



**UPPER PENINSULA ANIMAL WELFARE SHELTER
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

April 22, 2026 / 6pm / Cliffs-Eagle Mine Community Room

<p>Mission: UPAWS champions the wellbeing of pets by providing safe shelter, promoting adoption, and fostering a compassionate community through education and supportive services.</p>	<p>Vision: A compassionate community where all pets are safe, cared for, and treated with respect.</p>
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<p>Core Values: Collaboration, Transparency, Empathy, No-Kill Philosophy. (For a more detailed explanation of these items, please refer to our 2026 Strategic Planning document.)</p>
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Agenda

1. Call to Order / Attendance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Mission Moment
4. Public Comment
5. Approval of Minutes
 - a. March 25, 2026 Regular Meeting
6. Unfinished Business
 - a. Security and Key Fobs
7. New Business
 - a. Report & Recommendation from Ryan RE: Updating Behavioral Assessment Protocols
8. Communications
9. President's Report
10. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Treasurer's Report
 - b. March 2026 Financials
11. Shelter Operations Reports
 - a. Interim Shelter Manager Report
 - b. Shelter Manager's Report
 - c. Animal Behavior Care Coordinator Report

- d. Shelter Statistics
- 12. Committee Reports
 - a. Board Development Committee Report (Steffani)
 - b. Finance Committee Report (Chris)
 - c. Strategic Planning Committee Report (Chris)
 - d. Personnel Committee Report (Lynn)
 - e. Policy / Bylaw Committee Report - Minutes submitted
 - f. Donor Development Committee Report (Steffani)
- 13. Public Comment
- 14. Board Comment
- 15. Closed Meeting to discuss Personnel issue.
- 16. Adjournment

Next Board Meeting Date: May 27, 2026, 6pm, Cliffs-Eagle Mine Community Room, UPAWS



Upper Peninsula Animal Welfare Shelter
Board Of Directors Monthly Meeting
March 25th, 2026 / Cliffs – Eagle Mine Community Room

Present: Dominic Andriacchi (virtually), Lynn Andronis, Steffani Baker (virtually), Kayla Billings, Chris Danik and Andi Goriesky.

Staff Present: Ann Brownell and Nikki Dewald

Public Present: Reva Laituri, Sandy Place, and Shane Place

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by President Lynn Andronis at 6:06 pm
2. Approval of the Agenda: *Chris made a motion to approve the agenda with the following changes:*
 - a. #5c – remove the word “Special”
 - b. Add #5d and remove the word “Closed” and replace with “Special”
 - c. Add #6d Sasawin Update*Motion was seconded by Steffani, all in favor and motion carried.*
3. Mission Moment: Steffani applauded the success of “St Caterday” adoption event that recently took place, even during a snowstorm and the extension of the event. Ann commented that she took a verbal survey regarding appointments and most said they appreciated NO appointments necessary. Lynn also commented how proud she is that the staff and UPAWS team banded together over the last few weeks (snowstorm, staff changes, etc) and even donations are on the rise!
4. Public Comment: Reva then added that canister donations have also gone up!
5. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. March 5, 2026 Closed Session Meeting Minutes Draft: *Andi made a motion to approve the minutes with the following changes:*

“Chris made the motion to go out of closed session, second by Kayla at 8:42 pm. Meeting was then adjourned.”

Motion was seconded by Kayla, all in favor and motion carried.
 - b. March 7, 2026 Closed Session Minutes Draft: *Chris made a motion to accept with the following changes:*

The closed session meeting minutes from March 7, 2026 are amended with items listed verbally by Lynn

Motion was seconded by Andi, all in favor and motion carried.

- c. March 7, 2026 Special Session Meeting Minutes Draft: The 3/7/26 Closed Session Meeting Minutes Draft included the Open Special Session Minutes section at the end of those minutes. That discussion was broken out to separate minutes and are presented here.

Chris made a motion to accept the minutes from our virtual open special session, seconded by Kayla. All in favor and motion passed.

