



# Spokane County

WASHINGTON

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT • ASHLEY CAMERON • SENIOR DIRECTOR

To: Ashley Cameron, Sr. Human Resources Director  
From: Joshua Groat, Employee & Labor Relations Manager  
Nawal Guelzim, HR Generalist  
Date:  
Re: SCRAPS Operational & Organizational/Cultural Complaints

On Monday, February 5, 2023, Human Resources was provided two letters that originated from the SCRAPS Department. These letters described a series of employee concerns/issues regarding the alleged current operation of SCRAPS and the culture within the department. Due to the nature of the allegations, the Human Resources department conducted the investigation.

## **Background:**

SCRAPS (Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service) is a department contained within the operations of the Spokane County governmental structure. The department's primary mission is the enforcement of the Spokane County Code, City of Spokane Municipal Code and Revised Code of Washington pertaining to domestic animals. A total of 38 employees work in the department and a majority work in job classifications: Animal Protection Officer, Shelter Technician, and Animal Service Representative. The SCRAPS Department has recently undergone significant change as correlated to the previous director leaving in June of 2022. From June through September of 2022, Senior Director, Cat Nichols, served as the interim leader of the SCRAPS facility until October of 2022, when the new Director of SCRAPS was named. In December of 2022, the previously approved position of Shelter Operations Manager was added back to the organizational chart and a new employee was hired into the position. These leadership changes led to operational changes within the department as directed by senior leadership of Spokane County.

## **Summary of Interview Process:**

In total, the investigators spent a combined total of 57 hours over three (3) days (February 8-10, 2023) onsite at the SCRAPS location and interviewed 30 employees within the SCRAPS department, including but not limited to the Director of SCRAPS and the SCRAPS Shelter Operations Manager. The Senior Director of Community Affairs and SCRAPS Veterinarian were interviewed on later dates. Those employees interviewed had varying tenure within the SCRAPS Department, ranging from just a few months to many years. Employees who were hired within two weeks of this investigation were excluded from being interviewed. While each interviewed employee offered a unique perspective regarding the culture and operations of the SCRAPS department, common themes were identified highlighting a very clear divide amongst SCRAPS employees.

## **COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS & HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINDINGS:**

**COMPLAINT #1:** On October 13, 2022, a staff member brought concerns to the Director, Jesse Ferrari, regarding possibly moving SCRAPS dispatch to the regional dispatch. After discussion, the director ignored staff's ideas and stated he had to go return phone calls. Later that same day Ferrari asked for staff input on a phone call he received from the public. When that same staff member advised Ferrari of

SCRAPS policy, Ferrari responded that he didn't have time for "this shit." This staff member now tries to avoid interacting with Ferrari as he feels undervalued as an employee.

- **Findings #1 (Specific to moving dispatch):** Substantiated. It is true there has been discussion about moving SCRAPS dispatch to the Spokane County Regional Emergency Communications (SREC). At this time a final decision has not been made regarding the future state of SCRAPS dispatch operations. When a final decision is made, if a change will occur as related to the current process and employee work activities, informational meetings will occur with SCRAPS employees.
- **Findings #2 (Input on phone call):** Unsubstantiated. During interviews of the employees, this allegation was specifically referenced to gain factual details from a Senior Animal Protection Officer (Sr. APO). Specific to this allegation, in this event, the phone caller was a repeat caller who calls around the same time every year with the same complaint (topic was loose feral cats). In this instance, Director Ferrari took the phone call and admits to later asking staff for additional information and context as related to the citizen complaint. Director Ferrari denied making the statement, "I don't have time for this shit." During the investigatory interviews, no person interviewed was able to corroborate the allegation made in the written statement; therefore, the investigators are unable to substantiate this claim.

