Community Council Manual

For prospective and current Community Council members

BCSPCA

SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Community Council Manual
Version 4.0
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Section 1.0 - Introduction

Thank you for making the decision to volunteer your time, skills and energies on the Community Council of your local branch of the BC SPCA. The Community Council is an important part of the governance structure of the BC SPCA, helping to ensure the well-being of each branch and the entire organization in charting its future direction.

This manual has been designed to assist Community Council members and others gain a better understanding of the purpose, rights, responsibilities and duties of a Community Council and how it functions within the larger framework of the BC SPCA. The manual clarifies the relationship between the Community Council, the Board of Directors, staff and other shelter volunteers.

It is strongly recommended that Community Council members familiarize themselves with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act; the Constitution and Bylaws of the Society; the Code of Ethics; and the current strategic plan of the BC SPCA. All these documents can be found online at http://www.spca.bc.ca/about/governance-accountability/.

In addition, a wealth of additional information is available on the Society's internal password protected website at http://internal.spca.bc.ca/. Your local branch manager will be able to provide you with the most recent password to access this site. General information on volunteering for the BC SPCA can be found in the Volunteer Handbook, which is available for download on the internal website.

1.1   Our Mission

To protect and enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.

1.2   Our Vision

To inspire and mobilize society to create a world in which all animals enjoy as a minimum, five essential freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst.

2. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease.

3. Freedom from distress.

4. Freedom from discomfort.

5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

1.3   About the BC SPCA

The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA or Society) is a not-for-profit charitable organization reliant on support from the community. (Registered Charity BN 11881 9036 RR00010)

The Society was created under the auspices of the provincial Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act in 1895, and is the only animal welfare organization in B.C. which has the authority to enforce laws relating to animal cruelty and to prepare cases for Crown Counsel for the prosecution of individuals who inflict suffering on animals.

Through its 37 branches and facilities located across B.C., two spay/neuter clinics, a full service veterinary hospital, a provincial call centre and its provincial office in Vancouver, the BC SPCA provides a wide range of services and programs to help nearly 35,000 animals in distress each year.

1.4   Programs and Services

- Enforcement of animal cruelty laws through investigations into cases of animal cruelty and neglect

- Sheltering and adoption of homeless, surrendered and abandoned animals

- Low-cost spay/neuter programs and services to reduce pet overpopulation

- Emergency medical treatment and after-hours rescue

- Youth programs, including school programs, summer camps and the BC SPCA Kids Club

- Advocacy and animal-related issues, such as campaigning for stronger anti-cruelty laws, help for chained dogs, campaigns against puppy mills and improved transport conditions for farm animals

- Cruelty prevention and education programs for adults

- Outreach programs, including pet food banks and a free monthly vet clinic in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

- Reuniting lost pets with their owners

- Protection and advocacy for farm animals, including the SPCA Certified labelling program to ensure high standards of animal welfare by producers of meat, poultry, eggs and cheese

- Wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and advocacy

- Animal welfare research

- Leading edge work in temperament assessment and matching programs to increase animal welfare and success of adoptions

Section 2.0 – Structure of the BC SPCA

2.1   The PCA Act

Unlike most charities that are incorporated under the BC Societies Act, the BC SPCA derives its authority from the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act. The PCA Act sets out the powers, duties and obligations of the Society including: the right to amend or replace its Constitution and Bylaws; the power to establish branches; and the authority to establish membership categories and rules in the Society.

2.2   Constitution and Bylaws

The Constitution and Bylaws of the BC SPCA provides the general framework under which the Society carries out its governance functions. The Bylaws cover issues such as membership; general meetings of the Society; Directors of the Society; officers of the Society; the authority of the Directors to establish policies, rules and regulations; branches and Community Councils; regions; financial matters and the method for amending the Constitution and Bylaws.

2.3   Board of Directors

The BC SPCA's governing body is the Board of Directors. Directors are elected by the voting members and are responsible for determining the policies and direction of the BC SPCA. The Board is comprised of between 12 and 16 Directors elected as either regional directors or directors at large. The Board is responsible for developing an overall mission for the BC SPCA; setting long-term policy; establishing its strategic direction through long-term planning; ensuring effective use of overall resources; and reviewing and approving an annual operating and capital budget.

Ultimate responsibility for control and direction of the BC SPCA is vested in and taken by the Board of Directors.

2.4   Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer, who is accountable to the Board, is the person responsible for the day to day operations of the BC SPCA and has authority over all staff employed within the organization. In accordance with the Bylaws, the CEO (or designate) shall be responsible for the hiring, suspension and termination of all employees; as well as coordinating, directing and supervising the activities of all employees in accordance with policies, rules and regulations established by the Board.

Section 3.0 - Branches

3.1   Legal Standing of Branches

Branches are not independent groups and are part of the parent body, the BC SPCA. A branch has no legal standing of its own except insofar as it is part of the BC SPCA and is not registered as a separate charity under its own name. In accordance with the PCA Act, branches are subject to the control and direction of the Society and may, in accordance with the rules of the Society, be dissolved or suspended.

3.2   Establishment of a Branch

The Society, through the Board of Directors, may establish a branch anywhere in British Columbia. Where a new branch is established, a warrant will be issued stating the name of the branch and the geographic area or boundaries of the branch. The warrant certifies that the branch is recognized as part of the BC SPCA, but confers no legal standing other than as part of the BC SPCA.

