

TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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Public Statement from the Town of Cheshire Regarding Cheshire Animal Control Concerns February 7, 2025

The Cheshire Town Council, Town Manager and Police Chief acknowledge and respect the concerns raised by our community and animal rights advocates regarding the prolonged housing of seized dogs at the Cheshire Animal Control Facility from October 2022 until November 2024. We deeply appreciate the community's dedication to animal welfare and share the collective goal of ensuring the highest standards of care for animals in our custody.

The proceedings involving these dogs were complex and rooted in a serious case of animal abuse that necessitated the seizure by the Town of twenty-eight dogs to protect their well-being in October 2022. Two of the dogs were pregnant at the time of the seizure and gave birth to three puppies, bringing the total number of dogs in the Town's custody to thirty-one.

In November 2022, the Town commenced a lawsuit in Connecticut Superior Court against the alleged owner of the dogs. The relief sought by the Town included a request that the Superior Court vest permanent ownership of the dogs with the State Animal Control or the Town, in order to be permitted to promptly make them available for adoption. In December 2022, the Court appointed an attorney advocate for the dogs. The defendant contested the Town's Superior Court lawsuit and filed a counterclaim. The defendant also filed for bankruptcy during the pendency of the Superior Court lawsuit, which further delayed the ultimate resolution of the matters. The Superior Court litigation was settled in September 2024. In October 2024, the Bankruptcy Court approved the settlement and the Town immediately commenced the placement/adoption process for all the dogs. Unfortunately, the legal proceedings in Superior Court only concluded last week which limited our ability to share many details about these matters sooner.

During the two years the dogs were housed at the Town's facility, we regretfully experienced two instances where individual dogs became seriously ill. In both cases, the dogs were evaluated as soon as symptoms began and were treated in consultation with veterinarians. Despite receiving appropriate care over multiple weeks, their conditions did not improve, and humane euthanasia was deemed the most compassionate course of action.

This challenging experience revealed a number of areas in our processes, procedures, and the maintenance of our facility that required immediate improvement. The necessary areas of improvement were brought into focus by the consent order entered into between the Department of Agriculture and the Town of Cheshire. These include comprehensive intake forms, daily operational checklists and cleaning logs, weekly wellness assessments along with flooring replacements and new enclosure fencing. The Town is fully committed to addressing these issues and has already implemented significant changes to enhance operations and ensure the well-being of animals in our care.

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The Town will regularly publish monthly reports on our website which will outline the actions taken to date as well as updates on plans that are actively underway. These monthly reports will be posted at <https://www.cheshirect.org/182/Animal-Control>. These updates will continue as we provide regular monthly progress reports to the Department of Agriculture.

We understand that there have been allegations made against the Town's Animal Control Facility staff. The Town takes such allegations very seriously. Allegations against Town employees constitute personnel matters and it would be inappropriate for the Town to comment on any personnel review or investigation in a public setting.

We thank the community for its patience, compassion, and commitment to animal welfare as we continue to improve our operations and ensure the best possible care for all animals in the care of Cheshire Animal Control.