

GOVERNMENT

Following ACO Layoff, Town Board Voting to Hire Part-Timer for Weekends

Councilman: "We're doing something positive over there."

By **Joseph Pinciario** February 15, 2011

After laying off a full-time animal control officer at the beginning of the year, the town board will vote on adding a part-time animal control officer at Tuesday night's board meeting.

The part-timer, Maureen Schneider, is proposed to be hired at a rate of \$15 an hour, scheduled to work weekends effective Feb. 28.

Currently the only animal control officer at the Town Animal Shelter, Lou Coronese, is on-call during the weekends, leaving no ACO on duty while a part-time, paid kennel attendant watches over the shelter from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Full-timer Sean McCabe was laid off last year, though he was subsequently hired in the town's sewer department.

"We need somebody there on the weekends as a stopgap," said Councilman Jim Wooten, also board liaison to the Animal Advisory Committee, who said he plans to vote for the measure. "At least we're doing something positive over there."

Riverhead's President of the Civil Service Employees Association, Matt Hattoff, said that hiring part-timers is something he's willing to watch happen.

"I'll follow through with the proper paperwork and let the lawyers fight it out," he said. While Hattoff didn't imply a lawsuit, he said a "complaint which will force an investigation" is worthwhile.

"I'm not happy about it at all," he said.

Wooten distributed a letter to the town board on Monday calling for further changes in the department, namely transferring McCabe back to his previous position. While the letter doesn't explicitly request a swap with Coronese, the lone remaining ACO has been targeted by animal activists for nearly two months after a pitbull was euthanized last December. [Reports showed \(http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/letters-show-euthanized-dog-showed-great-improvement-before-being-put-down-by-town\)](http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/letters-show-euthanized-dog-showed-great-improvement-before-being-put-down-by-town) that one day prior to filing a euthanasia form, Coronese noted that the dog was previously showing "great improvement."

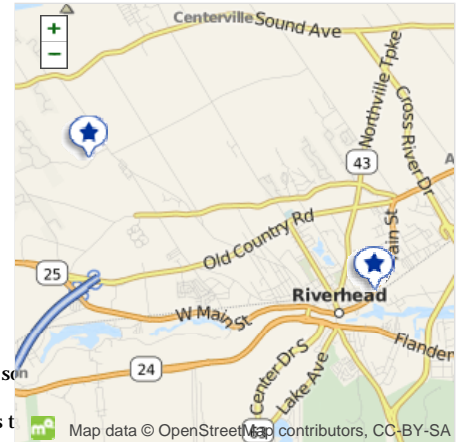
"I truly believe [McCabe's] departure and transfer from the shelter has created a void," Wooten wrote. "And furthermore that his experience and disposition should credit him with a more visible and vocal role in all animal shelter matters."

Councilman George Gabrielsen, expressing neither support nor opposition to transferring McCabe back to the animal shelter, said that some changes in the department are necessary. He cited a [vet coming in to check the dogs \(http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/town-hall-notes-bid-applying-for-grant-to-bring-ice-rink-downtown\)](http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/town-hall-notes-bid-applying-for-grant-to-bring-ice-rink-downtown) as steps in the right direction and favors hiring Schneider, who he says has dealt with public volunteers in previous roles.

Tuesday's town board meeting begins at 7:00 at Town Hall.

For those interested in adopting, click [here \(http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/show-some-love-this-valentines-day-adopt-buster\)](http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/show-some-love-this-valentines-day-adopt-buster) to see the latest dog promoted for adoption by the shelter.

Do you think the town is taking steps in the right direction to improve the animal shelter? [Tell us in the comments.](#)



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COMMENTS (1)

ricky muller

3:08pm on Tuesday, February 15, 2011

the right thing to do is to put sean back he is good at his job and gets a long with all and is very able to run the shelter and will do the right thing.