The first step in the process to establish a new branch is for ten (10) or more members of the BC SPCA resident within a proposed branch area, to apply in writing to the Board for recognition as a branch of the BC SPCA. Approval by the Board is not automatic and will depend on a number of factors, including:

*   Whether an existing branch can adequately service the area

*   Whether there is sufficient public support for the proposed branch

*   Whether the branch can support itself financially.

3.3   Dissolution of a Branch

A branch can be dissolved or suspended by the Board of Directors. Such action will only be taken if the branch does not act in the best interests of the BC SPCA as a whole. The procedure for the suspension and dissolution of a branch are set out in Article 9.4 of the Bylaws.

Section 4.0 – The Community Council

4.1 Role of the Council

The Bylaws mandate both the establishment of Community Councils and the kinds of duties they are expected to perform. The duties can be divided into two main roles:

To participate in the governance system of the Society; and

To provide functional support to their branch and, in particular, the branch manager.

4.1.1 Governance Role

The governance responsibilities of the Community Council are to:

- elect members of the Board of Directors
- represent the branch at the annual general meeting of the Society
- hold an annual general meeting of the members assigned to each branch
- consider amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws of the Society
- promote membership in the Society and monitor the register of Society members assigned to the branch
- provide input into the annual branch budget at the time of its development
- provide input into the development of Society policy and direction

4.1.2 Branch Support

While the focus of a Community Council's branch support activities may differ among CCs depending on each branch's needs, the CC branch support role does not extend to the management or operation of our animal care facilities, including shelters. The day-to-day management of the shelter is the responsibility of the branch manager, who directs all staff and all shelter volunteers. The branch manager reports directly to the Regional Manager or Chief Operations Officer. The Terms of Reference for the Community Council are attached as Appendix "A" and are available on the internal website under the governance section.

The branch support responsibilities of a Community Council are:

- fundraising (supporting the branch's annual plan)
- humane education
- advocacy
- volunteer development
- input on facility planning and the delivery of services at the branch

The governance and branch support responsibilities of the Community Council will be discussed in greater detail later in the manual.

4.2   Composition

Each branch shall have a Community Council comprised of not less than three (3) and not more than ten (10) members who have been assigned to the branch and who have been elected by the voting members assigned to the branch.

In accordance with the Bylaws, Community Council members are elected for a two year term of office and terms are staggered so that approximately one half of CC members retire from office at each annual general meeting.

The Community Council is reconstituted each year at the annual general meeting of the branch, which must take place before the end of March each year. The first meeting of the CC should take place immediately following the AGM of the branch, at which time the CC must elect a chair from amongst their number. The chair shall be considered the official governance representative of the branch. A vice chair; recording secretary and membership development chair must also be appointed as soon thereafter as is reasonably possible. (The procedures for calling a branch AGM will be discussed elsewhere).

Accordingly, each CC shall consist of, as a minimum, a chair; vice-chair; recording secretary and membership development chair. Where there are only three CC members, the vice-chair will also assume the role of membership development chair. There is no provision for co-chairs in the Bylaws and any appointment of co-chairs shall be considered null and void.

The names and contact particulars of all new CC members must be forwarded to the provincial office as soon as possible after the branch AGM.

In addition to the chair, vice-chair, recording secretary and membership development positions, a CC can be comprised of additional members who have assumed responsibility for specific duties, including but not limited to fundraising; advocacy; humane education; and volunteer development. (These positions will be discussed in greater detail under "duties of the CC".)

To be elected to any of the above-mentioned positions, the individual must first be an active or life member in good standing and be on the branch membership roll for a minimum of 7 days and may not be an employee in any capacity of the BC SPCA. For information on membership, visit our website at http://www.spca.bc.ca/about/join/membership.html.

4.3   Conflicts of Interest

Any Council member who has any interest(s) that may conflict with his/her duties and responsibilities should declare his/her interest at the branch meeting, which declaration must be recorded in the minutes of such meeting and he/she must abstain from branch discussions and decisions about the matter. Examples of conflict of interest include vendors who benefit from BC SPCA activities.

4.4 Filling Vacancies on the Council

If a vacancy occurs on a Community Council during a term, the vacancy can be filled by an appointment by the members of the Community Council in office at the time. Only members in good standing (current or life members) are eligible to fill the vacancy. The name and contact particulars of the new CC member must be communicated to the provincial office immediately subsequent to their election via the CC Membership Registration and Change Form.

Should the composition of a CC fall below three (3) members at any time, the remaining members are not permitted to fill any vacancies as the Council technically does not exist. In such cases, the remaining members and/or the branch manager should contact the provincial office to arrange an extraordinary general meeting of the branch.

4.5 Removing a Member from the Community Council

A member of a CC can be removed from office before the expiry of their term only in one of two ways:

- By a special resolution of the voting members assigned to that branch (i.e. a two-thirds majority of all the members who have been assigned to the branch); or

- Where any CC member has failed to attend two (2) consecutive meetings without prior notice to and approval of the CC, they may be removed from office before the expiration of their term by a two-thirds majority vote of the CC members in office. In such instance, the member is ineligible for re-election.

Section 5.0 – Duties of a Community Council

5.1   Introduction

As mentioned above, the duties or responsibilities of a Community Council can be classified into two areas, governance duties and branch support duties. Governance duties are mandatory and must be undertaken by every CC.

The governance duties undertaken by Community Councils align closely with those of the Board of Directors, who are mandated to ensure the governance obligations of the Society are complied with according to provincial and federal legislation.

Branch support duties, while no less important, are discretionary in nature and should be undertaken only once the governance duties have been fulfilled and where the necessary experience, passion and willingness is available to undertake these duties.

