

## Montcalm County studies its contract with animal research supplier; takes heat from community

Posted by [tgmiter](#) January 26, 2009 21:52PM

MONTCALM COUNTY -- The county's ties with a Howard City firm that takes unadopted pets from the county shelter and sells them for research will get a closer look.

The Board of Commissioners today voted 8-1 to form a committee to review the shelter's policies and procedures. Roger Caris cast the sole opposing vote. He declined to comment.

District 5 Commissioner Carl Paepke said he wanted to settle the contract matter immediately, but cast his vote to give fellow panelists more time to consider it.

"(Animal activists) think every (research) dealer is bad," Paepke said. "You know and I know that's not true.

"In a way, you've got to feel sorry for them because they truly believe that."

The decision came as commissioners discussed renewing a contract with R&R Research Breeders, whom area animal activists have been critical of for years.

Cheryl McCloud, founder of Newaygo-based Lake Haven Rescue, was one of about 100 residents from Allegan, Kent, Newaygo, Ionia and Montcalm counties who attended the commission's meeting.

McCloud said she successfully pressed Newaygo County officials to end a similar relationship with R&R. She is critical of the board's decision, which also included extending the county's five-year contract with R&R for six months while the committee tackles its task. The agreement was set to expire in February.

"I think it's a stall tactic myself," McCloud said. "How are you going to meet halfway with the devil?"

R&R officials did not return calls seeking comment.

No money changes hands between the county and R&R, county controller Chris Hyzer said. The firm disposes of the county's euthanized animals and is reimbursed in live, researchable animals, he said.

Surrendered or stray animals typically are held about 14 days before they are euthanized, Hyzer said. The commission and animal control also has faced national criticism for its euthanization methods.

Pets are put down with carbon dioxide. U.S. Humane Society director of animal sheltering issues Kim Intino called that "rare" and "unacceptable." The Washington D.C.-based animal rights organization advocates injection of sodium pentobarbital for animal euthanasia.

"(Carbon dioxide gassing is) just not a procedure we feel is humane and worthy of our companion animals," Intino said.

Hyzer said he hopes the committee will look at all of animal control's operational aspects, including how adoptions are handled and whether its rates are competitive.

Categories: [Featured](#), [Politics](#)

## Comments

### **mydogs says...**

Appalling at the very least. And gassing the animals - it doesn't get much worse. Anyone who would support that is obviously unaware or totally apathetic to the the suffering of the animals.

Posted on 01/26/09 at 10:53PM

### **indy49 says...**

This is just another example of how people in this country care more about what's happening to animals than they do about what's happening to the elderly in nursing homes and hospitals.

Posted on 01/27/09 at 7:37AM

### **snake7 says...**

What does any of this have to do with the elderly? Completely seperate issue!

Posted on 01/27/09 at 11:44AM

### **hanah says...**

This issue has nothing to do with whether or not animal testing & research is right or wrong. That is a completely different and separate discussion. This is about whether or not the people of Montcalm County want to continue their contract with the Class B dealer. And the message was very loud, and very clear at this meeting: NO.

Why the commissioners have continued to renew the contract in the past, and why they have not chosen to end it immediately yesterday remains a mystery to me. They need to start listening to their constituents and to what they want.

Posted on 01/27/09 at 9:10PM

Footer