

**JEFFERSON PARISH HOMELAND SECURITY  
INVESTIGATION REPORT**

**August 31, 2009**

**SUBJECT: Allegations of improper or illegal euthanasia of dogs and cats performed by Dr. Marci Miranov at the Eastbank Animal Shelter on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009.**

**INVESTIGATOR: Deano Bonano, Homeland Security Chief, Jefferson Parish.**

**PURPOSE/SCOPE: The purpose of the investigation was to determine if any improper or illegal acts were performed by Dr. Marci Miranov or the Animal Shelter staff in the euthanasia of 51 dogs and cats on the morning of August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The items under scrutiny were as follows:**

**1.) Did Dr. Miranov and the shelter staff have the authority to perform the euthanasia in question?**

**2.) Were the proper protocols used to select the animals to be euthanized?**

**3.) Were any of the animals selected for euthanasia already adopted or selected for adoption by an individual or group?**

**4.) Were the proper medical procedures followed by Dr. Miranov while performing the euthanasia?**

**5.) Were the animals selected solely by Dr. Miranov?**

**6.) Why was Dr. Miranov, the Westbank Veterinarian, performing euthanasia at the Eastbank Shelter?**

**INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES:** The investigator sought to answer the questions/allegations listed in the previous section by reviewing the documentation and reports prepared by Dr. Miranov and the shelter staff, interviewing the shelter staff, obtaining written statements from the shelter staff and requesting statements or documents from individuals that made claims through the media that they had spoken to eye witnesses at the shelter or had seen documents related to the euthanasia. The documents, interviews and statements were cross referenced for consistency and accuracy.

**NOTIFICATION OF EVENTS:** Late in the day of August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009 e-mails began to circulate amongst members of the animal rescue community alleging that Dr. Miranov, a contracted veterinarian for the Jefferson Parish Animal Shelter, had performed unauthorized, needless euthanasia of numerous cats and dogs at the Eastbank Animal Shelter. The e-mails suggest that some of the dogs had been selected for adoption and were waiting to be picked up by their new owners. In addition the communications stated that all of the cats came from the sick room or isolation area and that no pre-sedation had been administered.

These e-mails began to reach Jefferson Parish Officials late in the evening of August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

**SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:**

**AUGUST 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2009**

- At approximately 12:00 pm Ms. Lee Ann Matherne, resigns from her position as Animal Shelter Director, effective immediately.
- During the mid day hours Dr. Miranov and the Eastbank Kennel Master discuss the need to move Westbank animals to the Eastbank Shelter for euthanasia, because the Westbank Shelter facility had run out of the required Euthanasia drugs.

- **Jefferson Parish appoints Ms. Tiffany Peperone as Interim Director of the Animal Shelter.**
- **Westbank animals are transported to the Eastbank Shelter by Animal Control Officers.**
- **Ms. Matherne announces to the Eastbank Staff that she has resigned.**
- **Twenty-nine (29) dogs and cats are euthanized by Dr. John Edwards, the Eastbank Veterinarian.**

**AUGUST 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2009**

- **At approximately 0600 hours Kennel Staff begins to arrive at the Eastbank Shelter for their work day including the Kennel Master.**
- **At approximately 0630 hours Dr. Miranov arrived at the Eastbank Shelter to conduct the euthanasia of the Westbank and Eastbank animals.**
- **Dr. Miranov, at the request of the Eastbank Kennel Master, conducts a walk through of the Eastbank kennel to determine which animals require euthanasia.**
- **Dr. Miranov and the Eastbank Kennel Master approve the selection of forty-nine (49) animals for euthanasia.**
- **The Kennel Staff assists with the process by transporting all of the selected animals to the Euthanasia room.**
- **Dr. Miranov and the Kennel Master perform the euthanasia on all dogs and some cats.**
- **At around 0930 hours Dr. Edwards arrives at the Eastbank Shelter for the work day.**

- **At approximately 1000 hours Dr. Miranov requests Dr. Edwards to continue to euthanize the remaining cats. Dr. Edwards consents and completes the process including two (2) additional animals.**
- **At about 1730 hours the Assistant Director of the Animal Shelter informs the Homeland Security Chief that Dr. Miranov traveled to the Eastbank Shelter that morning and performed unauthorized Euthanasia on forty-nine (49) dogs and cats including one that had already been adopted.**
- **At approximately 1930 hours the Homeland Security Chief and the Interim Director, Ms. Tiffany Peperone decide to meet at the Eastbank Shelter at 0600 the next day to launch an investigation into the allegations.**
- **Throughout the night unsolicited e-mails began to be sent to Jefferson Parish Officials with numerous allegations about the euthanasia performed that day by Dr. Miranov.**

#### **AUGUST 14, 2009**

- **At approximately 0615 hours Interim Director Peperone and Homeland Security Chief arrive at the Eastbank Animal Shelter to begin the investigation and secure documents.**
- **Employees are interviewed jointly by Interim Director Peperone and Homeland Security Chief and are requested to provide a signed written statement.**
- **Shelter staff requested to provide euthanasia reports, controlled substance use logs, kennel files on each animal in question and any adoption requests for animals euthanized on 8/13/2009.**
- **Media coverage of the allegations began in the afternoon as Charlotte Bass Lilly of ARNO states that she spoke with eye witnesses and personally reviewed the euthanasia logs that**

indicated that Dr. Miranov stated that every animal euthanized was sick.

