.)

27. Encourage fostering rather than adoptions to transient military people

28. Create a visual barrier at the play yards to reduce stress (canvas, slats...)

29. Require the staff, manager, and board to read *The Culture Clash*, *Good Dog 101*, *Redemption* and/or attend equivalent seminars on some kind of regular basis. Develop a library of current, recommended books (*Calming Signals* by Turid Rugaas, etc.) Board members who are too busy to learn about animal behavior, training, and progressive management should consider resigning.

30. Bathe each dog at least every 3 months. Better yet, get them adopted.

32. Devise a legitimate adoption appeals process for people who feel they were turned down unfairly.

33. Close the door between the cat room and the main reception area

34. Get rid of all prong and choke collars and instead use Gentle Leaders or Easy Walk harnesses, or other acceptable non-aversive collars (martingale or flat collars.)

35. Ensure that staff can actually evaluate aggression from RJM (rude jumpy mouth) - or consult with someone who can. Make sure staff recognizes and is trained to deal with shelter-based stressors such as barrier frustration (which is not aggression).

36. Add board members with proven animal rescue track records, as well as animal professionals (veterinarians, trainers, etc.) with progressive credentials

37. Adhere to every aspect of WAIF's own By Laws, charter, and legal agreements in all manners pertaining to animal welfare, such as:

WAIF 2004 By Laws.pdf

Page 2 Specific objectives are 1) minimal kill 2) Best care possible while actively seeking adoptive homes

d) Open to general public

c) Notice of meeting given at least 4 days prior to each director

e) Public may address during general discussion or any agenda item

f) meeting may be closed for other discussion

WAIF Oak Harbor Agreement.pdf

Page 2 #12 The contractor (WAIF) will establish and maintain a foster program

#15 ... will establish an exercise program for animals kept at the shelter

38. Re-evaluate staffing and training needs. At present, one person with no specialized training has total control over adoption and euthanasia decisions for every homeless animal on Whidbey Island. One person with the title Shelter Manager is also charged by the WAIF board to fulfill all these duties (job titles taken from Seattle Humane Society): Operations & Adoptions, Shelter Manager, Kennel Supervisor, Behavior Program Manager, Training Coordinator, Adoption Supervisor, Cat Foster Coordinator, Dog Program Coordinator.

39. Quit using lack of funds as an excuse not to change, improve, or reform. A lot of needs can be met using the community and volunteers and creativity.

40. Schedule routine offsite adoption events. Many people do not want to go to the shelters, but would visit dogs for adoption at off-site locations and/or the WAIF Thrift Stores. It would also promote more traffic to the thrift stores.

And finally, work exhaustively to move the animals out of the contaminated, inadequate, disease-prone Coupeville shelter within a year, even if it means another temporary location until the new shelter is completed.