

City of Trenton – Department of Health and Human Services

Trenton Animal Welfare Advisory Board

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: October 27, 2025

Time: 5:56 PM

Location: Department of Health and Human Services, City of Trenton, NJ

Official Meeting Proceedings

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:56 PM by Ms. Destiny Walker, Acting Chair.

Roll Call:

Present:

- Dr. Diego Minacapelli
- Ms. Marge Caldwell-Wilson
- Ms. Katelyn Seeland (Secretary)
- Mr. Joseph Antonello
- Ms. Desire Walker (Vice Chair)
- Ms. Destiny Walker

Absent:

- Ms. Janina Calle
- Dr. Lenore Robinson (Chair)

Reading and Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the July 28, 2025 meeting were reviewed.

- *Motion to approve:* Ms. Destiny Walker
- *Seconded by:* Ms. Desire Walker
- *Vote:* Approved unanimously

Unfinished Business

1. Annual Public Meetings:

- The board discussed the importance of transparency and community engagement.
 - Ms. Destiny Walker and Ms. Desire Walker emphasized that public feedback is essential despite potential criticism.
 - Mr. Antonello expressed concern about premature public scrutiny. The board agreed to plan for an annual public meeting approximately one year from now, to be held in the first-floor recreation room.

2. TAWAB Bylaws:

- Members discussed updates to the bylaws, including term structures and reappointment procedures.
 - The board approved staggered terms to maintain continuity: three members will serve two-year terms and four members will serve four-year terms.
 - Discussion included whether to include member role descriptions; consensus was that training resources, rather than bylaws, should guide new members.
 - Ms. Caldwell-Wilson emphasized defining the board's purpose and establishing clear parameters of responsibility.
- Ms. Caldwell-Wilson requested clarification on visiting the Trenton Animal Shelter.
 - Dr. Minacapelli confirmed that members may visit with prior arrangement, provided they do not disrupt operations.
 - Several members expressed that visiting would build understanding between staff and the board.
 - Dr. Minacapelli referenced the executive order establishing the board and reaffirmed that visits must be pre-planned and coordinated.

3. Spay/Neuter Clinic

- The board discussed next steps for developing a community spay/neuter program.

- Dr. Minacapelli emphasized the need for a structured plan before fundraising, including identifying mobile veterinary providers and cost estimates per procedure.
- **Action Items:**
 - Contact People for Animals, Rowan University, and potential Pennsylvania partners licensed in NJ.
 - Explore vet university partnerships for possible free or low-cost services. Funding will be managed through the proposed trust fund overseen by Ms. Caldwell-Wilson.

New Business

1. TAWAB Secretary:

- Ms. Seeland is living outside of Trenton temporarily due to a family emergency. The matter will be revisited once her registration status is updated.

2. Breeding Ordinance:

- The board reviewed Asbury Township's breeding ordinance and discussed potential revisions to Trenton's breeding ordinance to limit backyard breeding and reduce rabies risk.
 - Mr. Antonello advocated for replacing the current ordinance with a ban on private breeding.
 - Dr. Minacapelli noted enforcement challenges due to limited Animal Control staffing.
 - Members agreed that enforcement and public education are key to successful implementation.
- Following the discussion, the board voted to recommend a new ordinance banning animal breeding within city limits
 - *Motion* to recommend: Ms. Destiny Walker
 - *Seconded by*: Ms. Marge Caldwell-Wilson
 - *Vote*: Unanimous approval

Announcements:

- None.

Adjournment:

- *Motion to adjourn:* Ms Destiny Walker
- *Seconded by:* Ms. Marge Caldwell-Wilson
- *Meeting adjourned at:* 6:54 PM

Next Meeting:

- Monday, November 24, 2025 at 5:30 PM