**COMPLAINT #2:** On December 1, 2022, a dog was impounded into the shelter by an Animal Protection Officer after finder expressed behavior concerns and an inability to hang onto the dog. Another staff member advised that officer that we are not to pick up animals, and that people need to take them back to where they are found. That officer told the staff member that this is animal abandonment and no officer will do that. Later that day Ferrari asked the officer why he "got him into trouble" and said there is nothing wrong with putting animals back in the municipalities they came from. The officer advised Ferrari that abandonment places them in possible danger. Ferrari advised they are being given the chance to find their way home. The officer brought up the animals found in unincorporated areas with no houses around, or on busy roads. Ferrari was dismissive.

- **Finding #1:** Prior to Director Ferrari, under previous SCRAPS Director Lyndsey Soffes, it was the policy and practice of SCRAPS to accept every animal, regardless of whether SCRAPS had available and adequate space directly creating the incorrect perception that SCRAPS had unlimited capacity. Under Director Ferrari, to ensure compliance with space and safety needs for animals and staff, a more organized protocol has been implemented requiring animal acceptance based on available kennel space to ensure humane and safe animal housing at SCRAPS.

Due to lack of a formal communication around the issue, Animal Service Representatives (ASRs) expressed concern regarding appropriate direction and communication being provided to the community when a person calls regarding a stray animal in their possession when they are unable/unwilling to take care of said stray.

During the course of this investigation, an ASR admitted to voluntarily and without directive from their Manager or from Director Ferrari, sending an email to the entire ASR team with specific options which should be provided to community members in the referenced situation. These options included:

1. Going around the neighborhood to see if they (the citizen) could find the owner
2. Posting a picture to the SCRAPS Lost & Found page or other social media postings
3. Taking the animal to a vet to scan for a microchip
4. Calling other organizations to learn if the animal could be dropped off with them

Another option included in the email was: the animal should be taken back to where it was found, because the animal could potentially find its way home and the area was more familiar to the animal. This was said to be the absolute last resort in these types of situations.

As a result of the above stated facts, it has been determined through the investigation, Director Ferrari did not issue a directive to ASRs or other SCRAPS staff, instructing them to direct community members to return animals (mainly dogs) back where they found them if SCRAPS is at capacity and unable to accept the animal. Under Director Ferrari, SCRAPS has returned to a relatively firm capacity model to ensure humane conditions for the animals and a safe working condition for the employees. In this model, there are times when SCRAPS is unable to accept an animal until clean and appropriately sized capacity is available. Due to the current level of animals being surrendered and abandoned in our community, the updated condition protocols have impacted SCRAPS' ability to always accept animals, most frequently dogs, due to lack of adequate, humane space.

While the allegation is unsubstantiated as this directive was not given directly by Director Ferrari, the investigation provided context he had been made aware of what was being relayed to the community because of the ASRs email. While it is believed the communication specific to returning an animal to where it was found is no longer being utilized by SCRAPS employees, the investigators are unable to determine definitively if this is true.

- **Finding #2:** There was a conversation which took place between Director Ferrari and an APO regarding the returning of animals back where they were found that was witnessed by multiple individuals. All witnesses gave similar accounts; the discussion was an emotionally charged discussion but did not rise to the level of what any witness considered inappropriate. Director Ferrari admitted to follow-up conversation with the Animal Protection Officer (APO), but denied asking the APO, "why he (APO) got him (Director Ferrari) into trouble?". Director Ferrari stated that type of conversation or behavior is unbecoming of a director and he would never engage in such conversation with his staff. Director Ferrari stated it may have been the APO who said, "I am going to do whatever the fuck I want, regardless of what he says", though not directly to him (Director Ferrari). The investigators were unable to determine if this was said by the APO, but through interviews of other APOs, the possibility that this particular APO did in fact make that statement cannot be discounted. Therefore, this particular complaint is substantiated in part and unsubstantiated in part.

**COMPLAINT #3:** On December 15, 2022, a partner organization was at SCRAPS picking dogs to transfer to their facility. Staff tried give input on the dogs' personalities and convey behavior concerns, but was cut off by Hobbs-Doyle stating numerous times they had it covered and didn't need any help. The partner organization then gave feedback to a staff member that they were having issues with one dog they had taken. This dog had known behavior issues that weren't conveyed to them, which caused safety concerns to the partner organization's staff.