6. Unfinished Business:

- a. Update UPAWS Fees and Concurrent Report and Recommendation: Lynn presented the Report and Recommendation for the updated fee schedule that was put into place on January 1, 2026, with only the identified items. *Andi made the motion to accept, second by Steffani, all in favor and motion carried.* Some discussion followed; Steffani asked if we shall reimburse for any community spay / neuter or owner requested euthanasia that were charged at the unapproved rate. Chris looked through the finances quickly and said it was minimal. Ann will check with the staff and run a report of who paid the extra fees for these exact things and will contact them to inquire about refund or donation.
- b. Review of Med App: We then reviewed the original Report & Recommendation for implementation of the medical app. Some discussion followed and Andi suggested we table for now and upon Megan's return, ask her to investigate if one of our existing programs can fulfill this request instead.
- c. Dog Treadmill Update: During last month's meeting, instructions were given to order this equipment. Per Ann, it has been ordered and she has applied for a grant in the amount of \$574.00 to cover some of the cost. We should be contacted within 3 months.
- d. Sasawin MOU Update: Lynn contacted Helen Kahn and she has requested a sit-down meeting to discuss changes in the MOU from both UPAWS and Sasawin.

7. New Business:

- a. Report & Recommendation from the Strategic Planning Committee to adopt the new Mission, Vision and Core Values: These items were drafted from the workshop last summer presented by Grow & Lead. *Andi made a motion to adopt, second by Steffani, all in favor and motion carried.* Ann will update the website, etc., and have posters made to hang in the lobby at shelter. It was discussed that everything from here on, both internal and external, should reflect the new Mission, Vision and Core Values.
- b. Report & Recommendation from Strategic Planning to adopt the new "Strategic Plan" focusing on the Strengths, Weaknesses and Threats: Chris explained the process and the updates and would like to invite the staff to be on the new Strategic Planning committee. Chris also made mention of how appreciative he is of the staff attending the Grow and Lead event last

summer. *Steffani made the motion to adopt, second by Kayla. All in favor and motion carried.*

c. Report & Recommendation from Board Development Committee:

Recommendation to appoint Shane Place to the Board of Directors with his term ending in 2027. Reva passed out ballots to everyone with both Steffani and Dominic voting by text to Reva; *vote was unanimous. Welcome Shane Place!*

8. Communications: Chris reminded the Board of the security and key fobs for UPAWS so this can be on the next month's agenda as "Unfinished Business". We also discussed adding a Cyber Security policy to our insurance. Chris will look into it and report back next month.
9. President's Report: No written report but Lynn verbally discussed we had many topics to discuss at the recent UPAWS Board Retreat and that it went very well! It was really good to meet and discuss topics and items. Unfortunately, we had a long list of items to discuss, and we see more work sessions in our future! Thank you again to the staff and our community for their patience and support!
10. Treasurer's Report: No written report. Verbal communication from Chris and he questioned the Return to Owner fees as there have been none or very little on the daily reports. Donations are up! Through February the Community Spay/Neuter program has gone down. Utilities are up. Andi made mention of looking into updating/adding a propane tank this summer and possibly different placement for ease of the propane company.
 - a. January 2026 Financials: *Andi made the motion to accept, Kayla second. All in favor and motion carried*
 - b. February 2026 Financials: *Steffani made a motion to accept, second by Dominic, all in favor and motion carried.*
11. Shelter Manager Report: Ann is the interim shelter manager, and she says things are going very well! The staff is great and there is currently NO WAITING list for surrenders!
 - a. Behavioral Animal Care Report: Julie absent. Reva made one suggestion for future reports to explain or spell out abbreviations for the report.
 - b. Shelter stats: A new format for January and February was presented. We need a cleaner picture of waiting list, foster to adopt animals, appointment statuses etc.
12. Committee Reports:
 - a. Board Development: No written report but Steffani welcomed Shane!
 - b. Finance: No written report but verbally discussed financial longevity, placing funds in long term accounts and ways to label funds.

- c. Strategic Planning: Finishing up the Report & Recommendation with the Mission and Vision.
- d. Personnel Committee: No written report from the March 3, 2026 meeting. There were 3 committee members plus Sarah at the time.
- e. Policy By Laws: No written report submitted.
- f. Donor Development: Steffani needed to reschedule the meeting due to the recent snowstorm. She verbally discussed Neon and keeping data updated. Ryan will join the committee.

