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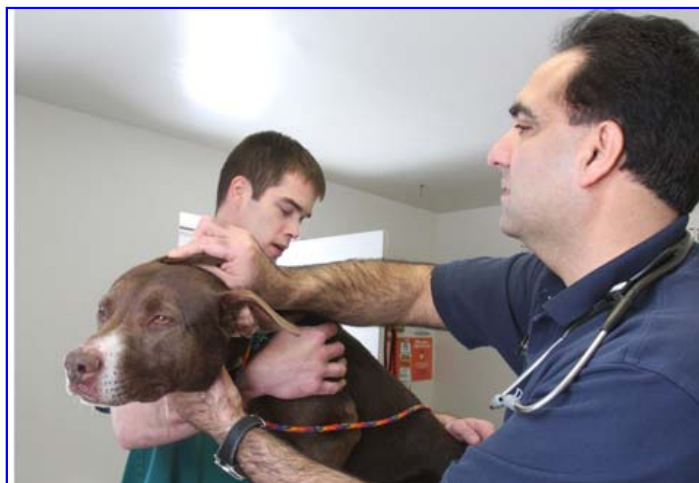
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Brookhaven: We won't be taking on Riverhead shelter pets

By [Grant Parpan](#) | March 1, 2011 in [Featured Stories](#), [News](#)

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Buster, a Riverhead Animal Shelter pet, gets a check-up from a vet. Riverhead officials said they're looking to transfer shelter pets to Brookhaven in an effort to save money.

A pitch to move Riverhead shelter pets to the Brookhaven Town Animal Shelter in Yaphank is news to Brookhaven officials who say their facility is maxed out.

Police Chief David Hagermiller proposed the idea of looking into transferring the pets “as a cost-saving measure” at a Riverhead Animal Shelter Advisory Committee meeting Monday. Riverhead currently has about 18 dogs in its shelter.

But Brookhaven Town Board member Jane Bonner, who serves as the Town Board liaison to the shelter, said it wouldn't be possible for Brookhaven to take on the new pets.

"We're full," she said. "We don't have any room. No."

Ms. Bonner's concerns echo sentiments expressed by members of the Riverhead committee, who said the Brookhaven Shelter is already proposing to pay animal rescue organizations \$250 for each pit bull they adopt from the town shelter to help unload some of the pets. Like most municipal shelters, most of the dogs in Brookhaven's shelter are pit bulls.

Chief Hagermiller said Riverhead's proposal is about consolidation, much like consolidation is talked about with school districts. While the chief said the idea of having Riverhead send the dogs to Brookhaven's shelter — for a price, of course — is being discussed, no final decision has been made. Ms. Bonner said Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko's office told her no such move is in the works.

Dogs kept at Riverhead's shelter are usually either dogs picked up as strays or dogs surrendered by their owners.

Statistics from the Riverhead Police Department indicate that in 2010, the town impounded 155 dogs. In addition, 54 dogs were surrendered and seven more were either found dead after car accidents or brought in dead by owners for cremations. The town got 105 dogs adopted and 98 dogs — including the dogs found dead in the streets — were returned to their owners, and 13 were cremated. Of the 13 cremated dogs, eight dogs had been euthanized.

Chief Hegermiller said six of those eight dogs were euthanized for health reasons, leaving only two dogs having been put down because they were deemed unadoptable by shelter officials.

Riverhead Supervisor Sean Walter said on Friday that he hopes to have a solution to the animal shelter problems within 30 days, but he wouldn't say what that solution might be.

"I'm working on some things and hopefully in the next month, we'll have an answer," he said.

With reporting from Tim Gannon.

Tags: [Jane Bonner](#), [Riverhead](#), [Town of Brookhaven](#)

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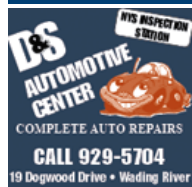
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