- **Finding #1:** During the investigation, all interviewees were provided the opportunity to bring forth any issues that were not discussed during the investigation and they believed should be investigated. Not one employee interviewed expressed this complaint (#3) as a concern or problem. This gives the indication to the investigators that either this issue did not take place or was not serious enough to bring to the attention of the investigators. Without any additional context or expressed concern from employees, nor from the external organization this alleged event involved, the investigators were not able to substantiate this claim.

**COMPLAINT #4:** On December 23, 2022, a staff member sent an email to the SCRAPS foster team, Ferrari and Hobbs-Doyle requesting a meeting between departments to prepare for upcoming kitten season. The email was never answered. A different staff member was advised curtly by Ferrari in person that the leadership team will have a meeting and will pass down information to regular staff. No information has been relayed and kitten season starts in February.

- **Findings:** During the interviews, an APO did raise this as a concern. The APO stated they had sent an email about having a meeting to discuss 'Kitten Season'. The APO did not receive a response to their email (written or verbal). Upon receiving no response, they did not follow up with their direct supervisor Ashley Proszek, Director Ferrari, or Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle to inquire about their desired conversation regarding Kitten Season, and whether it was discussed during a leadership meeting. Upon conclusion of this investigation, while it seems there may have been conversation specific to this topic at the Leadership level, the investigators were unable to determine that to be factual.

This complaint touches on a common theme identified in both the initial complaint received and throughout the investigatory process. The continual, identifiable theme is communication problems and breakdown in style, level, and full department dissemination. The investigators assessment and recommendations will be addressed in the conclusion of this report.

**COMPLAINT #5:** Between December 26, 2022 and January 2, 2023, Nick Hobbs-Doyle had various conversations with staff, both in person and via email, and dismissed concerns about scheduling conflicts with school.

- **Finding:** During the employee investigatory interviews, not one employee mentioned this as a concern or issue. All interviewees were provided the opportunity to bring forth any issues which were not discussed during the investigation, and they believed should be further reviewed and/or addressed.

**COMPLAINT #6:** On January 7, 2023, Nick Hobbs-Doyle offered to help staff with a feral cat transfer, insisting he knew proper animal handling protocol. While the staff was shutting the door, he let the cat out of the cage, and staff had to quickly scruff it before it got away and became more difficult to catch. Hobbs-Doyle put staff at risk for being bit and scratched.

- **Finding:** This allegation is substantiated. All parties agree this event did happen. Upon the conclusion of the event, no employee or animal, was injured. During the interview process, based on information provided by ASOs, it was determined this was not the first time this situation has occurred with an employee, as transfers are completed in a confined space for cases like these.

As like the finding in Complaint #6, this complaint is part of a larger theme identified at SCRAPS. Further commentary will be provided as part of the assessment and recommendations section.

**COMPLAINT #7:** On January 12, 2023, Nick Hobbs-Doyle radioed for assistance securing a loose cat. Staff arrived to find him underneath the kennels reaching toward the scared cat's face. Hobbs-Doyle ignored the numerous requests to stop as he was creating an unsafe situation for both staff and the cat. Staff finally removed the cat and returned it to its kennel. Afterward, Hobbs-Doyle told staff he was going to "avoid the bite," which is very difficult to do when handling animals this way.

- **Findings:** This allegation is substantiated. All parties agree this event did happen, but there are some discrepancies within the recollections depending upon the person interviewed who was present for the event itself. Some employees who witnessed the event stated Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle ignored repeated requests to stop his actions. Other employees state he stopped when the first request was made.

Mr. Hobbs Doyle stated when asked to stop, he immediately did so. Upon the conclusion of the event, no employee or animal, was injured. The animal was safely retrieved in an appropriate manner by a Sr. Shelter Tech who was trained in and familiar with proper protocol and procedure for this specific type of event.

As like the finding in Complaint #6, this complaint is part of a larger theme identified at SCRAPS. The investigative process supports a lack of appropriate experience and training on the part of Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle as directly related to animal handling and safety. Additional context will be provided as part of the assessment and recommendations section.