13. Public Comment: None.

14. Board comment: Andi thanked everyone for their patience and reiterated how everyone is looking forward to the bright future of UPAWS! Shane then asked if there are certain “areas” where he can be utilized and helpful in. We will put him to work! Shane and Steffani will meet to discuss.

15. Adjournment: *Andi made the motion to adjourn, Kayla second. All in favor and motion carried.* The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Countersigned

Andi Goriesky
UPAWS Board Secretary

Lynn Andronis
UPAWS Board President

Report & Recommendation: Updating Behavioral Assessment Protocols

Report: Assessment Bottlenecks and Reliability

The current SAFER protocol is a single-session temperament test that has become outdated in the field of Animal Welfare. While intended to standardize safety, it presents three primary risks to UPAWS:

- **Logistical Inefficiency:** The requirement for a two-day wait, two-staff administration, video recording, and independent review creates significant delays. This extends a dog's stay from 3 days to as long as 21 days, causing kennel stress and reducing shelter capacity.
 - **Low Predictive Value:** Scientific consensus shows that a dog's behavior during a staged, high-stress test does not accurately predict behavior in a home. In 2024, a dog named "Taffy" passed the SAFER test perfectly despite a known history of severe biting, proving that "snapshot" tests can miss critical safety risks.
 - **Liability Risks:** Relying on one stressful event for a safety determination is legally vulnerable. Modern best practices favor a history of documented observations over time, which provides stronger evidence of responsible evaluation.
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Recommendation: Multi-Observation Assessment System

Replace the SAFER test with a continuous, multi-source observation model. This system gathers data from daily interactions to create a more reliable and holistic behavioral profile.

Solution Implementation:

- **Integrated Data Points:** Utilize existing touchpoints—intake profiles, veterinary exams, and volunteer walker logs—to track behavior across different environments and handlers.
- **Three-Day Decompression:** Implement a "First Three Days" caregiver sheet to document kennel behavior and stress recovery during a dog's initial acclimation period.
- **Structured Playgroups:** Transition to using group play as the primary tool for dog-to-dog evaluation, providing a more natural and accurate assessment of social signals than a fake stimulus.
- **Efficient Pathways:** 1. **Fast Track:** Immediate adoption for dogs with consistent, safe history and observations. 2. **Standard:** Adoption following a brief, multi-handler observation period. 3. **Intervention:** Specialized placement or training for dogs with documented concerns.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
April 2026

1. Prepared March 2026 stats
2. Stats have also been sent to the national database.
3. Chaired Personnel Committee meeting. 4/6/26
4. Municipal Contracts – in progress. Still need to contact Chocolay Township to review the proposed impound contract.
5. Sasawin MOU – Meeting has been scheduled for later this month to review all changes and, hopefully, return to next month's meeting with a final and executable MOU
6. We still have multiple topics to discuss that were deferred at our Retreat.
7. Had a BLAST at Cause For Paws!!!!

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Andronis

UPAWS Board Report – April 2026

Prepared by: Ann Brownell, Interim Manager (March–mid April 2026)

Overview

This reporting period focused on keeping operations steady during a leadership transition. The priority was making sure the shelter continued to run day-to-day, animals received consistent care, and staff had the support they needed to do their jobs. A significant amount of time was spent addressing issues as they arose and maintaining positive consistency across all areas of operation. This transition period was important in helping reestablish structure, communication, and overall stability.

