

# TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY ANIMAL SHELTER COMMITTEE MEETING



**The Mission of the Town of Yucca Valley is to  
provide a government that is responsive to its citizens  
to ensure a safe and secure environment  
while maintaining the highest quality of life.**

**ANIMAL SHELTER COMMITTEE: 5:30 PM  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026**  
Yucca Valley Community Center- Cholla Room  
57090 Twentynine Palms Hwy  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Use the above link to virtually access the meeting. You will automatically be muted upon entry. During the meeting, participants will be prompted to “raise hand” or inform the meeting moderator when wishing to make a public comment. Comment time is limited to 3 minutes or as instructed by the Mayor/Chair. If any technical difficulties occur resulting in lack of connectivity or virtual streaming, the in-person meeting will continue to proceed.

\* \* \* \*

## **Animal Shelter Committee**

Jim Schooler, Chair

Jeff Drozd, Vice Chair

\* \* \* \*

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:**

**760-369-7207**

**Public Comments: [townclerk@yucca-valley.org](mailto:townclerk@yucca-valley.org)**

**[www.yucca-valley.org](http://www.yucca-valley.org)**

**AGENDA**  
**MEETING OF THE ANIMAL SHELTER COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026, 5:30 PM**

The Town of Yucca Valley complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you require special assistance to attend or participate in this meeting, please call the Town Clerk's Office at (760) 369-7209 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting

The meeting agenda packet is available for public view in the Town Hall lobby and on the Town's website at [www.yucca-valley.org](http://www.yucca-valley.org) prior to the meeting. For more information on an agenda item or the agenda process, please contact the Town Clerk's office at (760) 369-7209 ext. 226.

If you wish to comment on any agenda item or on any subject not on the agenda during public comments, please fill out a request to speak card and give to the Town Clerk/Commission Secretary. Comment time is limited to 3 minutes.

Where appropriate or deemed necessary, action may be taken on any item listed in the agenda.

## **OPENING CEREMONIES:**

### **Call to Order**

### **Roll Call**

Council Members Denison, Drozd, Lombardo, Schooler, and Mayor Abel

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Consent Agenda**

All items listed on the consent agenda are routine matters or formal documents covering previous Town Council instruction. Items are enacted by one motion and a second without separate discussion unless a member of the Town Council or Town Staff requests dialog on a specific item at the beginning of the meeting. Requests for public comment on the consent agenda items should be filed with the Town Clerk.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes 11/20/2025
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes 12/18/2025

### **Department Reports**

3. Animal Care, Control and Committee Update

#### **Recommendation:**

**That the Animal Shelter Committee receives and files the report and provide any direction, input, and guidance as desired.**

### **Public Comments**

The Animal Shelter Committee takes this time to consider your comments on items of concern which are not on the agenda. When you are called to speak, please state your name and community of residence. Please limit your comments to 3 minutes or less. Inappropriate behavior which disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting will result in forfeiture of your public comment privileges. The Animal Shelter Committee is

prohibited by State law from taking action or discussing items not on the printed agenda.

**Staff Reports and Comments**

**Town of Yucca Valley  
Animal Shelter Committee Meeting Minutes  
November 20, 2025**

**Call to Order**

**Roll Call**

Present: Jeff Drozd, Jim Schooler

Absent:

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Led by Chair Schooler

**Approval of Agenda**

**1. Agenda Approval**

**Motion:**

Approve the meeting agenda as prepared.

**Result:** (Yes 0, No 0, Abstained 0)

**Mover:** Mayor Jeff Drozd

**Second:** Council Member Jim Schooler

**Ayes:** Jeff Drozd, Jim Schooler

**Consent Agenda**

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2025**

**Motion:**

Approve the meeting minutes of August 21, 2025 as presented.

**Result:** Passed (Yes 2, No 0, Abstained 0)

**Mover:** Mayor Jeff Drozd

**Second:** Council Member Jim Schooler

**Ayes:** Jeff Drozd, Jim Schooler

**3. Approval of Meeting Minutes for September 16, 2025**

**Motion:**

Approve the meeting minutes of September 16, 2025 as presented.