**COMPLAINT #8:** On January 14, 2023, a member of the public told staff that they are a dog trainer and heard that SCRAPS is telling people to dump dogs back where they came from, that the shelter manager (Hobbs-Doyle) is making rude comments about the health of animals and was not providing full info to another shelter regarding dog's behaviors.

- **Finding #1:** The first part of this allegation has been substantiated and explained in this report (see COMPLAINT #2, Findings #1).
- **Findings #2:** During the employee investigatory interviews, not one employee mentioned this as a concern or issue. All interviewees were provided the opportunity to bring forth any issues which were not discussed during the investigation, and they believed should be further reviewed and/or addressed. Without any additional context from employees the investigators were not able substantiate this claim.

**COMPLAINT #9:** On January 18, 2023, Nick Hobbs-Doyle advised staff that if their shift is over that they can leave animals in the small transfer cages and not examine and transfer them into a proper kennel. Hobbs-Doyle dismissed concerns regarding the upcoming kitten season and said that if the animal has a will to live then they will survive. He expressed a general hopelessness for SCRAPS future and decreased staff's confidence in both his management and SCRAPS ability to plan for future animal care. Hobbs-Doyle also spread inaccurate information about other shelters, that was disputed by staff, but he continued to tell other employees.

- **Findings #1:** This allegation is substantiated as Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle admitted to the investigators, he did make this comment. No additional context was provided and why it was said that was not included in the allegation.

Over the past eight (8) months, it was not unusual employees would work overtime each shift they were scheduled to work. As related to recruitment and retention difficulties with the workforce, as well as with the volume of animals accepted by SCRAPS under the previous director, employees worked a significant amount of overtime to ensure SCRAPS continued to meet basic operational requirements. The previous Director of SCRAPS took it upon herself to set a tone which created an unwritten expectation in the mind of employees that an employee should not end their shift until all tasks were completed and everyone was able to leave, together. This staffing model and expectations of work contributed to high employee burnout and retention issues.

In an effort to work toward a better work life balance to retain employees, Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle and Director Ferrari implemented new scheduling and work expectations. After speaking with SCRAPS employees and compiling their suggestions, schedule lengths were adjusted to address the significant amount of expected overtime. Speaking directly to this initiative, Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle informed his team, as related to current CBA contract language (his team is represented by the

Master Coalition Agreement and the Local 1553 Supplemental Agreement), no language exists which allows for him to require employees stay for “mandatory overtime” to finish tasks and provide care for the animals. Through this investigation, it was learned employees agreed no language existed which would allow for “mandatory overtime.” As related to this investigation, both contracts were reviewed by the investigator; it is confirmed no language allows for mandatory overtime.

Due to Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle having no experience in animal care, he advised his team they should use their best judgement to determine what activities are truly necessary to be completed that would prompt a need for them (the employee) to stay past the end of their regularly scheduled shift. Thus, he is relying on and trusting his team’s experience and expertise to make appropriate judgement calls related to overtime. The investigation found, at no time in his tenure, has Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle denied employee overtime. This was corroborated by employees throughout the interviews conducted as part of this investigation.

- **Findings #2:** The investigators were unable to substantiate the second part of the allegation as during the interview process, no employee interviewed spoke to or corroborated the accusation of Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle making disparaging remarks about SCRAPS and other operations.

**COMPLAINT #10:** On January 18, 2023, Nick Hobbs-Doyle changed the status on three dogs to “available for adoption” after they were spayed/neutered, and dropped the "supervision required" status, which could have caused a huge public safety and internal safety issue if not caught by staff two days later. On 1/28/23, staff discovered that kennel cards were printed and hung on the kennels without the “supervision required” status, which caused confusion and a safety hazard for the new volunteer dog walkers. New kennel cards were printed two days later upon request of staff.