Branch support duties undertaken by Community Councils align more closely with the duties and responsibilities undertaken by the branch manager. Community Council members undertaking these activities will work closely alongside and in some cases report to the manager.

A Community Council organizational flow chart is attached as "Appendix B".

The various roles will now be discussed in more detail.

5.2   Governance Duties

5.2.1 Branch AGM

In accordance with the Bylaws, each branch must hold an annual general meeting of the members assigned to each branch no later than the end of March each year. The purpose of such meeting is to elect the Community Council.

The chair of the CC shall prepare and issue the notice of the branch AGM, providing not less than 21 days' notice of the meeting to the voting members assigned to the branch. The form of the notice shall be substantially the same as the template marked "Appendix C". The template can also be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

Where there is no CC, the branch manager will work with the CEO to establish the date of the branch AGM.

Notice of the AGM can be given either by personal delivery; mail delivery; electronic mail; or publication of a notice in the community newspaper and at the local shelter. A copy of the notice must be submitted to the provincial office to the attention of the CEO.

The outgoing chair (or in his/her absence the vice-chair) shall preside at the AGM. Where no CC exists, the branch manager will make arrangements with the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that a member of the Board of Directors presides over such meeting until such time as a chair is elected.

The chair, in cooperation with the recording secretary, will prepare the agenda for the AGM. The form of the agenda shall be substantially the same as the template marked "Appendix D". The template can also be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

To assist the chair in the execution of his/her duties, procedures for the conduct of the branch AGM have been prepared and are attached as "Appendix E". They can also be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

The nomination and election of new Community Council representatives shall be managed in accordance with the procedures established by the Society for this purpose. A copy of such procedures is attached as "Appendix F" and can be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

5.2.2 Election of the Members of the Board of Directors

A primary responsibility of a CC is the election of members of the Board of Directors. Community Councils are responsible for the election of their regional director and for the election of directors at large. Barring unexpected vacancies, most CCs will vote for one regional director and two directors at large every year.

The process for electing Board Directors is as follows: The CEO (or designate) will forward the list of eligible candidates for regional director (if a vacancy exists) and for director at large to the Community Council. The CC will then convene and conduct a vote among the CC members (by secret ballot, if necessary), to decide which regional candidate and which two directors at large it wishes to support for election to the board. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes from among CC members shall be deemed to be the choice of the Community Council.

Regardless of how the chair of the Community Council initially voted, he/she shall then cast a single vote (in the form established by the Society) for the regional director that the majority of the CC wishes to support and up to two votes for directors at large that the majority of the CC wishes to support.

Candidates who receive the highest number of votes from among all eligible voters are elected to the Board.

A copy of the voting procedures is attached as "Appendix G" and can be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

5.2.3 Bylaw Amendments

From time to time the Society will consider amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws of the BC SPCA. The CC plays an important role in the development of and approval of amendments to the Bylaws.

Each year, the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors will seek input from Community Councils on possible changes to the Bylaws. The Committee will seek input in two ways:

- The first step would be to solicit the CC for their ideas of potential changes to the Bylaws. Under this scenario, Community Councils are free to make their own recommendations for Bylaw amendment. Any such recommendations must be directed to the Governance Committee and will be subject to further research by the Committee.

- Secondly, CCs are asked to comment for or against specific proposals for amendments made by the Governance Committee itself.

A copy of the board approved Bylaw revision policy is attached marked "Appendix H" and can be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

Bylaw amendments are generally voted upon by the members of the Board of Directors and the chair of each CC at the annual general meeting of the Society and require two-thirds support of eligible voters to pass.

5.2.4 Attendance at the Annual General Meeting of the BC SPCA

Another responsibility of the CC is attendance of the AGM of the BC SPCA. In accordance with the PCA Act, the Society is required to hold an annual general meeting in each calendar year. The chair of each Community Council is required to attend and vote on behalf of the branch at every AGM of the Society.

If the chair of a CC is unable to attend an AGM, the CC in question may appoint another CC member to represent the branch at the AGM. In order to be properly accredited, the CC must by prior written resolution, appoint such other member to represent the branch at the AGM. The form of the resolution shall be substantially the same as the template marked "Appendix I". The template can be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section. A copy of this resolution must be received by the Chief Executive Officer by the AGM.

All members are welcome to attend the AGM of the BC SPCA.

5.2.5 Membership Development

The promotion and approval of new and lapsed members is another core responsibility of the CC. Since only members can sit on a Community Council and the Board of Directors, it is important that the Society have an ever increasing number of members from which to draw new governance volunteers.

Each CC is required to actively promote membership in the organization; review and approve new members; renew lapsed members; and on rare occasions make recommendations to the Board of Directors for the cancellation of a membership.

Since membership is a branch function and not a provincial office function, each CC must contain one position dedicated to membership development. All membership applications must be processed by the branch manager or staff at the branch level and should not be forwarded to provincial office. The specific job duties of the membership chair will be identified in the section on role descriptions.

Membership is a governance function, not a fundraising program. The provincial revenue development department plays no role in membership development.

5.2.6 Development of the Annual Branch Budget

Community Councils are required to provide input into the development of the annual branch budget. In the fall of each year, the Society undertakes the process of compiling an operating and capital budget for the subsequent year. Each department and each branch of the BC SPCA is required to submit a draft budget (largely based on previous activities) for ultimate approval by the Board of Directors.

