

Animal Companions Meeting Minutes  
December 13, 2021  
Via Zoom

**Attendees:** Judy Bosland, Dawn Duncan, Carol Ezell, Elizabeth Grinnell, Cherri Hudson-Brown, Linda Kinstle, Miguel Marquez, Denice Mittelstaedt, Bart Polin, Nancy Sharp, Candis Stern

**Meeting began:** 5:35pm

Dawn began the meeting by introducing new members. She reminded attendees that because we are a community action group rather than a nonprofit organization, we do not need a quorum to take a vote. We will be taking a vote later in the meeting in an effort to maintain transparency and collaboration.

Miguel, Animal Companions web developer, discussed recent changes to the Animal Companions website (<https://animalcompanionsoflascruces.org/home>). The "About Us" page now shows the Management Team and Supporting Members. The language has been updated on the "Mission and Goals" to better reflect our current status. "Research and Data" has been replaced by a list of documents on the "Resources" page. "Media and Events" has recent video and publications showcasing our efforts. Dawn's presentation has been added to the Archives.

Dawn introduced our new strategy. The consortium idea is off the table for now since some veterinary clinics in Las Cruces prefer to work out of their own clinics. Animal Companions will need to work with all our local veterinary clinics. Our goal is to support and to help them expand as necessary. We hope to support a "Televet" option so that veterinarians can do emergency care out of their own clinics. A second goal is to help recruit more veterinarians. There is also the possibility of helping to establish a veterinarian tech licensure program in cooperation with Dona Ana Community College and New Mexico State University. Perhaps in the future, we can work towards an emergency hospital. However, we need to do something NOW to help our pets. We're done with the research phase of our work. It's time to become a nonprofit to raise the funds for the work ahead of us.

Carol gave a presentation on options for becoming a nonprofit. Two common options are the EZ 501c3 and the "Full" 501c3. The "EZ" version has simpler paperwork and lower filing costs but limits the nonprofit to no more than \$50,000 per year in donations and less than \$250,000 in assets. This version is also less attractive to granting agencies. The "Full" version has more complicated filing and annual reporting requirements that will necessitate hiring financial expertise. A third option available to us is to go under sponsorship of the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico (CFSNM) as discussed at our November meeting.

To apply for the CFSNM sponsorship, there is a \$1,500 startup fee plus 5% operational costs, and an application. CFSNM will assist us with grant writing, record keeping, and guidance. Their efforts will be transparent. We must submit the application to CFSNM by January 10, 2021.

Carol moved to approve the motion made by Dawn for Animal Companions to go under the sponsorship of CFSNM as a nonprofit. Candis and Nancy seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. The 5% operational cost is a minimum but is not expected to increase. Several attendees, speaking from past experience, mentioned how working with CFSNM would be beneficial. A vote was then taken for Animal

Companions to come under the fiscal sponsorship of CFSNM, and the vote was unanimous. The next steps will include drafting a narrative and bylaws, and defining the Advisory Board.

Dawn is working with Dr. Kelly, Santa Fe veterinarian, to provide a free webinar to our local veterinarians regarding how to establish emergency services in Las Cruces. Dawn plans to hand deliver letters regarding the webinar to local veterinary clinics. She asked for volunteers willing to make treats to accompany the letters, and possibly deliver the letters.

Volunteers will also be needed in the future for a letter-writing campaign to state legislators to advocate for vet tech licensure and “do not compete” clauses. Candis suggested contacting a local legislator who has worked for animal welfare programs in the past. A Volunteer Form will be posted to our website in the near future.

In closing, it was noted that our research is done, and it’s time to work! Congratulations to us!

Meeting adjourned at 6:20pm. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 10, 2022 at 5:30pm via zoom.

*Minutes submitted by Judy Bosland, December 14, 2021*