- **Findings:** This allegation is substantiated, though it can be only confirmed this error occurred with one dog, not three as stated in the complaint. Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle admitted he accessed the system to change the spay/neutered status on a dog named Karma. He stated he did not realize when he changed the spay/neuter status, the system required him to re-check the “supervision required” status to keep that descriptor attached to Karma. On January 20, 2023, at 6:38PM, he was included as a receiver of an email sent by an APO. That email questioned why Karma’s status had changed and no longer reflected the “supervisor required” status. By 6:42PM, that same night, Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle corrected the error by updating the dog Karma’s profile to include the “supervisor required” status. As part of this investigation, the timeline and series of this event was validated through a review of emails sent and received by Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle. No additional evidence was located or provided by staff which demonstrated additional events of this nature.

**COMPLAINT #11:** On January 20, 2023, staff called on the radio for help returning a dog to its kennel. Other staff members responded to help, along with Hobbs-Doyle. Staff carefully took over the dog handling and returned him to his kennel. Staff expressed concerns that if Hobbs-Doyle had gotten there before them, that he could have made the situation worse as he was just going to grab the dog, without knowing it’s behavior issues.

- **Findings:** This event did take place, but the investigators questioned why this event was included in the complaint. Even though Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle did respond, he did not handle the animal, nor

would the staff have had any ability to know how he would have handled the dog. This specific complaint raises awareness of the possibility of these complaints having motive outside of staff and animal safety as related to leadership changes; additionally, it may reflect the various stages of the change management curve as necessary operational and cultural changes occur at SCRAPS.

**COMPLAINT #12:** On January 24, 2023, Nick Hobbs-Doyle advised staff when their shift ends to make neonate kittens comfortable and if they have the will to live that they will survive. Hobbs-Doyle said it is more important to avoid employee burnout, and that it is the employee's sole choice whether they stay to help a fading kitten or leave and hope it survives.

- **Findings:** Similar to Complaint #9, Findings #1, it was confirmed Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle made this statement. When questioned about this event, Hobbs Doyle provided additional context as related to why he provided that guidance to his staff. Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle stated he did not give a directive to not provide care to neonate kittens who may or may not survive. Hobbs Doyle told investigators he stated, "if there were many kittens who would survive with care, and a neonate kitten who may not survive, even with care, the Shelter Techs should use their best judgement in determining which kittens would receive care." In this situation, Hobbs Doyle was relying on the experience of Shelter Techs to make the most correct triage decision they could as to which kittens should receive care.

The investigators conclude Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle's communication style and direction led to confusion and misunderstanding by his team. That coupled with his lack of experience with animal care as related to neonate kittens led to employees questioning his ability to successfully lead and provide adequate instruction to the team. This will be further discussed in the assessment and recommendations section of this report.

**COMPLAINT #13:** On January 25, 2023, Nick Hobbs-Doyle was inside a dog's kennel that has known behavioral issues and was putting his arms under the guillotine to move the dog bed and the dog on the other side grabbed his arm with his mouth and left bruises.

- **Findings:** Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle admitted to investigators this event occurred. During the interview with Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle, the bruise was still evident on his arm as a direct result of the incident.

### **Assessment and Recommendations:**

Upon the conclusion of the interviews, investigators believe there is a clear divide amongst SCRAPS employees. On one side of the divide are employees who have been with SCRAPS for a relatively short period of time – several months to a couple of years. Interviews of these employees showed them to be relatively happy with the new leadership (Ferrari and Hobbs Doyle) and their ideas/operational changes. This group of employees expressed concern the SCRAPS department is not necessarily meeting all needs of the community, but generally believe current leadership will improve the department as they continue to implement change.

On the other side of the divide, the investigation showed there are those employees who were interviewed who have been with the department for many years, and are having a very difficult time adapting to and complying with the organizational change occurring under new leadership. This group of employees openly expresses their contempt for current leadership and believe the previous model of operational standards set by the past Director is superior to the necessary changes occurring under Director Ferrari. While many of the events in this complaint have been substantiated, the totality of the investigation and

individual comments provided by these longer-term employees interviewed, lends to a possibility of employee feeling frustration and purposely undermining current leadership. This theory was supported by conversation in employee interviews, as those who more generally support the new leadership told investigators they believed there are employees (mainly those still firmly connected with the former SCRAPS Director and share similar operational beliefs) who are intentionally undermining the current leadership's authority and credibility in an effort to thwart change.