**Result:** Passed (Yes 2, No 0, Abstained 0)

**Mover:** Mayor Jeff Drozd  
**Seconded:** Council Member Jim Schooler  
**Ayes:** Jeff Drozd, Jim Schooler

## Department Reports

### 4. Animal Shelter Operational Review Status Update

Town Manager Yakimow presented an operational review status report and welcomed comments.

Public Comments:

Susan Herring, Pioneertown reported on a recent visit to the shelter and the request for canned dog and canned cat food. Herring inquired about the typical percentage of intake from Town limits vs. County area and requested additional spay and neuter clinics.

Lori Herbel, Yucca Valley asked how to become an animal shelter volunteer.

Lori Herbel introduced herself to the group and spoke of the benefits of animal behavioral training and has offered services to the shelter for both the animals and the shelter staff. Herbel announced free training programs available at [fearfreeshelters.com](http://fearfreeshelters.com)

## Public Comments

Chair Schooler opened public comments.

Abigail, Yucca Valley commented on a seemingly tight timeframe when announcing the critical list and volunteered to assist with transporting.

James Porter, Yucca Valley announced his intent of forming a non-profit organization and suggested euthanasia-alternative boarding opportunities for a cost, might have public support.

Allie, Joshua Tree thanked Town Manager Yakimow for pointing to the problem and explaining the concerns, and requested clarification on the Deputy Town Manager job description. Allie expressed it is great to see Lori Herbel and Dr. Petris attending this evening and spoke of the long euthanasia list.

Cheryl Contopulous, Yucca Valley requested monthly spay neuter clinics monthly, and additional announcements prior to red list being released.

Candace, Yucca Valley inquired on euthanasia procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_ spoke of overcrowding and asked for clarification on the reason for no available foster programming.

Susan Herring, Pioneertown spoke of the upcoming holiday closure and feels customer service should be a focus for improvement.

### **Announcements**

Mayor Drozd commented on a recent request for a non-profit supporting the shelter and provided suggestions for development guidelines. Drozd offered to share these guidelines to assist.

Chair Schooler thanked Town Manager Yakimow and Lori Herbel for the information this evening.

Town Manager Yakimow denounced recent online staff harassment through a formal statement.

With no further business, Mayor Drozd adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lesley Copeland, CMC  
Town Clerk

**Town of Yucca Valley  
Animal Shelter Committee Staff Report**



**To:** Animal Shelter Committee

**From:** Lesley Copeland, Town Clerk

**Date:** February 13, 2026

**Meeting Date:** February 19, 2026

**Subject:** Approval of Meeting Minutes 12/18/2025

**Recommendation:**

Approve the meeting minutes of December 18, 2025 as presented.

**Prior Review:**

**Discussion:**

**Alternatives**

**Fiscal Impact:**

**Attachments**

1. Animal Shelter Committee Minutes

**Town of Yucca Valley  
Animal Shelter Committee Meeting Minutes  
December 18, 2025**

**Call to Order**

**Roll Call**

Present: Jeff Drozd, Jim Schooler

Absent:

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Led by Chair Schooler

**Approval of Agenda**

**1. Agenda Approval**

**Motion:**

Approve the meeting agenda.

**Result:** Passed (Yes 2, No 0, Abstained 0)

**Mover:** Committee Member Jeff Drozd

**Second:** Chair Jim Schooler

**Ayes:** Jeff Drozd, Jim Schooler

**Department Reports**

**2. Animal Shelter Operational Review Status Update**

Town Manager Yakimow presented the staff report providing an operational update for the animal shelter. Yakimow provided pending California legislation relating to animal care and access.

Chair Schooler opened public comments.

Susan Herring, Pioneertown welcomed May to the Town team and spoke of concern over animal control services availability and lack of customer service.

Susan Walls, Joshua Tree inquired about the availability of office staff and lack of customer service.

Candace Moulton, Yucca Valley spoke about the lack of return phone calls from Animal Care and Control staff. Moulton would also like to see the shelter stress experienced by the animals to be kept to a minimum.

Cheryl Contopulous, Yucca Valley commented on the statistics provided and requested clarification.

Jade & Partner, Yucca Valley spoke of a recent visit to the shelter and high noise level at the kennels during the visit. Suggestions were made for research sound proofing the kennel area for the health of the animals and better visiting opportunities.

Susan Herring, Pioneertown agreed with previous comments on the overpowering noise levels and also provided suggestions for baffling.