The branch manager is tasked with initiating the budget discussion with the Community Council. The branch manager will solicit the views and opinions of the Community Council with respect to new and existing initiatives that are planned for the branch. All initiatives recommended by the branch must be consistent with the strategic plan and must be fully costed and funded to merit consideration. The role of the branch manager and the Community Council is advisory in nature as all draft budgets are subject to change (based on available resources and strategic priorities) prior to their approval by the Board.

In conjunction with the development of the branch budget, an annual fundraising plan is also developed by the manager, in cooperation with the CC. The annual plan, which will be described in more detail later, contains a detailed analysis of fundraising activities for the branch for the upcoming year.

The branch manager will provide a copy of the approved budget to the Community Council as soon as it has been approved. The branch manager will also provide the CC with copies of the monthly financial statements for information purposes.

5.2.7 Input into the Development of Society Policy and Direction

Community Councils are frequently requested to provide input and comment on all animal welfare position statements that are put before the Board of Directors for consideration. The Animal Welfare Committee will solicit comments and/or suggestions from Councils prior to any final recommendation being submitted to the Board of Directors. Request for comment are made via the provincial email bulletin, which is distributed to CC Chairs every two weeks. These bulletins are also made available on the internal website.

Likewise, Community Councils will be requested to comment and provide input on any new strategic plan that is developed by the BC SPCA. The input in such cases will generally include face to face meetings and written submissions.

Any such policies, strategic plans or other documentation from the Board, staff or committees will be in a draft phase, are strictly for internal use only and should not be forwarded without prior written consent from the author.

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5.3   Branch Support Duties

Once the governance duties have been addressed, the Community Council can turn its attention to the branch support duties. The fact that these duties are classified as supporting does not make them less important. In fact, these supporting duties are critical to the success of the branch and to the improvement in animal welfare across our province. Rather, the distinction is that with governance duties, the role of staff is limited to support, with governance volunteers taking the lead role, while in the case of branch support duties, staff play the lead role and CC members provide support.

Not all Community Councils will be able to be able to fulfill all or even some of these duties. The key is the identification of one or more individuals who have the passion, experience, time and above all the willingness to assume the volunteer leadership role in one or more of these duties. In some cases, one CC member may assume more than one role, but they should clearly understand the additional time commitment required.

Accordingly, it is essential that every Community Council member (prior to their election) clearly understands the role that he/she has agreed to play on the Community Council. CC Members who agree to undertake these branch support roles are required to work with staff to define annual objectives as well as a calendar for those objectives. They will work primarily with the branch manager and provincial office staff in the execution of these activities. (Coordination with the branch's annual plan will be key to their success.) It is essential that for the success of the branch and the volunteer experience of the CC member, that they have a strong interest, passion or expertise when they take up an assigned portfolio.

Where such an individual cannot be found for a particular portfolio, the task of fulfilling the duty will rest with the branch manager, who will then look outside the Community Council for volunteers to assist in this regard. If after exhausting this option without success, the role will go unfilled.

The branch support roles will be now be discussed in greater detail.

5.3.1 Fundraising

The BC SPCA is a not-for-profit reliant on support from the community. Fundraising is an essential component of every not-for-profit charitable organization. This is certainly true in the case of the BC SPCA as the provincial government funding we do receive is restricted to capital projects and does not cover day-to-day operations. BC SPCA shelters would simply not exist without the significant fundraising efforts that take place throughout the year. While provincial revenue development initiatives and staff-directed fee for service revenue account for approximately 80% of most shelters revenue, local fundraising initiatives are essential to ensuring the success of our shelters and helping to achieve its goals now and in the future.

It is important to note that <u>the branch manager is ultimately responsible for managing fundraising activity</u> and ensuring all annual plan targets are being met. Accordingly, the branch manager will take the lead in this area, but given the size of the task, should be supported by a group of core volunteers who have specifically agreed to

support the manager in this endeavour. It is incumbent on the branch manager to actively recruit this group of volunteers.

Each CC should ideally have a fundraising chair, whose function it is to help the branch manager achieve the goals in the annual plan and if possible, surpass them. The ideal candidate is someone who is currently a BC SPCA donor, outgoing, proud of the work of the BC SPCA, likes people, and is respected in the community. Of course, not everyone will have all of these skills, but a combination of some or all of these skills, including time management skills would be most suitable for this role.

In cases where such a candidate is not readily available on the CC, we strongly recommend against the appointment of a member who may be uncomfortable with the portfolio. Rather, the branch manager will be tasked with identifying a volunteer (who may be outside the BC SPCA) to assist in this regard.

The branch manager (with the support of provincial office revenue development branch liaison and the fundraising chair) will develop an annual plan for the branch. The annual plan will detail the activities (type; timing; and expected return on investment) that will be undertaken at the shelter during the course of the upcoming year.

Annual plans are developed to ensure the branch is strategic in its fundraising efforts, balancing short term and long term goals, thereby ensuring that the branch can maximise opportunities and also ensure everyone is on track with agreed-upon priorities. The annual plan is also designed to avoid staff and volunteer burnout.

Fundraising activities outside the annual plan may take place if there are volunteers willing to undertake such activities. However, it should be noted that the involvement of staff will be very limited as priority must always be given to items in the annual plan.

The branch manager will work with the fundraising chair to ensure all targets are met. To this end, we recommend the establishment of a fundraising committee consisting of other volunteers and perhaps other members of the CC. Each member of this committee will be held accountable for any and all tasks that have been assigned to that member.

In conclusion, it should be noted that annual plans are developed in October and approved in December of each year as part of the budget process, while Community Council elections take place in March. As such, newly elected Community Councils who have chosen to be involved in fundraising can expect to be working off an existing plan, but will be actively involved in the development of the subsequent plan.