Outside of the cultural problems as related to the organizational change, multiple areas of concern have been identified through the investigative process. These areas of concerns showed as common themes throughout the duration of interviews, regardless of the employee being interviewed. In each area of concern, it is recognized by the investigators the entirety of blame does not fall on Director Ferrari and/or Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle, alone. The investigation showed a general lack of effort and teamwork, as a department, to provide the community and animals the best service possible.

The following analysis includes assessment of the investigators as related to current state concerns and their correlated recommendations which focus specifically on areas related to SCRAPS leadership. The investigators do believe through a concerted effort as related to communication, direction, and training, many of the aforementioned issues will naturally come to a closure and the culture of the department will improve.

- **Area of Concern #1: Leadership**

- The change of leadership within the SCRAPS department led to a heightened state of anxiety amongst employees. Current leadership and communication style has done little to calm the general feelings of employee anxiety. While it is recognized by the investigators the department and employees have a need for need and are craving strong leaders, current leadership has not been successful in managing change and employee morale as related to operational changes at SCRAPS. Through the investigation, all the leaders within SCRAPS, including the Sr. Director of Community Affairs, were interviewed. These interviews showed leadership style and effectiveness of leadership to be mixed, at best.
  1. The SCRAPS Office Manager stated she does not meet with her direct reports on a regular basis. Throughout the course of the investigation, it was learned the most senior ASR employee performs many of the Office Manager work tasks and functions as the team leader. This has led to ASRs having limited support, a lack of consistent leadership and having been forced to make independent decisions they are not equipped to make or seeking out Director Ferrari for guidance on general work tasks. The lack of support and leadership from the Office Manager has directly impacted employee morale and lends toward the high level of employee turnover in this employee group.
  2. While the Field Operations Manager is generally liked by employees, employee interviews provided context demonstrating she is viewed by some staff as not being onboard with the direction Director Ferrari is leading the SCRAPS Department. During the interview with the Field Operations Manager, she stated she has voiced her frustrations to her staff when she was frustrated by or disagreed with a decision made by Director Ferrari. Interviews with her staff confirmed these events and led them to believe she does not support Director Ferrari. While it appears to have been unintentional, this behavior encouraged employees to also question Director Ferrari, the decisions being made by him, and directives being given to employees by leadership. There is a clear lack of unity and consistency of the Leadership team, which was especially evident when interviewing those employees working in the APO department of SCRAPS.



3. Credit is given to the Director and the Shelter Operations Manager, as they regularly attempt to interact with all SCRAPS employees. This is evident in interview feedback and employee statements; both make effort to get to know them and understand what they do in their role. Most employees interviewed generally like both individuals. For those who stated they don't typically interact with Director Ferrari or Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle, context was provided that both have been approachable and easy to talk to. What appears to be most difficult as related to relationship building as initiated by Director Ferrari and Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle is many employees, almost exclusively long-term employees, have no interest in interacting with Director Ferrari. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, there is an appearance of intentionality in undermining Director Ferrari's authority. The investigation provided no evidence to the investigators Director Ferrari has taken action to address this issue.
  4. Upon the conclusion of the interview with the Senior Director of Community Affairs, it is worthy to note she does not appear to fully comprehend the anxiety and concerns employees have as related to daily activities and leadership directives. While it is not the daily work activity of a Senior Director to manage the day-to-day operations of a single department, it is critical to provide support and guidance to their direct reports, especially when they are new to their role and/or to Spokane County. As relevant to the cultural problems occurring at SCRAPS, the Senior Director hired two individuals with little, to no, Shelter operations experience, and they (Sr. Director) also have limited experience in shelter operations. Unfortunately, with the lack of shelter experience, Director Ferrari and Shelter Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle were placed in a disadvantaged situation. With the advantage of hindsight being 20/20, based on the staffing decisions made by and supported by the Senior Director, an all-hands-on deck, structured training model would have been extremely beneficial for the new leaders. Knowing both hires needed substantial training, specified milestones and check-ins as part of position onboarding could have prevented many of the situations identified as complaints in this report. This lack of planning, training and targeted leadership has deeply affected the success of Director Ferrari and Operation Manager Hobbs Doyle, specifically related to their credibility with many of their employees. Most of the substantiated findings could have been identified and avoided had the Senior Director been actively involved with the operations of this department, and through structured interaction and expectation setting with their management team.
- **Recommendations:**
    1. All leadership within the SCRAPS Department attend leadership training with a focus on change management and employee morale.
    2. To help reset the culture, communication and employee meetings should be in-person, active and inclusive whenever possible. To ensure attendance, the entire management team needs to set the expectation with employees: what is a mandatory meeting and who needs to attend.
    3. The Office Manager, Lynnette Brown, be provided a performance improvement plan which includes SMART Goals to be attained within a 90-day period of time. As related to job performance, it is recommended she be placed on a schedule as aligned to the staff her position leads; meaning her schedule moves from a Monday through Thursday schedule to a Monday through Friday schedule.

