

**Select Board Meeting, Monday July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 5:00pm  
Via Zoom**

**Present:** Bob Glidden (Chairman), Mike Ripley, Sandra Russo, George Timko, Stephen Plunkard, Brendan McNamara (Town Manager), Jen Leak (Recording Secretary), Doris Eddy (Town Health Officer), Bill Blake (Town Counsel), Susan Ladmer, and Ron Hagenow.

**1. Call the meeting to order**

Bob Glidden, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

**2. Conduct hearing regarding dogs belonging to Susan Ladmer.**

Brendan thanked everyone for being present. He said that the owner of the dogs, Susan Ladmer, is present by phone. He said that a complaint has been brought by Ron Hagenow, present via Zoom, stating that Ms. Ladmer's dogs have been present on his property and defecating on his property, dating back to May 2022. Brendan said that he has spoken with Susan and advised her of the Town's animal control ordinance. Brendan said that on July 7, 2022, Ron filed an Animal Bite Report at Brattleboro Memorial Health Center stating that Susan's dogs attacked and bit him. Brendan said that Ron reported another incident which occurred on July 3<sup>rd</sup> (reported on July 7<sup>th</sup>) and another on July 11<sup>th</sup> and the most recent on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Brendan said that he had forwarded a letter from Mr. Hagenow stating these claims and a letter from Ms. Ladmer denying them to the Board. Brendan said that he is treating these issues very seriously and has given Susan both a verbal warning and a written warning and the third warning is holding this discussion with the Board tonight. Brendan asked all participants to only address animal control issues tonight.

Mike asked if Susan admitted owning the dogs. Brendan said that she did. Mike asked if Susan owned the property she is living on. Brendan said that the property she is living on is owned by Brian Glynn. Mike asked if Ron owned the property he is living on. Brendan said that the property he is living on is owned by Mario Gattorna. Bob asked if the dogs were registered. Brendan said that as of today 4 of the 5 dogs were registered.

Mike asked if there was proof of bites. Brendan said that he has received 3 Animal Bite Reports and there was another alleged bite which occurred last Friday that he has not received a report on yet. Ron said that he has hospital reports from Brattleboro Memorial Hospital but he will not release them because they would become public. Mike asked if the Animal Bite reports documented the bites. Ron said that they did. Ron added that he also received a series of rabies shots. Ron said that he has cameras on his property and has photos of the dogs on his property starting on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Mike asked if Ron was renting this property. Ron said that he has a contract to purchase it from Mr. Gattorna and there is an ongoing court case regarding this purchase so he cannot discuss it. Ron said that the dogs have been on his property hundreds of times since Ms. Ladmer moved in.

Mike asked Ron if he knew Susan before she moved there. Ron said that he knew her because of her connection with Mr. Gattorna. He said that she has been Mr. Gattorna's legal adviser since December 2019.

Stephen asked Ron to describe the bites and whether they had broken his skin. Ron said that they did break the skin, he had a bite on his ankle and calf with 4 punctures which were treated with antibiotic. He said that he did not believe the dogs had current rabies certificates at the time of the bite so he received a series of rabies shots. Ron said that his second bite was on his left hand. He said that it was treated at Ludlow Health Center and was infected so he started antibiotics. He said that the last bite was received last Friday. Ron said that one dog bit his forearm after the others had jumped on him and pushed him to the ground. He said that his first issue with the dogs occurred when they jumped on him and he dropped and broke his new iPad.

Brendan asked the Board if they had any questions for Ms. Ladmer. Mike asked her about one of the bite

incidents which occurred when she stated her dogs were out of town. Ms. Ladmer said that incident was the July 11<sup>th</sup> bite. She said that she and her dogs had left town on July 9<sup>th</sup> because of concerns about Doris Eddy interfering with the dogs. Susan said that she stayed in her car in Ludlow for 4 days. Susan again stated that on July 11<sup>th</sup> she and her dogs were not in town.

Mike asked if she was renting this property. Susan said that she has purchased it from Brian Glynn, however Brian said that he needs to hold the deed in escrow. Susan said that she will be disputing that.

