Mid-Michigan Humane Society to take over shelter

BY ELISABETH WALDON
DAILY NEWS NEWS EDITOR

STANTON — Montcalm County is officially out of the animal shelter business.

The Montcalm County Board of Commissioners on Monday evening voted unanimously to formally recognize the recently formed Mid-Michigan Humane Society (MMHS) and to allow the MMHS use of the county's animal shelter building starting Oct. 1 for one year. The switch in services is related to ongoing county budget cuts.

Animal Control Director Angela Hollinshead was smiling from ear to ear as she thanked commissioners for trying a hopeful new option for the adoption and rescue of local animals.

"We're excited, there's a lot of good that can come from this," she said. "We're looking forward to utilizing the building and helping people with their pets."

Commissioner John Johansen said he would be voting in favor of the proposal, but not without a caveat about the Humane Society of the United States, which is known...
In front, Montcalm County Animal Control Officer Autumn DeVries, left, and Director Angela Hollinshead listen Monday evening as the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners decides whether to formally recognize the Mid-Michigan Humane Society and allow the society to use the animal shelter building. Also listening in back from left are Montcalm County Treasurer JoAnne Vukin, Greg Alexander of Stanton, Kay Gravelyn of Pierson and Holly Cook of Trufant.

**Humane Society**

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for clashing with farmers over animal rights.

"I have to tell you if there’s any connection that moves toward anything having to do with the national Humane Society in the future, you will have the agricultural community of this county up in arms," Johansen said. "Those of us involved in agriculture, I don’t think I have to say anything further."

Hollinshead emphasized that the MMHS is an independent non-profit entity completely separate from the Humane Society of the U.S.

"There’s no way that there would be any kind of takeover or partnership with the national Humane Society," she said. "I'm a farmer and a hunter and I cherish what we have here."

The fate of Hollinshead and Animal Control Officer Autumn DeVries remains unsettled, but Hollinshead is president of the new MMHS and she and DeVries will likely take on increased responsibilities there as they move away from being county employees. Montcalm County will remain responsible for animal control issues and Controller-Administrator Bob Clingenpeel told The Daily News county officials are considering several options, such as contracting with Hollinshead and DeVries for those services, such as animal cruelty, dog bites and rabies cases.

Montcalm County Treasurer JoAnne Vukin hopes commissioners soon define the future of Animal Control, as her office is heavily involved in overseeing dog licenses.

"Who should my office call if we receive complaints?" she asked.

"Unfortunately, tonight we don’t know the answer to that question," said Commissioner Patrick Q. Carr. "We still have to figure out what we’re going to do with enforcement and licensing."

Visit midmichiganhumane.org or search for "Mid-Michigan Humane Society" on Facebook for more information about the MMHS.

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