

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
PUBLIC COMMENT SIGN-UP SHEET**

Please complete this form and return to the Board Clerk

This form is a public record

MEETING DATE: 8.23.2018

AGENDA ITEM # _____ OR NON-AGENDA SUBJECT: X

FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____

NAME: Josue RENAULT & Beckie Child

CONTACT INFORMATION (optional):

ADDRESS: POB 3641 97208

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE: 503.367.6128 E-MAIL: info@multnomahcounty.org

IF YOU WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD IN PERSON:

1. Fill out this form and submit to the Board Clerk 15 minutes before meeting begins.
2. Comment for Non-Agenda items will be called immediately after the vote on the Consent Agenda.
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MEETING DATE: 08/23/18

AGENDA ITEM # _____ OR NON-AGENDA SUBJECT: Abuse reporting for vulnerable populations

FOR: X AGAINST: _____

NAME: Beckie Child, MSW, Ph.D.c.

CONTACT INFORMATION (*optional*):

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE: 503-943-9444 E-MAIL: Beckie.child@gmail.com

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Testimony for Multnomah County Commission
August 23, 2018

Jason Renaud & Beckie Child, MSW
Mental Health Association of Portland
www.mentalhealthportland.org
info@mentalhealthportland.org

Beckie and I are here today to speak about the safety of thousands of patients at Unity Center, and in the dozens of other hospitals, clinics, alcohol and drug treatment centers, nursing homes, jails, daycare centers, schools, adult foster homes, residential care facilities, mental health treatment centers which assist and protect vulnerable populations in Multnomah County.

As best as we can understand it, due to a miscommunication between state staff and County staff, few if any patient abuse investigations were completed by County staff in 2018. This miscommunication is unacceptable, and we commend the County's quick response to investigate the problem.

In general we tend to trust licensed clinicians. They have education, training, experience, supervision, peer standing, and legal responsibilities to guide their work. We rely on their help for our health, and sometimes with our lives.

Counties provide an additional layer of authority and reassurance by receiving complaints of patient abuse by mandatory reporters, thoroughly investigating the complaint, setting out the facts of the complaint and making recommendations for future action. This tedious process provides an impartial and public accounting and resolution. It is the only layer independent of the clinician or the agency which employs them - independent, authoritative, and impartial. The legal ability to investigate and force actions keeps patients - and their community of friends, family members, allies and neighbors - safe and secure, knowing the clinical services are a safe sanctuary of health and healing.

But a message was received by the County to cease investigations. That alone should have set off sirens - not just a red flag - which should have alerted your offices directly. It took a dozens of messages from one alert employee and finally a dozen newspaper articles to get your attention and commendable response.

Further - and we hope you add this to your inquiry - we've been told by career staff in the mental health division there has never been a training about mandatory reporting.

Your investigation will have recommendations. Along with the ones you discover, ours would be the following.

1. All county agencies and personnel who interact with people vulnerable populations by Oregon statute should identify a specific single person to receive all abuse complaints by mandatory reporters. This reporting process could go through the county's main 988-4888 and then be filtered to the appropriate people.
2. The identified agency receiver of complaints will be a mandatory reporter, and be licenced by the state as social worker, professional counselor, psychologist, or physician.
3. All county personnel who work with vulnerable populations be trained within 180 days on abuse reporting procedures and requirements and annual refresher trainings.
4. All contracts include requirement that agency staff receive annual training on abuse reporting.
5. Reports of confirmed abuse will be forwarded to law enforcement for prosecution.

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AGENDA ITEM # _____ OR NON-AGENDA SUBJECT: MCAS

FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____

NAME: JON GRAMSTAD

CONTACT INFORMATION (optional):

ADDRESS: 1306 N.E. 153rd Ave

CITY/STATE/ZIP: PORTLAND, OR. 97230

PHONE: 503-424-2270 E-MAIL: J. GRAMSTAD@comcast.net

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AGENDA ITEM # _____ OR NON-AGENDA SUBJECT: MCAS

FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____

NAME: BARBARA SPEARS

CONTACT INFORMATION (optional):

ADDRESS: 3762 S.E. MARKET

CITY/STATE/ZIP: PORTLAND, OR. 97214

PHONE: 503-421-3169 E-MAIL: BARBARA.SPEARS@comcast.net

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AN OPEN LETTER TO MULTNOMAH COUNTY LEADERSHIP

Dear Multnomah County Commissioners:

Since the spring 2015 retirement of the long time Director of Multnomah County Animal Services, conditions for MCAS's impounded dogs have gone from bad to worse. Despite reports of incompetence and chronic absenteeism, MCAS's shelter manager is now also serving as interim director, leaving both key leadership positions largely vacant. Multnomah County's Director of Community Services, who oversees this agency, has been made aware of this problem but seems unwilling to take action to correct it.