Abbey spoke kindly of the current changes and suggested not referring to the animals at the shelter as "inventory."

James Porter, Yucca Valley commented favorably on the current statistics and positive changes shown in the numbers and spoke of the benefits of community involvement.

Greg Gendron, Yucca Valley welcomed Animal Care and Control Manager May and expressed his interest in volunteering at the shelter. Gendron requested the urgent list to be distributed to the public and not just the rescues, and inquired on the lack of announcing the pet of the week.

Susan Walls, Joshua Tree commented on the use of kennel cards inside plastic protectors.

With no other members of the public wishing to speak, Chair Schooler closed public comments.

### **Public Comments**

Chair Schooler opened public comments for items not on the agenda.

Susan Herring, Pioneertown commented on a dog that was picked up in Landers and transferred to Devore.

With no other members of the public wishing to speak, Chair Schooler closed public comments.

### **Staff Reports and Comments**

With no further business, Chair Schooler adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lesley Copeland, CMC  
Town Clerk

**Town of Yucca Valley  
Animal Shelter Committee Staff Report**



**To:** Animal Shelter Committee

**From:** Shane Stueckle, Deputy Town Manager, Shianne May, Animal Care and Control Manager

**Date:** February 12, 2026

**Meeting Date:** February 19, 2026

**Subject:** Animal Care, Control and Committee Update

**Recommendation:**

That the Animal Shelter Committee receives and files the report and provide any direction, input, and guidance as desired.

**Prior Review:**

There has been no prior review of this matter.

**Discussion:**

The purpose of this report is to update the Animal Shelter Committee on changes that are occurring in the Animal Care and Control operations. Staff will highlight elements of the Shelter Operational Review at the Town Council meeting. A number of programmatic efforts are underway as outlined below.

**Software:** The Town has purchased ShelterLuv and implementation is moving forward. Going live in 2Q2026 is the goal.

**New and Update Social Media Tools:** The Town is moving forward with new Facebook and Instagram pages for Shelter operations. Shelter staff will be able to upload directly, share individual animal stories, and market animal adoptions through these improved tools. The Town will also be investigating Next Door as a possible addition to social media tools.

**Use of Social Media:** The Shelter has increased the use of existing social media tools for individual animal marketing, directed towards increased adoptions and improved live release rates.

**Use of Local Media:** The Town continues to advertise on both the Z107.7 and has begun purchasing one half-page adoption ads in the Hi Desert Star, with multiple animals highlighted weekly.

**Staff Training:** Animal Control Officer/Shelthel Specialists are enrolled for Animal Control Officer training through Cal Animals; animal temperament testing staff training is anticipated to begin in the next 45 to 60 days. Standard operating procedures are also under review and update on an ongoing basis. This will occur throughout 2026.

**Donor Recognition Program:** The Draft Donor Recognition program is being reviewed internally, with anticipated Town Council review/approval in 2Q2026.

**Volunteer Program:** Applicants being screened for desired or preferred shelter activities; implementation of greeters, dishwashers, and drivers, anticipated in the very near future; followed by additional volunteers when the Senior Shelter Specialist position is fully staffed. This position supervises the day to day Shelter operations and is responsible for volunteer programs.

**Spay Neuter Clinics:** Animal Action League has been able to schedule the Town for March 31, 2026. The Town will be evaluating alternative service providers and/or the possibility of the events occurring at the AAL facility in Joshua Tree, if AAL can hold more events at their on-site location. AAL current availability can provide clinics approximately three to four times annually.

**Foster Programs:** With volunteer programs being the highest priority for implementation, foster programs are anticipated for implementation in 3Q2026.

As illustrated above, Shelter staff are making significant progress in implementation of Town Council recommendations and priorities as outlined in the Operational Review. Continued challenges will affect timelines and operations, including staffing (industry wide issue), professional services, rescue group availability, all of which impact Shelter operations.

The Town is highly thankful for the community support, interest, and efforts in assisting with adoptions, rescues, and live release rates at the Shelter. Rescues and adoptions from the recent Urgent List are illustrative of the community's efforts to assist in maximizing adoptions and rescues of Shelter animals.

**Alternatives**

NA

**Fiscal Impact:**

Budget informatin for the 26-28 FY Budgets will be presented to the Town Council as part of the overall annual budget process.

**Attachments**

None