

## THEIR LIVES (SHOULD) MATTER

The end of the road may well be here. For several years the Humane Society of St. Lucie County, nka, Second Chance Animal Shelters, has asked the three jurisdictions to pay their fair share to care for the animals brought to us. The animals become our animals only after they are discarded by others. Neither the animals nor we choose that circumstance. For years we have subsidized government's statutory obligations. Our staff has been cut; their hours have been decreased. Benefits have been cut and eliminated. There is no more to cut. Nonetheless, these cuts are simply not enough to sustain the operations and facilities which receive 5,000 animals annually.

This past year has been particularly difficult. The Humane Society has been the focus of unfair and inaccurate reporting and unreasonable demands. Six board members, all volunteers, are unable to continue to do the heavy lifting. IT TAKES A COMMUNITY. We are happy to see that the County is including funding for TNR in its new budget, a budget that routinely increases employees' salaries by 3%. Hopefully, the City of PSL will follow and develop a similar ordinance. Best Friends has the templates. All it takes is a vote by the council.

For all our efforts we have been increasingly asked to do more. Grow the board of directors, increase staff, do more fundraising, marketing and on and on. We did not create the problem. The animals are the community's before they are ours. We are part of the solution. Beating us up helps no one least of which the animals, the real victims.

REGRETTABLY, without more money we cannot continue. The animals need food, shelter and medical care. We cannot increase millage or levy taxes to meet the shelters' needs.

This Board of Directors did not build the Glades Shelter and declines to evaluate the efficacy of that decision. The Glades Shelter has received thousands of animals since it opened November 2013. Directors are fluid. The mission is not. The focus should be on the animals.

We volunteered to participate in the Best Friends review. We welcome assistance. We are lucky to have some incredible staff and volunteers. However, on our side of the equation there is no more to give. The jurisdictions and the community need to rally for the sake of the animals or our doors will close as an open admissions shelter.

OUR FUTURE LIES WITH YOU. WITHOUT YOU WE WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE WITH DONATIONS OR A MESSAGE TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVES.

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