



March 28, 2023

The Honorable Terry Turner, Chair
Members of the Putnam County Board of County Commissioners

Dear Mr. Turner and Members of the Board:

Our office has been hearing from members and supporters across the country who are alarmed by recent media reports revealing that the owner of five dogs who attacked and killed a mail carrier named Pamela Rock in August won't face any charges. The state attorney's office made the decision after its investigation revealed that the dogs' owner had previously tried to surrender the animals—**twice**—to the county's self-professed “no-kill” animal control facility and **had been refused help both times. We urge you to act immediately to overturn the dangerous and deadly “no-kill” policy at your publicly funded animal control facility.**

According to media reports and public records obtained by PETA, the owner of the dogs who attacked and killed Ms. Rock had previously told authorities that **he couldn't even afford to feed the animals.** The dogs had repeatedly escaped through a poorly constructed fence cobbled together with bricks and stones and had attacked a man and a car on **two** separate occasions before they mauled and killed Ms. Rock. A detective who interviewed the dog's owner stated in a report that the owner said he'd been told that the animal control facility was “at capacity” and wouldn't accept adult dogs. Putnam County Animal Control Officer Donald Ferguson said in a recent media interview about the fatal attack that the dogs' owner “wanted us to come get the dogs, but due to our policy, we don't take owner surrenders unless of dire needs And this is not a dire need situation because he just couldn't afford them or whatever the need may be. We're not going to take custody of somebody's dogs just because.”¹ It was only after the dogs killed Ms. Rock that animal control picked them up. (They have since been euthanized.) Weeks later, the county received a complaint alleging that the dogs' owner had acquired four more dogs.

Animal control departments were established and are funded with public monies **categorically to protect animals and the public.** Putnam County's animal control agency has negligently abandoned its mission by putting “live release rates” and a meaningless “no-kill” moniker above the safety of animals and human residents. **Please consider this situation an emergency and take immediate action to overturn the county animal control shelter's dangerous, deceptive “no-kill” policy, which has resulted in death and deep suffering in Putnam County.**

¹Anne Maxwell, “‘A Beautiful Person in Every Way’: Family of Mail Carrier Killed in Dog Attack Speaks Out, Demands Accountability,” News4JAX.com, Updated March 16, 2023, https://www.news4jax.com/i-team/2023/03/15/a-beautiful-person-in-every-way-family-of-mail-carrier-killed-in-dog-attack-speaks-out-demands-accountability/?fbclid=IwAR3PgvB9UaEgchB3oAhNg9_oZ09izhdz-ABuYOFpMljSjifDj0Vyix_rtBU

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Washington, D.C.

1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles

2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk

501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Oakland

554 Grand Ave.
Oakland, CA 94610
510-763-PETA

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

Affiliates:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

A humane, responsible model for animal shelters exists. Sumter County commissioners rescinded a “no-kill” policy at that county’s shelter last summer (around the time that Pamela Rock was killed) and embraced a [socially conscious sheltering model](#). According to a media report about the decision, “overcrowding has increased concerns about sanitation and safety, including at least 13 people being bitten, according to a report provided by Assistant County Administrator Stephen Kennedy. ‘It’s not a safe operation to continue under that particular [‘no-kill’] resolution,’ County Administrator Bradley Arnold advised.”² **Putnam County must take similar action to protect the community’s animals and residents.**

Our hearts go out to Ms. Rock’s family and members of the community who have suffered due to the inexcusable dereliction of duty of and the irresponsible policies at the county’s animal control facility. **May we please receive your assurance that humane, responsible policies will be implemented there immediately?**

I can be reached at [REDACTED]. Please let me know if PETA can be of any help. Meanwhile, **we’re eager to hear good news from you.**

Sincerely,



Teresa Chagrin
Animal Care and Control Issues Manager
Cruelty Investigations Department

cc: Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General of the U.S. and CEO of USPS (louis.dejoy@usps.gov)
Pritha Mehra, Chief Information Officer and Executive Vice President, USPS (pritha.mehra@usps.gov)
Douglas Tulino, Deputy Postmaster General and Chief Human Resources Officer, USPS (douglas.tulino@usps.gov)
Thomas J. Marshall, General Counsel and Executive Vice President, USPS (thomas.j.marshall@usps.gov)

²Curt Hills, “Sumter County’s Animal Services Will Now Be ‘Socially Conscious Sheltering,’” TheVillagesDailySun.com, Updated August 25, 2022, https://www.thevillagesdailysun.com/sumter_politics/sumter-county-s-animal-services-will-now-be-socially-conscious-sheltering/article_c765513c-24b9-11ed-84df-33f69b0da76c.html