



Dear Montcalm County Commissioners:

In light of the concerned citizens and negative publicity that has been bestowed upon the Montcalm County Animal Shelter/Control (and upon the county itself), you as a commissioner know how gravely important it is to make the right decision when it comes to changing county policy and the importance of empowering the new director of the Animal Shelter/Control to carry out humane actions. All of Michigan is now watching to make sure Montcalm takes charge and does what is right for the county—its citizens and its animals.

The critical issues concerning the shelter, as you know:

- (1) The alliance it has made with Class-B animal dealer Jim Woudenberg, who personally profits from the sale of shelter animals to research,
- (2) The inhumane and antiquated way animals are euthanized for “free” by Mr. Woudenberg, and
- (3) The exorbitant amount of animals that are either sold to research or euthanized instead of being adopted.

According to the Humane Society of the United States, “Class-B dog and cat dealers are brokers who acquire animals from a variety of sources—including ‘pounds,’ flea markets, and newspaper ads—and then sell them to research institutions or veterinary schools. These dealers, putting profits before pooches, are regularly cited for violating the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and have long been a cause for concern for many.”

Mr. Woudenberg is determined to obtain animals in whatever way he can and has somehow hijacked the Montcalm County Animal Shelter/Control—using it as his own personal warehouse for animals—a lucrative money-making venture for him funded by the taxpayer. The stronghold Mr. Woudenberg has over the Montcalm County Animal Shelter/Control is astounding—especially when he has a proven history of violation:

- Newaygo County ceased relations with Mr. Woudenberg in 1995 after the shelter director testified about him performing extremely cruel and unethical euthanasia. Newaygo citizens were appalled by his actions and demanded change. Concerned commissioners listened and responded.
- In 1997, he was advertising himself as “animal control” in the phone book. Only when the attorney general’s office ordered him to cease and desist did he stop his misleading and illegal practice.

- A film taken by Henry Erb of Wood TV 8 in 1997 clearly shows Mr. Woudenberg removing numerous dead animals from a gas barrel one on top of the other when animals are supposed to have a stethoscope on them to make sure they are dead. How many have gone to the landfill still alive?
- During an Ingham County Board of Commissioner meeting in 2003, a policy was detailed which stated those dropping off animals would be given a consent form if they would like their animal to go to research. Mr. Woudenberg was charged with upholding this policy. As of April 2008, no such form is being used in Montcalm, allowing residents to unknowingly “donate” their animal to research.

USDA records indicate in 2006 that R&R Research (owned by Woudenberg) was reimbursed \$196,272 for the sale of 621 dogs and cats. Another sad statistic states that in 2007, 75% of the dogs and cats that entered Montcalm’s Animal Shelter were either gassed in a barrel (a cruel and outdated form of euthanasia) or given to R&R Research. If the shelter had adopted out just 816 dogs and cats (instead sold to R&R), \$16,000 in revenue would have been generated for the facility.

We need a change! In the Internet age, information travels fast and furious and having someone gas animals in barrels for free isn’t really free if you value your reputation. You, as a county commissioner, can participate in this change by (1) the cessation of gassing animals in barrels, a very horrendous way for any living thing to die; and (2) to allow the public to adopt animals instead of giving them to Mr. Woudenberg to make a personal profit. Without these changes, it will be difficult to hire a credible, qualified director to undertake a shelter where county policy dictates that animals are either gassed in barrels or given to a B-Class Dealer to make money for himself.

I pray the shelter will be returned to the taxpayers of Montcalm County and that animals that need to be euthanized will at least be given a humane death.

Cheryl McCloud
Director and Founder of Lake Haven

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Plenty! Contact the Montcalm County Commissioners and tell them to enact humane euthanasia policies at their animal shelter and end their relationship with Class-B dealer Jim Woudenberg.

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