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Hearing for Animal Shelter Head Postponed Until October

Lou Coronesi, head of town animal shelter, has reportedly not shown up at work since early July.

By [Joseph Pinciario](#) | [Email the author](#) | September 1, 2011

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As head Animal Control Officer Lou Coronesi reportedly continues to skip work, a Wednesday hearing scheduled to determine if the town has reason to fire him was postponed for at least another month.

Coronesi, who animal activists say is unfit for his position, is being charged with unexcused absences after using all of his paid leave, Councilman Jim Wooten said. Wooten estimated that Coronesi last worked in early June and was sent a letter last week requesting him to return to work, to no avail.

Wooten has been working to remove Coronesi from his position, saying in the past he would like to "create a better environment at the facility."

Animal advocates, who have hounded Coronesi since a pit bull was euthanized December less than a week after he said it was "showing signs of improvement," have singled out [Coronesi's past run-in with the law](#), particularly since it involved animals, going so far as to [request an investigation from the district attorney's office into management at the shelter](#)

Wooten said on Thursday that Coronesi's attorney has been unable to contact him, thus requiring the postponement. The next date is scheduled for Oct. 7, Wooten said.

A labor relations specialist with the Civil Service Employee Association was on vacation when contacted for comment, and Riverhead CSEA President Matt Hattorff would not comment on the proceedings.

Supervisor Sean Walter confirmed the current state of the proceedings. He said he would like to see Coronesi fired and "that's what we're working on."

"In a real job, when a guy doesn't show up, you fire him," Walter said. "In a government job when a guy doesn't show up, you get six months of pain until you fire him."

According to the Riverhead CSEA contract, "all permanent, full-time employees covered by this Agreement are offered the protection of Section 75 of the Civil Service Law." Section 75 states that all employees covered who are the subject of a disciplinary action have the right to a hearing under the [Public Employees Fair Employment Act](#).

While Coronesi has reportedly "been AWOL," Wooten said the shelter has extended the hours of a part-time kennel attendant to full-time and hired a part-timer to pick up the slack. He said Coronesi has not been paid since his accrued leave time expired.

Both Walter and Wooten would prefer to see operations at the shelter privatized, though a [request for proposals sent out last year only brought in one bidder](#).

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