Recent shelter visitors witnessed the following:

- dogs exhibiting signs of heat exhaustion, lethargy and heavy panting in extreme summer temperatures
- Note: Despite the \$1 million MCAS was given for facilities improvements in June 2015, the two areas of the shelter where dogs are housed remain without air conditioning. The thermometer hit 90 plus degrees 24 days in July and August. Ice was donated on one the 100 degree days, in an attempt to provide some relief.
- dogs in dire need of bathing and grooming
- dogs with untreated medical conditions
- the dog adoption area vacated by staff and public trying to avoid the heat
- the apparent absence of a manager or director

A new director will assume leadership of MCAS on October 19. With its current budget of almost \$10 million (\$1,250 per animal), double that of the average U.S. animal shelter, generous county citizens will hold her responsible for providing the bold, innovative leadership this agency has lacked for so long.

The citizens of Multnomah County expect:

1. An agency which functions according to documented policies and procedures to insure efficiency and consistency
2. The implementation of the full range of programs and services necessary to achieve and maintain a 90% plus save rate, found in all progressive animal services agencies
3. Detailed financial accountability and transparency to guarantee that the public's money is spent responsibly
4. A willingness to consider and address citizens' concerns and ideas
5. High standards of teamwork, communication and respect to build morale in a largely dispirited staff

For decades, animal loving citizens have campaigned for the transformation of MCAS from a traditional animal control model into a modern, progressive, life-saving agency. October 19 should be the turning point. As commissioners, you have the ultimate authority and responsibility to oversee this transformation. We will be actively monitoring your progress.

Political Animal
PoliticalAnimal2015@gmail.com

Scooby, a 12 year old stray, sat in an MCAS cage for almost a month during the hottest days of summer, including nine days of 90 plus degree heat.

His painful periodontal disease and debris packed ears went untreated. He remained unbathed and ungroomed despite an unkempt coat, skin inflammation and hair loss. He was diagnosed with a throat ailment which made him uncomfortable in excessive heat and sensitive to neck pressure. Against the vet's instructions, he wore, not only a flat 1" leather collar, but a bandana tied around his neck.

He caught the eye of his adopter, who after several visits in late August, noticed that he seemed to be giving up. Only after someone expressed interest in him, did MCAS take steps to relieve his suffering.

He is now restored to health and a beloved member of his adoptive family.



TESTIMONY OF BARBARA SPEARS 8/23/18

We provided each of you with a copy of the full page ad we ran in Willamette Week on September 9, 2015.

In it, you'll see the open letter we wrote to County Commissioners concerning the brutal conditions we, and others, witnessed in the dog kennels at MCAS that summer when the temperature in the kennels was 95 degrees - equal to that outside.

To read from our letter, we saw:

- dogs exhibiting signs of heat exhaustion
- dogs in dire need of bathing and grooming
- the kennel area vacated by staff and public trying to avoid the heat
- the absence of a manager or director

The reason? The shelter had air-conditioning everywhere except the dog kennels. Dogs had been suffering in summer heat for years!

That summer, the temperature rose above 90 degrees for 24 days.

When we appealed to anyone and everyone who might be able to help **NOTHING WAS DONE.**

We ran our full page ad **BUT NOTHING WAS DONE.**

We brought it to the attention of the auditor, Steve March who included the failure in his February, 2016 performance audit.

STILL, IT TOOK A YEAR TO GET A COOLING SYSTEM INSTALLED IN THE KENNELS.

Now the MCAS Director is using a swamp cooler as the centerpiece of the agency's crowning achievements.

Exactly what does it take to make just **ONE CHANGE FOR THE BETTER at MCAS?**

First - the public must notice and report the problem because management isn't paying attention.

Second - citizens must appeal en masse to County officials.

Third - citizens must spend \$2,217 to run a print ad.

Fourth - citizens must make their case to the auditor.

TESTIMONY OF BARBARA SPEARS 8/23/18

Then, finally, a year later, changes may or may not be made.

By the way, animals today are still not getting groomed, some dogs with medical conditions still remain untreated and managers and directors are still absent.

And the little dog in the photo? A 12 year old poodle suffering in the heat, with periodontal disease, debris packed ears and a tracheal condition exacerbated by the two collars wrapped around his neck despite a sign on his cage disallowing any neck restrictions?

We adopted him and found him a home. Only then did he get the medical attention, grooming and care he so desperately needed.

Public and taxpayer disrespect, disdain and distrust of government bureaucracy are at an all time high.

Your refusal to act to reform MCAS, is one of the reasons why.

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AGENDA ITEM # OR NON-AGENDA SUBJECT:

FOR: AGAINST:

NAME: Lightning Super Disrupt Watchdog

CONTACT INFORMATION (optional):

ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP:

PHONE: E-MAIL:

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AGENDA ITEM # _____ OR NON-AGENDA SUBJECT: Communication

FOR: _____

AGAINST: _____

NAME: JOE WALSH

CONTACT INFORMATION (*optional*):

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

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