

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Animal Control Minutes
Tuesday, May 10, 2022

Members present; Sean Sargeant, Tony Romeo, Peg Flory, Anna Tadio, and Carrie Savage. Also present, ACO Jones, Deputy City Clerk Kapusta, Karen Bahr, Michele Willis, Kraig Willis and Keith Gadson.

Chair Sargeant called the meeting to order at 5:31 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 Sage, owned by Keith Gadson (respondent), a dog named Erin owned by Michele and Kraig Willis (complainant) and Karen Bahr dog groomer. Deputy Clerk Kapusta confirmed that notices were sent by Certified Mail with tracking, that both Mrs. Willis and Ms. Bahr received the notices on April 25 and April 27, 2022 respectively. Mr. Gadson's Certified Mail was returned to the Clerk's Office as undeliverable. ACO Jones hand delivered the letter to Mr. Gadson on May 3, 2022. 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, Mr. and Mrs. Willis, Ms. Bahr and Mr. Gadson were sworn in.

ACO Jones read the Vicious Dog Complaint form and brief history of the attack that occurred on April 12, 2022. ACO Jones presented evidence including sworn statements, veterinary letter, veterinary records, pictures, Board of Animal Control Decision and Order from June 21, 2021, and police reports. 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. As of the date of this hearing, Mr. Gadson had not licensed his dogs with the City of Rutland. ACO Jones did check with Mr. Gadson's veterinary and both dogs are up to date on rabies until 2024.

Ms. Bahr was asked to comment on the incident and gave verbal testimony of the incident. A dog identified as Sage attacked a dog named Erin at Ms. Bahr's Dog Grooming business. Sage was being picked up from grooming by Mr. Gadson and at the time Erin was placed in the tub. Ms. Bahr walked Sage through a half swinging door toward Mr. Gadson for a hand off, when Sage, in a split second, just turned around and jumped in the tub and had Erin in his mouth. Ms. Bahr put her fist in Sage's mouth to get him to let go of Erin. After a little struggle, Sage finally let go and Mr. Gadson removed Sage from the premises. Ms. Bahr cleaned up Erin as best she could and drove her down the street to Riverside Veterinary Clinic for treatment. Ms. Bahr contacted Mrs. Willis to explain what happened and where she had brought Erin. Ms. Bahr has been a licensed dog groomer for the past 38 years and has groomed Mr. Gadson's dogs over 33 times without any incidents. When Ms. Bahr has groomed Sage previously there was never another dog at her Dog Grooming business. Sage was not provoked when he attacked Erin.

There was a brief Q & A with Ms. Bahr and the Board.

Mrs. Willis was asked to comment on the incident and gave verbal testimony of the incident. Mrs. Willis was contacted around 2:30 PM by Ms. Bahr telling her that Erin was attacked by another dog and that she had brought Erin to Riverside Veterinary Clinic for care. Mrs. Willis arrived at the clinic and took Erin to her normal veterinary in Castleton as Riverside would not treat Erin because she was not a patient of the clinic. Erin received medical attention for large canine bite wounds of the head and throat areas. The wounds were cleaned, flushed and some areas required surgical staples. On April 15, Mrs. Willis had to bring Erin back to the veterinary for extensive swelling of the right side of the mouth, lips and under the jaw. Erin was having difficulty using her tongue and was not able to eat or drink. IV fluids and antibiotics were administered for 2 days until Erin could eat and drink again. Erin did not return to full normal function until April 26.

There was brief Q & A with Mrs. Willis 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 6:18 PM.

At 6:20 PM the Board moved into deliberative session. At 6:40 PM the Board adjourned.

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