

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Animal Control Minutes
Thursday, April 15, 2021

Members present; Sean Sargeant, Dr. Luther Brown, Jeanette Langston, Thomas Franco and Carrie Savage. Also present, Attorney Matt Bloomer, ACO Jones, Control Commander Sheldon, Brittany Cassell, Tina Lizotte, Deputy City Clerk Kapusta and Courtney Schaner by phone.

Chair Sargeant called the meeting to order at 5:38 PM and noted that the Board was asked to hear a vicious dog complaint from ACO Jones who investigated the incident with a dog named Insane, owned by Courtney Schaner (respondent), Tina Lizotte dog walker for Insane and a dog named Buddy owned by Brittany Cassell (complainant). Chair Sargeant noted that the respondent, Courtney Schaner was present by phone. Deputy Clerk Kapusta confirmed that notices were sent on April 9, 2021 to all parties. Chair Sargeant introduced all members and participants present. Chair Sargeant asked if there were any conflicts or ex-parte communications from the Board. Seeing none, Chair Sargeant asked Deputy Clerk Kapusta to swear in anyone giving testimony or evidence. ACO Jones, Ms. Cassell, Ms. Schaner and Ms. Lizotte were sworn in.

ACO Jones read the Vicious Dog Complaint form and brief history of the attack that occurred on March 24, 2021. ACO Jones presented evidence including sworn statements, medical records and Veterinary records. ACO Jones presented his evidence and reviewed the documents prior to submitting them to the Chair. Chair Sargeant noted the documents and placed them into evidence.

Ms. Cassell was asked to comment on the incident and gave verbal testimony of the incident. Ms. Cassell was walking her two dogs on leashes when another dog named Insane, who was being walked by Tina Lizotte, on the opposite side of the street and aggressively barking, broke free from his leash and came across the street and starting attacking Buddy. Buddy is a 10 month old Golden Retriever that weighs about 50 pounds. Insane quickly latched on to Buddy's mouth biting him and growling aggressively. Ms. Cassell tried to break up the dogs and during this time, Insane bit her multiple times. Neighbors in the area ran outside to help separate the dogs as well as a gentleman who was driving by. Eventually Insane let go of Buddy. Another passerby called the police. Ms. Lizotte explained that Insane was not her dog and gave Ms. Cassell her name and the owner's name and phone number. After Ms. Lizotte left the police showed up. Ms. Cassell gave the Officer all contact information of who was involved. Ms. Cassell then went to the Emergency Room and Buddy was brought to Eastwood Animal Clinic.

There was brief Q & A with Ms. Cassell, ACO and Board.

Ms. Lizotte was asked to comment on the incident and gave verbal testimony of the incident. Ms. Lizotte was walking Insane on a leash when she came upon Ms. Cassell walking her two dogs. Ms. Lizotte states that Buddy was aggressively barking at Insane, so she put Insane in between her legs to hold him down with her body, when he slipped his collar and ran across the street to Buddy. Insane was on top of Buddy and Ms. Cassell along with others that came out were literally beating Insane to get him to release. All of a sudden Insane just let go. Ms. Lizotte then exchanged names and phone numbers with Ms. Cassell. Ms. Lizotte did say that Insane was up to date on his shots.

There was brief Q & A with Ms. Lizotte, ACO and Board.

Ms. Schaner was asked to comment on the incident and gave verbal testimony of the incident by phone. Ms. Schaner has had Insane since last June, 2020. Insane was originally her current boyfriend's and his ex-girlfriends dog. Insane had his shots from a Veterinary in Glens Falls and is up to date. Insane is a 3 ½ years old pit bull mix and weighs about 50-60 pounds. He has never been aggressive with any other animal or human. Insane lives with Ms. Schaner and her two very young children. Ms. Schaner did quarantine Insane for 10 days as punishment for his actions.

There was brief Q & A with Ms. Schaner, ACO and Board.

At this point, Chair Sargeant offered all evidence presented, to Deputy Clerk Kapusta.

With no further questions from the Board, testimony or evidence from either party, the Board concluded the open meeting session at 6:07 PM.

At 6:20 PM the Board moved into deliberative session.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy L. Kapusta
Rutland City Deputy Clerk
Deputy Clerk of the Board of Animal Control