



The Facts

COVERING BRAZORIA COUNTY ★ WHERE TEXAS BEGAN

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SPCA dismisses executive director

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LAKE JACKSON — The SPCA of Brazoria County is moving forward under new leadership after parting ways with Executive Director Nicole Hardesty, a decision the board said it made to protect the welfare of its staff, volunteers, animals and the community the nonprofit serves.

"In recent weeks, the board received escalated feedback from staff and community members expressing concern about internal operations and overall morale," SPCA Board President Beate Damm said in a prepared statement. "After careful review and reflection, the board determined that a leadership transition was the best path forward to realign the organization with its core values and to ensure a positive, healthy environment for both our team and the animals we serve."

Hardesty, after consulting with her attorney, declined to comment Monday afternoon.



HARDESTY

SPCA

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"I cannot comment as there may be civil litigation," Hardesty said via email.

The issues between the board and Hardesty extended beyond confidence in the handling of the staff and community relations, SPCA Board Vice President Melissa Udayan said.

"During this process, the board also identified several financial matters that required closer attention," Udayan said in an email statement, adding that "while facing those realities has been challenging, it has also given the organization the opportunity to strengthen its

foundation."

She said the board has since taken steps to stabilize operations.

"We understand that transparency is essential when it comes to community trust and donor confidence, and as such we have taken decisive steps to stabilize operations, implement clearer processes and additional checks and balances, as well as improved communication to ensure that every dollar entrusted to us is used responsibly and in support of our mission," Udayan said.

As a result of the leadership change, Damm said two board members, Tammy Butler and AC Butler, resigned and the remaining board, staff and

volunteers are continuing daily operations.

"The board is in the process of evaluating next steps regarding future leadership and will share updates once a permanent plan is established," Damm said.

The transition has not interrupted animal care or shelter services, and daily operations are being managed collaboratively by the executive board, supported by experienced staff and volunteer leaders, Udayan said.

"We're working closely with our partners and supporters to ensure the SPCA continues to thrive long into the future, always guided by compassion, integrity, and accountability," Udayan said.

The SPCA of Brazoria County is encouraging people interested in contributing their time or expertise — whether as board members, volunteers or fosters — to reach out and learn more about how they can make a meaningful impact.

"As a community-supported nonprofit, the SPCA relies on the compassion and involvement of our neighbors," SPCA Board Secretary Renee Rape said in an email statement. "Together, we're building not just a stronger shelter, but a stronger future for the community."

Hardesty served as executive director for two years.

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