Shelter Operations

- Day-to-day operations remained steady
- Animal care stayed consistent across all areas
- Issues were addressed as they came up to prevent disruption
- Intake and adoptions continued in a manageable and steady way
- Cat adoptions appear to be doing well with the move to walk-ins
While exact numbers are not yet available, the process has been running smoothly
Staff report no issues, and visitors have been patient and understanding with wait times
- Dog and cat wait lists have been cleared

Staffing & Team

- Maintained a calm, respectful, and consistent work environment
- Reinforced expectations so staff remained aligned
- Encouraged teamwork and clear communication
- Focused on rebuilding a positive and cooperative team dynamic

Training & Customer Experience

- Introduced customer service training for staff
- Plan to continue training in small, manageable steps
- Initial focus will next be on the **Adopters Welcome** process

Community & Public Presence

- Increased focus on consistency in public communication
- Moving toward stronger, more intentional community engagement

- Emphasis on building and maintaining positive community relationships and techniques on defusing situations.
- Made updates to the website front page to clean it up and improve layout and organization

Ann Brownell

Interim Manager (March–mid April 2026)

Shelter Manager's Report April 2025

- **Management Transition:** I am thrilled to step into the role of Shelter Manager here at UPAWS! While my first week was unexpectedly shortened due to a family emergency, I am eager to hit the ground running and look forward to presenting a full month of progress at our next meeting.
- **Cause for Paws Success:** A huge congratulations to Nikki and our dedicated volunteers for a fantastic event! The "Cause for Paws" fundraiser was a resounding success thanks to everyone's hard work.
- **Staffing Update:** Samantha Kopacz, one of our Animal Caregivers, has submitted her two-week notice. While we are sad to lose her as part of the team, we are incredibly excited for her as she begins her next journey!
- **Statewide Safety Initiative:** The Jackson County Animal Shelter has invited us to participate in a statewide "Do Not Adopt" tracking sheet. I will be conducting further research to determine if joining this initiative aligns with UPAWS' policies and best practices.
- **Operations Update:** Following concerns raised by staff and board members, we have transitioned away from the appointment system for cat meets. I am happy to report that the shift is going smoothly and has been well-received so far.
- **Behavioral Reports:** Please find the monthly report on animal behavior, prepared by Julie, attached for your review.

Monthly Report Behavioral Animal Care Coordinator

March 2026

Statistics

No. of dogs adopted/gone into foster-to-adopt	21
No. of adopters contacted	19
No. of adopters giving feedback	15
No. of adopters mentioning some issues and receiving post adoption training support	4 (guarding and rough play, nipping ankles when friend leaves, doesn't know name) and ongoing support for previous adopters including a one-on-one counselling
No. of returned adoptions - under 2 months in home - Under a year in home	4 (1 returned twice (family emergency and then severe separation anxiety), too much for family, health emergency of adopter, 1 (health of owner)

Dogs on a specific behavior modification, training or management plan: 6

Dut	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Confidence building
Ice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Assessment, confidence building, practicing meeting new people
Ding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Rehab after abuse couldn't be touched for weeks
Kay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● basics
Aco	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Settling and basics
Lan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Confidence building, practicing meeting new people

POLICY & BYLAWS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 13, 2026, 6:30pm, Border Grill Negaunee

Attendees: Leslie Hurst, Brian Hummel, Christine Larson, Linda Roncaglione

Excused Absence: Lynn Andronis

- [February Minutes](#) - Approved (draft watermark removed). Already included in the March 5th board packet.
- Board Policies and Procedures Review Project:
 - 3/27/23 Board Approved Updates. A full document / formatting review was completed at the February meeting. Leslie needs to request that it replaces the March 2022 version on the website and on the google drive (possible locations: Shelter Management, Shelter Operations, Board of Directors). The superseded documents are filed in the Archives folder of the Policy / Bylaw Committee drive.
 - [Policies & Procedures Suggestions](#) - This is a consolidated list of items to address. We hope to begin a full review & update of the P&P document at the May meeting so we will all review this list in preparation. If someone wants to organize the list better please do.
 - Bylaws Review Project - Leslie will complete the R&R for the proposed changes (from the Nov 2025 meeting) by next Monday, April 20th and distribute. Everyone will review for final discussion at the May meeting. It needs to be distributed to the board by Wed, May 20th 6pm to be addressed at the May 27th board meeting.
- Other
 - [Mission, Vision, Core Values from Strategic Planning](#) - Still on-hold pending more input from the BOD, Lynn please update us at the May meeting.
- Next Meeting **Monday, May 11, 2026 6:30pm Negaunee Border Grill.**