



Board of Directors Update

The best shelter...is a compassionate community.

October 2015

Transition

As the Monadnock region transforms into the reds and golds of autumn we are happy to report that we have completed the Discovery and Evaluation phases of our transition work. With the assistance of Dr. Taryn Fisher, Program Director, and Elizabeth White, MBA student, from Antioch University New England's MBA in Organizational Sustainability, as well as the ongoing work of Transition Leader, Joe Olsen, we have been provided with a wealth of information on the internal functioning of MHS as well as an extensive survey of the collaborative and competitive space of animal welfare. Interviews were conducted with staff, program managers and community members.

We have also benefited from the expertise of board member, Sharon Wirant, Manager of Anti-cruelty Behavior Services for the Anti-cruelty Behavior Team of the ASPCA, on current trends in animal welfare work. Lindsay Hamrick, NH State Director of the Humane Society of the United States, also contributed her perspective on the challenges facing humane societies in the New England region.

Strategic Plan

In October we will enter the Strategic Planning phase of our work. The desired outcome of this phase is to create an actionable strategy based on findings produced in the first two phases of the project. The strategy will address MHS's mission and vision, marketing plan, operations, financial

position (and projections), and organizational structure. It will also outline at a high level a fundraising strategy that includes, but is not limited to, a capital campaign and several earned income opportunities.



We are grateful to have Wink Faulkner, of AdvCoach, join us as a coach in developing our strategic plan. Wink works extensively in the Monadnock community helping both profit and nonprofit organizations achieve their goals. He is currently president of the Rotary Club of Keene and was General Campaign Chair for the Monadnock United Way in 2014. His late father was a benefactor of MHS and we feel very fortunate to have Wink's care and skillful assistance as we plan our strategy for MHS 2016-2019.

We have appointed a task force to develop the strategic plan drawing on members of the board and staff who bring a variety of skills and perspectives to the work. Staff members serving on the task force are Ashley Okola, Feline Coordinator, Carol Laughner, Director of Marketing and

Development, and Joe Olsen, Transition Leader. Board members on the task force are Sharon Wirant, Jennifer Thompson, Scott Rochwarg, and Katherine Clarke. They bring a mix of rich experience in animal welfare, public policy, development, finance, strategy, and nonprofit leadership. We expect the three-year strategic plan to be approved by the board in early December.

Given this schedule the board of directors has extended the term of the Transition Leader, Joe Olsen until June 30, 2016. This will provide continuity to MHS as we begin to implement the strategic plan and develop the budget for the next fiscal year. With the priorities of the strategic plan in mind we will consider the skills and capacities needed in the next Executive Director and begin a search by April.

Board Development & Activity

The last several months have been a very active period of development for the MHS Board of Directors. In July five new members joined creating a full board of 14 members. The committees of the board were refreshed again with new members and worked steadily over the summer months. The leadership of the Finance Committee resulted in a budget for 2015-2016 that reduced the operating deficit by about 50%. This committee is now investigating new investment strategies for our quasi-endowment funds.

The Governance and Nominations Committee, having designed the process for cultivating, recruiting and training board members, turned their attention to implementing the orientation they had planned for newcomers. The orientation was also extended to the other members who had joined the board during the year when there was little time for orientation. This committee's work for the coming year will be focused on board evaluation. When the strategic plan is completed they will also review

the governing bylaws of MHS to determine whether or not they will serve us well going forward.



The Development Committee was enlarged when new members joined the board. They have created a fresh statement of purpose and have been leading a strategy to help the whole board become more effective at fundraising. On September 1st Sharon Wirant, co-chair of the Development Committee, led a board retreat designed to build the board into a more cohesive team through focusing on how and why they were drawn to MHS. This was followed by each member developing the key talking points or story, known in the trade as an “elevator speech,” they would use to represent MHS well in the community.

The retreat's focus on passionately informed cultivation skills was then expanded at the next board meeting with a talk by Carol Laughner, MHS Director of Development, on becoming a donor-centric organization. The board has been taking very seriously its responsibility to become informed on the substantive issues and new realities MHS is facing. We are committed to being effective advocates and ambassadors for MHS, offering opportunities for the community to share in our mission and asking them to join us with their time, talent, and treasure.

Why MHS?

The stories told at the board retreat about why board members were drawn to MHS were unique to each individual but remarkably similar in their themes. One person talked about how animals were part of the community he grew up in. Dogs and cats tended to find their way into different houses in the neighborhood, kids played together and the grownups looked after the kids and the animals. Idyllic, maybe, but he wants to work to create a community with that kind of care at the heart of it.



Ashuelot Park, Keene, NH

Others told stories of coming to MHS looking not just for animals but for community. They found a welcome and a way in. Someone else said she wasn't much of an animal person but she was a people person. For her MHS is about people and the animals who give so much to enrich the lives of their people. Over and over again we heard stories of how much MHS matters. We are very aware of our special responsibility as a board right now to help MHS endure, thrive and continue to matter in this community.

Invitation



Sharon Wirant, M.A., ACAAB, CPDT, CBCC

The board is delighted to welcome everyone to a free public talk by board member Sharon Wirant, Manager of Anti-Cruelty Behavior Services for the Anti-Cruelty Behavior Team of the ASPCA. A recognized national leader in animal welfare, Sharon will give the same presentation she gave to the board this summer to explain important new realities and significant new approaches to animal welfare work today. Come hear key ideas that will inform our strategic plan to take MHS into the future. The talk will be in the Therrien Community Room at MHS on October 6th at 6:30 PM.

If you would like to respond to this update, we welcome comment at

boardchair@humanecommunity.org