- Late in the afternoon Jefferson Parish invites the LASPCA to conduct an independent third party investigation of the allegations being made surrounding the euthanasia activities of August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

### **INVESTIGATION REPORTS AND FINDINGS:**

1.) Did Dr. Miranov and the shelter staff have the authority to perform the euthanasia in question?

The investigation found that Dr. Miranov often traveled to the Eastbank Shelter to provide veterinary services even though her primary work location was the Westbank Shelter. The Eastbank Veterinarian resigned in late April and Dr. Miranov was the only vet for both shelters for several months. Dr. Miranov had been deemed the senior vet by former Director Lee Ann Matherne.

On the day in question Dr. Miranov was assisted by the Eastbank Shelter Manager in the selection of the animals for euthanasia. The shelter protocol calls for two out of three persons to approve the euthanasia of any animal. The veterinarian, the Kennel Master and the Shelter Manager are named in the protocol as the persons that are authorized to approve euthanasia.

On August 13<sup>th</sup> both Dr. Miranov and the Eastbank Kennel Master had the authority to approve euthanasia and both indicated their joint concurrence on the animals selected that day.

2.) Were the proper protocols used to select the animals to be euthanized? The shelter statement of qualifications uses three criteria for determining which animals should be euthanized.

A. Medical- is the animal sick and suffering or does it have a contagious disease that will affect the entire shelter population.

**B. Behavioral- is the animal aggressive and a threat to potential adopters?**

**c. Space- is the shelter at its capacity and the animal in question has not been adopted after being a candidate for an extended period of time.**

**Note: In no case can stray animals be held for less than seven (7) days, owner surrenders for less than forty-eight (48) hours or bit or cruelty cases until a court of competent jurisdictions issues a judgment unless it becomes medically necessary.**

**The investigation found that this procedure was followed in making the decision as to what animals to euthanize on 8/12/2009. A review of the euthanasia logs found that the animals selected this day had been in the shelter since February in some cases, sick in others or aggressive and not adoptable.**

**3.) Were any of the animals selected for euthanasia already adopted or selected for adoption?**

**No records were found nor any produced that indicated that any of the animals that euthanized were adopted by an individual or group.**

**4.) Were the proper medical procedures followed by Dr. Miranov while performing the euthanasia?**

**A review of the controlled substance logs and the statements from the shelter staff indicated that all proper medical procedures including pre-sedation of cats were followed.**

**5.) Were the animals selected solely by Dr. Miranov?**

**Interviews and written statements submitted by the Shelter staff indicate that Dr. Miranov and the Eastbank Kennel Master made the decision to conduct euthanasia on the selected animals on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009.**

**6.) Why was Dr. Miranov the Westbank Veterinarian performing euthanasia at the Eastbank Shelter?**

**The Westbank shelter routinely ran out of medical supplies due to a lack of sufficient inventory management procedures by the Shelter Administration. The Federal Drug Enforcement Agency rules prohibit the transfer of controlled substances from one location to another once they have arrived at their registered facility.**

**Dr. Miranov routinely traveled to the Eastbank to conduct euthanasia when she ran out of the necessary medicines on the Westbank. She was out of medicine and had her Westbank animals transferred to the Eastbank Shelter for the purpose of euthanasia on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009.**

**CONCLUSIONS:**

**The investigator found no violations of Parish Policies or any indications that any illegal activity took place during the euthanasia process that was conducted at the Eastbank Animal Shelter on August 13<sup>th</sup> 2009.**

**The number of animals euthanized on this day was unfortunately, not out of the normal range for our shelters. In fact, a review of the euthanasia logs shows that on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009 our Eastbank veterinarian conducted the euthanasia of forty-three (43) animals.**

**Many of the animals selected this day had been held for a much longer period of time that is customary. During the interview with staff of the shelter they indicated these animals were prohibited from euthanasia because they were favored by the former Director while other dogs that were much more adoptable were put to sleep. The staff could not explain the former Director's reasoning for this decision.**

**Record keeping and reporting at the shelter is poor and sloppy which made the investigation difficult and slow. There is also great**

**confusion over which set of protocols is to be followed by the staff as several different versions were published by the former Director.**