5.3.2   Volunteer Development

While some of our larger shelters have paid staff that are responsible for volunteer development, the majority of our branches do not and the task of recruiting, training, monitoring and recognizing our shelter volunteers falls to the branch manager.

Given the limited amount of time available to a branch manager, it is desirable for each branch to have a volunteer development chair whose primary function would be

to work with the branch manager and the chair of the Community Council in the identification of individuals who would be well suited to sitting on the Community Council and playing an active role in the governance of the organization. Accordingly, the role is to identify community leaders who would be willing to donate their time and energy to help the Society meet its objectives of improving animal welfare in BC.

Better Impact, the BC SPCA's volunteer tracking software, has been implemented in shelters province-wide and may be a valuable tool in assisting the volunteer development chair to recruit and screen prospective CC members. Volunteer development chairs are encouraged to speak with their Branch Manager and CC Chair regarding this possibility.

It is important to note that while the volunteer development chair can also assist the branch manager in the recruitment and orientation of shelter volunteers, such shelter volunteers (which include dog walkers; foster care coordinators; drivers, etc.) report directly to and take their direction from the branch manager. Where a member of the Community Council is also a shelter volunteer, they report to and are accountable to the branch manager when undertaking their shelter volunteer function.

Disciplinary issues involving shelter volunteers are the responsibility of the branch manager, not the Community Council. Where it is necessary to undertake disciplinary action against a shelter volunteer, the branch manager may, however, consult with the volunteer development chair prior to taking the necessary action.

5.3.3 Advocacy

The BC SPCA is increasingly taking on more of an advocacy role. In the past few years, the BC SPCA has initiated a number of very successful advocacy campaigns, including, campaigns to strengthen anti cruelty legislation; exotic animal welfare; transport campaigns; model bylaws; pet overpopulation; puppy mills and pet stores. The Society is committed to continuing and increasing its efforts in this regard.

While some campaigns have a provincial and/or federal focus, many of our advocacy campaigns require changes at the local government level to achieve success. As local members of the community, the voice of our branch can often be more effective than a message coming only from a provincial source.

As such, the Society encourages Community Councils to take on the responsibility of advocacy in their community through the identification of an advocacy chair on the Community Council. The ideal candidate for this position is someone who has experience working with local government and has excellent written and oral communication skills, including being comfortable with public speaking. The advocacy chair will work closely with and take direction from the branch manager and provincial office staff in the execution of their duties ensuring consistency in messaging and maximising impact across the province. The chair should report on their activities on a regular basis to both the Community Council and provincial office staff.

The Society recognizes that there are a multitude of deserving animal welfare issues that can and should be highlighted. However, given the very limited resources at our disposal, the BC SPCA is required to limit the number of advocacy campaigns in which

it can be involved. It is important to note that <u>only advocacy campaigns that have been specifically approved by the BC SPCA may be undertaken at the local level</u>. Where there is any doubt, Community Councils must first seek the written approval of the CEO before initiating an advocacy campaign.

It is recommended that an annual advocacy plan be developed by the CC and forwarded to the provincial office, who in turn will determine how best it can support such efforts.

5.3.4 Humane Education

Another vitally important duty is the delivery of humane education messages and programs to children, teens and adults. Because we are a not-for-profit with limited resources, the BC SPCA strategically targets children aged eight to thirteen for our messaging, the primary age for empathy development, self-esteem building and demonstrating social responsibility.

Branches can play a key role in helping to deliver these messages and the Society encourages Community Councils to take on the responsibility of youth humane education in their community through the identification of a humane education chair on the Community Council. The ideal candidate for this position is a current or retired teacher, community program facilitator or an individual with a passion for education and children.

A number of BC SPCA humane education programs are available which can be delivered in a number of ways including school visits, youth workshops, community education displays, school clubs and summer camps. Programming can also be delivered indirectly by providing professional development workshops for teachers. Other programs include shelter tours, hosting youth birthday parties at the shelter (where space permits) and through the promotion of the BC SPCA Kids Club. An individual can do one or more of these initiatives and recruit additional volunteers to create a diversity of program options.

The humane education chair will work closely with and take direction from the humane education department at provincial office ensuring consistency in messaging and maximising impact across the province.

BC SPCA education programs are tailored to the developmental level of children and vetted by a committee of professional educators. For consistency and harmony with the Society mission and vision, only BC SPCA programs or approved material may be used. A list of approved materials is contained on the BC SPCA internal website at internal.spca.bc.ca. Additional materials are available for download on the BC SPCA's public site at spca.bc.ca/youth/teacher and by contacting the education department at the provincial office.

The humane education chair is expected to report on their activities on a regular basis to both the Community Council and provincial office staff or (where applicable) the regional humane education staff member.

It is recommended that an annual humane education plan be developed by the CC and forwarded to the provincial office, who in turn will determine how best it can support such efforts.

5.3.5 Input on Facility Planning and Delivery of Services at the Branch

Very occasionally, the Board of Directors may conclude that an existing facility has reached the end of its useful life and that planning should commence to consider the future delivery of services in an area. In such cases, the Board of Directors will as a first step establish a Facilities Committee tasked with considering all available options for the future delivery of services.

The Facilities Committee will include staff representatives from provincial office and the local branch; as well as Community Council members and/or a local shelter volunteer. Accordingly, the CC should decide which of its members is most qualified to sit on the Facilities Committee. This representative can report back to the CC on the activities of the Facilities Committee.