4. The Director, in conjunction with the Senior Director of Community Affairs, develop clear behavioral expectations for the SCRAPS management team. These expectations should be outlined in one-on-one meetings, as well as what will happen if the expectations are not adhered to. These expectations should be the same for all leaders in the department.
  5. The Director, in conjunction with the Senior Director of Community Affairs, develop clear behavioral expectations for employees. These expectations should be initially provided to all employees by Director Ferrari in a manner other than email to ensure employees have an opportunity to ask questions.
  6. The Senior Director of Community Affairs should commit herself to working at the SCRAPS facility on a weekly basis. It is the belief of the investigators this recommendation would help her gain understanding of the actual current state of affairs - the culture and operations of the department. Through her presence, operational and leadership training needs as related to onboarding could be identified for the new department leaders and could provide them with support and reassurance in their roles. Additionally, regular visibility in the building would provide communication opportunities between her and SCRAPS employees.
- **Area of Concern #2:** Lack of leadership and managerial experience within an Animal Protection Service and/or Animal Shelter.
    - It is evident from the investigation; employees do not view the Director and the Shelter Operations Manager as experts they can rely on to help when needed. They also question if their new leaders have the training or knowledge to make correct decisions regarding animals in the care of SCRAPS. While Director Ferrari has some previous experience working with animals, both in the Military and as a volunteer at an animal shelter, additional training and resources would ensure his success in leading the SCRAPS Department. The Shelter Operations Manager has zero experience handling animals and was hired with no work or volunteer history in a similar type of organization as SCRAPS. This lack of experience caused and continues to cause great concern among employees. Additionally, the decision in hiring a Shelter Operations Manager with no relevant experience created a perception the Senior Director and Director have limited respect or regard to the business and operational needs of SCRAPS. It is important to note Director Ferrari and Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle have made and continue to make a concerted effort to learn and receive training from experienced SCRAPS employees, but having both of these positions filled by individuals who know less than their employees created distrust an already difficult culture. A lack of any identified training and onboard plan other than working with senior, long-term employees is of concern to the investigators. Employees rely on their leadership to provide expectations, direct work activities, and provide training/mentorship. While it could be said one of the two positions could have been filled with a person in need of a robust training plan to become proficient in shelter operations, having filled both positions with candidates who had no proficiency at hire directly contributed to a lack of faith exhibited by many employees.
    - **Recommendations:**
      1. Create a structured training plan to help leaders gain proficiency in their positions. Both Director Ferrari and Shelter Operations Manager Hobbs Doyle, and/or the

Senior Director of Affairs, should identify national certifications, if any, related to proper animal handling. Through a structured training plan, set targeted completion dates for training and certification. Training should be completed as soon as possible, but no later than 6-12 months from the issuing of this report.

2. Both Director Ferrari and Shelter Operations Manager Doyle Hobbs would likely benefit from multi-day visits to similar facilities with operations in Spokane or in the State of Washington. This would enable them to gain insight related to operational efficiencies. It would also provide them with community resources and provide networking opportunities which would likely lend toward additional leadership perspective.

