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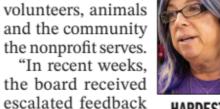
SPCA dismisses executive director

By GAURI B. GODBOLE gauri.godbole@thefacts.com

LAKE JACKSON — The SPCA of Brazoria County is moving forward under new leadership after parting ways with Executive Director Nicole Hardesty, a deci-

sion the board said it made to protect the welfare of its staff, volunteers, animals and the community the nonprofit serves.

from staff and



HARDESTY

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

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

both our team and the animals we

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

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 or shelter services, and 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 leadthat "while facing those ership change, Damm realities has been challeng- said two board members, ing, it has also given the Tammy Butler and AC tunity to strengthen its remaining board, staff and ity," Udayan said.

volunteers are continuing daily operations.

process of evaluating next steps regarding future leadership and will share said.

The transition has not ful impact. interrupted animal care 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, organization the oppor- Butler, resigned and the integrity, and accountabil-

The SPCA of Brazoria County is encourag-"The board is in the ing people interested in contributing their time or expertise — whether as board members, volunteers updates once a permanent or fosters — to reach out plan is established," Damm and learn more about how they can make a meaning-

> "As a communitysupported 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.

Gauri Godbole is a reporter with The Facts. Contact her at 979-269-6928