The Committee's role is advisory in nature and has no authority to bind the Society in any way. Under no circumstances may members of the Committee or the Community Council engage in any capital funding for a new facility until this has been expressly approved by the Board of Directors.

Requests for capital improvements to existing facilities are handled through the regular budget process. Community Councils should meet with their branch manager to determine which if any capital improvement projects will be recommended. All such requests must be fully costed and where possible funded.

Section 6.0 – Meetings of the Community Council

6.1   Rules of Order and Conduct of Meetings

The chair of the CC (or in his/her absence the vice-chair) shall preside at all meetings of the Community Council. In order to ensure that meetings proceed in an efficient and congenial manner, it is imperative that Community Councils follow long-established rules of order.

The rules of order for branch Community Council meetings are attached as "Appendix J". The Rules can also be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

6.2   Meeting Schedule

Community Councils should meet as frequently as necessary in order to conduct the business of the CC. Generally speaking, Community Councils should strive to meet every other month or approximately six times a year. Meetings of the CC take place at the call of the chair, but it is strongly recommended that CCs develop a meeting schedule early in the new term of each Community Council. A consistent meeting schedule (e.g. the second Tuesday of every other month at 7 p.m.) will facilitate an effective and orderly conduct of business.

For those CCs wishing to make use of it, a meeting schedule template has been developed marked "Appendix K". The template can also be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

Community Councils may wish to extend invitations to attend CC meetings to the Regional Manager, Regional Director(s) or members of the Senior Management Team.

6.3   Meeting Agenda

The CC chair (with support from the recording secretary and the branch manager) is responsible for developing and circulating the agenda of each meeting. The agenda should be circulated well ahead of time so that all CC members will be well prepared for the meeting.

For those CCs wishing to make use of it, a template agenda has been developed marked "Appendix L". The template can also be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

6.4   Reports

It is strongly recommended that Community Councils establish a formal protocol of mandating regular written reports for each area of responsibility that is undertaken by the CC. Such a practice ensures the orderly conduct of business and efficient use of time at CC meetings. Written reports should be circulated well ahead of CC meetings to ensure all members have an opportunity to fully discuss any item contained in the report. Ideally, all Council meetings should take no more than two hours.

The branch manager will submit an operations report substantially in the form of "Appendix M" at each meeting of the Community Council. The report of the manager can be discussed at the CC meeting to allow for a better understanding of local shelter issues, but the Chair of the Council

must take steps to ensure that the report of the manager does not dominate discussion at the meeting as it is imperative that other items, including membership development; fundraising; advocacy and humane education are allocated sufficient time for discussion. Community Council members who wish to discuss further aspects of the report with the branch manager should make separate arrangements. It is important to note that the branch manager report is submitted for information purposes only and the CC has no oversight role with respect to the report.

6.5   Minutes of Meetings

Minutes are a permanent, written and when confirmed, official record of the proceedings of a meeting. Minutes must be kept for all Community Council meetings and the branch AGM. The taking of minutes is the responsibility of the recording secretary. The minutes should be written up within 30 days of each meeting.

Minutes must contain the name and nature of the meeting; the date, time and place where the meeting is held; the names of those present; the names of people who sent regrets and those who did not; a record of any decisions /resolutions) made; and the time the meeting closed.

A copy of the minutes must be sent to provincial office to the attention of the Executive Assistant to the CEO within 14 days of their approval by the CC. If applicable, minutes should also be forwarded to the Regional Manager and Regional Director(s).

For those CCs wishing to make use of it, a template for the taking of minutes has been developed marked "Appendix N". The template can also be downloaded from the internal website under the governance section.

6.6   Quorum

For the purposes of the BC SPCA, a quorum at any meeting of the CC is a majority of the Community Councils in office. For example, if a CC consists of eight members, no fewer than five members must be present before a meeting can commence. No business can be transacted if a quorum is not initially established.

Section 7.0 – Role Descriptions for Community Council Members

While each member of the Community Council plays a complementary role, each is required to undertake duties quite distinct from his/her colleagues. In this manual, we will highlight the basic duties of each of the various positions on the Community Council. Detailed position descriptions for each Community Council position are attached as "Appendix O" and are available on the internal website under the governance section.

Community Council Chair

• Calls and presides over all meetings of the CC

• Ensures order and enforce rules of procedure at meeting

• Establishes the calendar of meetings for the year

• Sets the agenda for CC meetings with input from branch manager and CC members

• Ensures that decisions and recommendations made are properly recorded

• Ensure council stays with its terms of reference

• Monitors the provincial email bulletin and brings pertinent matters to the attention of the CC

• Monitors the work of other CC members

• Attends annual general meeting of the Society

• Calls and presides at annual general meeting of the branch

• Supervises the CC voting process for the election of regional directors and directors at large

• Ensures CC input into proposed amendments to the Bylaws

• Ensures CC input into branch budget process

• Ensures CC input into policy development

• Liaises with regional director on governance issues

Community Council Vice-Chair

• Chairs meetings of the council in the absence of the chair

• Where appropriate, provides support and assistance in the duties allocated to the chair

• In absence of a membership development chair, performs all membership functions.