Sandra said that Ron has pictures of bites and hospital reports and asked Susan if she had any comments. Susan said that she didn't believe that her dogs had ever bitten him and added that her dogs were never accused of biting anyone in NH. Susan said that his photos don't show her dogs acting as a pack or attacking him. She said that she believed Ron was fabricating stories in revenge for her helping Mr. Gattorna retain the property that Ron lives on. Brendan and Bob asked Susan to only discuss the dog issues.

Sandra said that Ron had sent the animal bite reports. She agreed that this discussion should focus on the dogs and not ongoing legal issues but added that they were related. Sandra asked Bill Blake if he would comment. Brendan said that any legal discussions would need be done in executive session. Bill agreed his legal opinion would be privileged but said that he could answer procedural questions in open session. Sandra asked what options were available for the Board to take now. Bill said that he believed that would be an executive session discussion. He said that the animal control ordinance does state some options.

Mike asked if anyone else had made complaints about these dogs. Brendan said no one else had complained.

Stephen asked if witnesses would be required to document the dogs attacking Ron. Bill said that the two witnesses are the two parties involved, and since a third party witness is often not available in these types of cases it would be up to the Board to determine their credibility. Sandra asked if Brendan could tell the Board what options were available in the animal control ordinance. Brendan said that fines could be levied or sanctions could be stated such as requiring the dogs to be tethered or setting a date to construct a fenced yard. He said that sanctions would be put in writing, and if not conformed to then the dogs could be impounded and possible euthanized.

George said that Ron showed some pictures of the dogs on his property and asked how many dogs were being investigated tonight. Ron said that Susan has 5 dogs and he has pictures of all 5 dogs in his yard with the dates they were taken although not all 5 together. George asked how many dogs had bit him. Ron said that on July 10<sup>th</sup> all 5 dogs were in his yard, surrounded him and jumped on him, and the brown dog bit his calf. He added that he thought Susan lied when she said the dogs were gone starting on July 9<sup>th</sup>.

George asked if Doris had any comments. Doris said that she had two animal bite reports but didn't have the most recent report yet. She said that she saw bite marks on Ron's hand. She said that she had talked with the State Dept of Health about quarantining periods for the dogs. She said that she didn't know where the dogs were quarantined after the last bite.

Ron asked Doris if there was a trooper with her when she served Ms. Ladmer with some documents on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Doris said that there was. Ron asked if Ms. Ladmer had threatened her. Doris said that she was very angry about the quarantining requirement.

Sandra asked if the Board should discuss the steps to take now. Brendan said that they could discuss what steps to take but if there were any legal questions they would need to move into executive session. Sandra suggested that the dogs should be tethered and have a fenced area to keep them off Ron's property. She said that Ron's cameras can document compliance. Brendan commented that all suggestions should be written and checked by legal counsel. Doris said that Ms. Ladmer appears to have kennel fencing which needs to be set up. Brendan asked Susan if that was so. Susan said that she has been tethering the dogs, except for Friday when a stranger opened her door and the dogs got out. She said that she has kennel fencing but is unable to set up the kennel by herself.

George said that he had some legal questions. Brendan suggested moving into executive session. He said that he

would move Ron and Susan into a waiting room and bring them back into the Zoom session when the Board exits executive session. Brendan suggested inviting Doris and Jen into the executive session. The Board agreed.

*George Timko moved/Stephen Plunkard seconded a motion to enter executive session at 6:47 pm. All voted in favor.*

*Mike Ripley moved/Bob Glidden seconded a motion to exit executive session at 6:05 pm. All voted in favor.*

Brendan added Ron and Susan back into the meeting.

*Mike Ripley moved/Sandra Russo seconded a motion that the Select Board recommends Susan Ladmer’s dogs are kept tethered, and a kennel will be constructed by August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and it will be inspected by the Town Manager, and if other instances occur the dogs will be removed. All voted in favor.*

Brendan said that he will draft a letter for the town counsel and Board to review.

Susan stated that she was disappointed she didn’t get to present evidence and asked for help finding someone to construct the kennel.

**3. Adjourn**

*Mike Ripley moved/Stephen Plunkard seconded a motion to adjourn at 6:08 pm. All voted in favor.*

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_