- **Area of Concern #3:** Type, style, and amount of communication

- During the investigation, almost all employees indicated the primary form of communication is email. It was also indicated Director Ferrari prefers to have his managers distribute information to their employees from a top-down approach. The investigation showed this to be a problem as there are gaps in communication. Some SCRAPS managers showed to be stronger than others in the dissemination of information updates. In current state, this communication style led to communication gaps and missing information depending on the topic and division of SCRAPS.

- Currently, weekly leadership meetings are being held which include only the management team and a couple of the more senior staff from each division. It is the responsibility of each one of the managers to then distribute any relevant information from these meetings through the ranks. During a time of significant change, this has led to different information being provided to employees in each division and in different manners.

- **Recommendations:**

1. The creation of non-optional, Director led, all-staff huddles is recommended to begin immediately. Team building all-staff huddles should be held once per week at a minimum. Huddles allow for all employees to understand what is happening within each division as well as withing SCRAPS as a whole. Huddles provide an opportunity for team bonding, employee engagement and leadership tone-setting/communication.
2. Understanding SCRAPS employees work a variety of schedules and shifts, it is recommended agendas for meetings be created. Once a meeting is concluded, the agenda and corresponding conversation (minutes/notes), as well as any decisions made during the meeting could be sent out to all employees directly from Director Ferrari or the relevant Manager. This would provide all employees with direct information and context as related to operational changes.
3. All managers should begin holding one-on-one meetings with each of their staff on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. These meetings should include discussions specific to their work activities, safety awareness/training, updated policies or procedures, etc.

- **Area of Concern #4:** SCRAPS Adoption by Appointment Only

- The investigators learned the adoption by appointment process was a major source of frustration expressed many of the employees. Most employees believe limiting the public's ability to access the facility has limited the number of animals adopted out of SCRAPS. They also believe the adoption by appointment has hindered adoptions and therefore has

created a situation that limits the ability of SCRAPS to take in additional strays. It is important to note, no employee provided any evidence or data to support that position. Many interviewed stated they understood why the appointment process was implemented: short staffing, employee safety, and animal well-being; and they view it as a necessary evil. That said, almost all voiced the process could be improved to provide additional options to open the doors to the public.

○ **Recommendation:**

1. Provide relevant information to employees specific to occupancy, animal intake year over year, space requirements to ensure adequate and safe housing of animals, and other relevant data to help staff and volunteers understand the actual story vs. the perceived situation.
2. Work with employees to identify areas of improvement as related to the adoption by appointment process.
3. If possible, identify dates/times for limited access for drop-ins or completely open to the public.

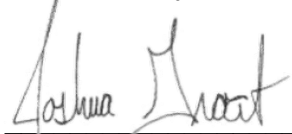
**Summary:**

In summary, many aspects of the complaint filed by some employees of SCRAPS were found to be with merit. However, the investigators also found statements to be missing relevant context of a situation and/or made it appear no similar events happened in the past, both with experienced and non-experienced SCRAPS staff. Ultimately, the investigators determined most of the concerns were related to substantial and necessary changes SCRAPS experienced over the past year. That said, inexperienced leadership also lent itself toward the continued employee culture and morale issues.

While a majority of those employees interviewed expressed SCRAPS appears to be heading the right direction, without the implementation of a solid communication plan (team meetings/huddles/fluid communication pertaining to day-to-day operations), employees will continue to feel as if they are not fully informed on how to respond to the public. As shown in this investigation, this leads to misinformation and rising complaints both from employees and citizens.

Overall, the investigators do not discount the concerns brought forth by employees, but they do believe the issues/concerns that have been raised, especially around employee & animal safety, have an element of inflation due to what appears to be extreme difficulty with change management.

This summary is submitted to you for your review and consideration.



03/14/2023

Joshua Groat  
Employee & Labor Relations Manager



03/14/2023

Nawal Guezm  
Human Resources Generalist

**Reviewed and Approved:**



03/13/2023

Ashley Cameron  
Sr Director of Human Resources