Recording Secretary

• Records the minutes of all meetings, including the branch AGM

- Provides draft minutes of all meetings to CC members on a timely basis

- Ensures that minutes are circulated to the provincial office within 14 days of approval

- Keeps an accurate file of all recorded minutes of the CC

Membership Chair

- Prominently displays membership material throughout the community

- Recruits new members on an ongoing basis

- Presents the list of new members for approval by CC

- Works with the branch manager to ensure new members are entered into the Shelter Buddy database

- Oversees membership renewals

- Maintains an accurate list of branch members

- Regularly reports on activities to the CC

Fundraising Chair

- Provides input into the annual fundraising plan of the branch

- Works with branch manager to ensure that the goals set out in the annual plan are achieved and if possible, surpassed

- Works with branch manager to recruit volunteers to assist with fundraising programs at the branch

- Regularly reports on activities to the CC

Volunteer Development Chair

- In collaboration with branch manager and CC Chair, identifies current strengths and weaknesses of the CC and areas of need

- Works with branch manager and CC Chair to recruit skilled and capable Community Council members

- Ensures proper nomination and election procedures for incoming CC members are followed

- Regularly reports on activities to the CC

Advocacy Chair

- In collaboration with provincial office, develops and implements an annual advocacy plan for the branch

- Recruits, orientates and manages volunteers to assist with program delivery at the local level

- Where applicable, works with the Community Outreach Ambassador to streamline initiatives and action plans within the community

- Reports regularly on activities to CC and provincial office

Humane Education Chair

- In collaboration with the provincial humane education department, develops and implements a humane education plan for the branch

- Recruits, orientates and manages volunteers to assist with program delivery at the local level

- Reports regularly on activities to CC and provincial office

Section 8.0 – Governance versus Operations

Understandably, there can be confusion over what issues are operational and what are governance, particularly when people volunteer in both capacities. Below is a list of examples to help:

8.1   Governance

• Election of Board of Directors and Community Councils

• Amendment of Bylaws

• Membership development

• Approval of financial statements and appointment of auditors

• Approval of policy

8.2   Operations

• All matters related to the care of all animals at shelters (admittance of animals; feeding; cleaning; exercise; assessments; veterinary care; adoptions; transfers; euthanasia; fostering)

• Cruelty investigations

• Staffing (recruitment; training; evaluation; compensation; discipline; dismissal)

• Shelter volunteer development (recruitment; training; evaluation; discipline; dismissal)

8.3   Procedures for Communicating Issues of Concern

Where a Community Council is of the opinion that existing operational policies and/or procedures are not being complied with at the local branch, the chair of the Community Council shall meet first with the branch manager in order to resolve the issue. If, after such meeting, the matter remains unresolved, the chair shall request a meeting with the Regional Manager or Chief Operations Officer in order to resolve the issue. Should it still not be possible to resolve the issue, the CC chair shall request a meeting with the CEO. Should the matter still remain unresolved, an appeal to the Board of Directors is only possible where the allegation is that the CEO is failing to comply with existing policy or has interpreted existing policy incorrectly. Day to day management shall not be a matter of appeal to the Board. Such appeal shall relate only to the policy in question and must be delivered to the Board care of the Provincial Office or through the board@spca.bc.ca email address.

Section 9.0 – The Role of the Branch Manager, Staff and Shelter Volunteers

The branch manager is tasked with ensuring the day to day management and oversight of the animal shelter and reports to and takes direction from the Regional Manager or Chief Operations Officer. All staff at the shelter and all shelter volunteers report directly to the branch manager, whose responsibility it is to ensure that they carry out their activities in accordance with established policy. The branch manager is responsible for all operational decisions at the shelter.

Neither the branch manager, staff or shelter volunteers report to or take direction from the Community Council or a member of the Board of Directors. The Community Council is elected in a governance capacity, not an operational capacity. Operational issues are outside the mandate of a CC.

Although the branch manager does not take direction from the Community Council or the other way around, it is, however, critical for the branch manager to enjoy a strong working relationship with their Community Councils. Branch managers and CCs are expected to work with and support each other in their endeavours as much more can be achieved by working in partnership than working alone.

The importance of working together underlies why a member of the Community Council (usually the chair) will always be asked to participate in the recruitment of a new branch manager. We want to ensure that there is a close working relationship from day one. While the committee interviewing prospective candidates will strive to achieve unanimity in the selection of the successful candidate, it is important to note that the ultimate decision on which candidate will be hired will be made by staff.

Unfortunately, from time to time, the relationship between a branch manager, staff member or shelter volunteer and the Society will not work out as everyone had hoped. In rare cases, discipline and termination are the result. The decision to discipline or terminate and employee or shelter volunteer is a staff decision only and is not subject to review or discussion with the Community Council. While we understand that this situation may leave the Community Council with a lack of information as to why such action was necessary in the first place, we note that privacy considerations mandate that these matters not be discussed further in an open forum.

In the case of a termination involving a shelter volunteer, the branch manager may consult with the volunteer development chair prior to taking the necessary action.

Section 10 – The Role of the Provincial Office

The provincial office of the BC SPCA is comprised of both direct delivery (program) departments and support departments. Program departments include cruelty investigations; humane education; behaviour and welfare; animal health; farm; wildlife; community relations; advocacy; volunteer development; operations; and the transfer program. Support programs include human resources, information technology; finance; and administration. In addition, there is a provincial revenue development department.

Provincial office staff will communicate with the branch manager on all operational issues. This ensures continuity and consistency in our communications. To the extent possible, Community Council members should address non governance comments, concerns, and questions through the branch manager to ensure we maintain the consistency in communications. We do recognize that those Community Council members who have assumed the portfolio of advocacy, humane education and fundraising may from time to time need to connect directly with provincial office departments. We support this process, but request that the branch manager always be kept in the loop.

From time to time the CEO, on behalf of the board, or the board itself, will communicate with the Community Council chair on specific governance items, including the branch AGM; the Society AGM; and the election of Directors.

Section 11 – The Role of the Board of Directors

Communication from a Community Council to the Board of Directors on a matter of governance should be through their respective regional director, who will bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Directors. (Where items of an operational nature are brought to the attention of the Regional Director, the Regional Director will redirect the matter to the branch manager, the Regional Manager, the Chief Operations Officer or the CEO.)

From time to time, the Board of Directors (usually through one of its committees) will seek input from Community Councils on matters currently before the Board. Community Councils are encouraged to respond to such requests as this helps to inform the Board as to the views of branches on particular issues. Such requests will pertain to the affairs of the Society and are for internal discussion only.

Section 12 – Reporting Incidents of Wrong-Doing

Where a member of the Community Council observes wrong-doing by a member of staff or a shelter volunteer, the incident should immediately be reported to the branch manager. Where the wrong-doing is being undertaken by the branch manager, the Community Council chair must immediately inform the Regional Manager or Chief Operations Officer of such wrong doing. Where the wrong-doing is being undertaken by a member of the CC, the matter is to be immediately referred to the CC Chair or Regional Director. Community Council members are encouraged to refer to the BC SPCA Code of Ethics and the Whistleblower Protection Policy, which are available for download from the internal website under the governance section.

Section 13 – Statements to the Media

In accordance with the BC SPCA Media Policy, only designated spokespersons may publicly comment on BC SPCA policies and procedures or the impact of policies on local branches. In many cases of a local nature, the branch manager will be the official spokesperson of the Society.

All such media enquiries should be forwarded to the General Manager, Community Relations so that the nature of the request can be clarified and clear, consistent messages can be determined.

Section 14 - Social Media

Community Council members are representatives of the BC SPCA in their community. In accordance with the BC SPCA Social Media Policy, members must exercise care when expressing their views on issues related to, or about the Society, as such opinions contribute to the public perception of the BC SPCA brand. In addition, members should always identify their relationship to the Society when posting materials or discussing topics related to the organization and should never speak on behalf of the organization. Please refer to the BC SPCA Social Media Policy for further information.

Section 15 – Communication

15.1   Government Officials

No member of the CC can write to any government official on behalf of the Society. The Chief Executive Officer (or designate) is the only person authorized to write to government officials. CC members are of course free to write to any elected official in their personal capacity.

15.2   BC SPCA Email Addresses for Community Councils

Community Councils are encouraged to request a BC SPCA email address from Provincial Office in order to communicate with other CCs and local branch members on topics of a governance nature. Email addresses may be requested from Rebecca Calderone at rcalderone@spca.bc.ca or 604-681-7271. Please note the following:

Each Community Council may receive one email with an address in the following format: southpeacecc@spca.bc.ca

One CC member will be assigned to the email account. This individual may be the only one to send and respond to emails from this account, on behalf of the CC. Please confirm this individual upon requesting the email address.

This individual will be required to thoroughly review and sign the BC SPCA Privacy & Confidentiality Policy and the BC SPCA Information Technology Privacy Policy. Both signed pages must be returned to Rebecca Calderone via email (rcalderone@spca.bc.ca) or fax at 604-681-7022.

15.2.1 Communicating with Members

The BC SPCA encourages regular communication between Community Councils and the Members of the branch. Such communication must be consistent with our Privacy & Confidentiality Policy and, in keeping with the governance function of Community Councils, this individual, on behalf of the CC, may only communicate with Members on governance-related topics. Should the CC receive email communication from a Member regarding an Operational concern, the individual must immediately forward it to the Branch Manager for appropriate follow-up. Prior to communicating with Members, CCs must first seek consent from the Branch Manager on the communication item as it is important to consider that Members may also be receiving additional email communication from the BC SPCA.

Section 16 – Detrimental Statements

Any member who publishes or permits or causes publication of, or publicly makes statements which are detrimental to the interests of the BC SPCA, may be expelled from the BC SPCA.

Examples include any statements that are defamatory in nature or statements designed to undermine the credibility of the BC SPCA in the eyes of the public.

Members who make detrimental statements about the BC SPCA or any member of the BC SPCA or any other person or organization cannot be protected by the BC SPCA from any defamation proceedings against them that may ensue from these statements.

CC members who make use of social media websites such as Facebook should seek guidance from the branch manager and/or provincial office staff before they post any material relating to ongoing activities of the BC SPCA. Further information is available in the Volunteer Handbook.

Section 17 – Expenses

From time to time, it may be necessary for a Community Council member to incur expenditures in the exercise of their duties. Before an expense is incurred, the CC member should seek direction from the branch manager whether such expense can be incurred and whether it has been provided for in the branch budget.

All expense claims must be submitted to the branch manager for payment within 30 days of incurring the expense. A copy of the expense reimbursement form can be downloaded from the internal website under the finance section.

Common expenses that will be incurred by the CC include the cost of advertising the branch AGM; the cost of any meeting room and refreshments for a meeting; and travel expenses to attend the BC SPCA AGM. The CC may request that a specific line item be included in the branch budget to cover reasonable CC expenses and initiatives.

Section 18 – Use of BC SPCA Logo

The official BC SPCA logo and names of publications and/or programs are all registered trademarks of the BC SPCA. Branches must seek the approval of the Chief Executive Officer to reproduce registered trademarks for merchandise purposes.

Section 19 – Endorsements

No branch may, without the express written permission of the Chief Executive Officer, endorse any product, company or service or allow the BC SPCA name of logo to be utilised by any other person other than in connection with official BC SPCA business.