

5. Introduced by: Monaghan/Paul

Unan.

September 28, 2023

**RESOLUTION NO 59 OF 2023
AUTHORIZING APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDERS TO
CONTRACT FOR FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS –
GENERAL CONSTRUCTION AT THE MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY**

Damiani: Contract #2 Butler Change Order #32 in the amount of \$15,947.28 related to the additional egress doors required for access routes within the environmental wall.

6. Introduced by: Powers/Soskin

Unan.

September 28, 2023

**RESOLUTION NO. 60 OF 2023
AUTHORIZING APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER TO
THE CONTRACT FOR FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS –
ELECTRICAL AT THE MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY
IN HILLBURN, NEW YORK**

Damiani: Contract #5 Rockland Electric Change Order #32 in the amount of \$5,638.50 for installation of underground conduit and wiring associated with the leachate collection fuel tank alarm panel. Change Order #30 in the amount of \$152.11 for the connection of the circulation pump in the boiler room. Change Order #31 in the amount of \$655.18 for installation of new ground cable. The total amount of the change order is \$6,445.79.

7. Introduced by: Kohut/Foley

Unan.

September 28, 2023

**RESOLUTION NO. 61 OF 2023
AUTHORIZING APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDERS TO
THE CONTRACT FOR FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS –
FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM AT THE MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY
IN HILLBURN, NEW YORK**

Damiani: Contract #6 W&M Fire Protection Services Change Order FP27 in the amount of \$1,276.60 for the relocation of sprinkler piping that would prevent installation of the egress stairway. This change

order will be directly back charge to Contract #1 design build equipment provider VDRS for the amount of \$1,276.60.

8. Introduced by: Specht/Hoehmann Unan. September 28, 2023

**RESOLUTION NO. 62 OF 2023
AWARD OF SERVICE CONTRACT FOR SOLID WASTE COLLECTION,
TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSAL FOR
THE VILLAGE OF POMONA, NEW YORK
RFP- 2023-08**

Damiani: We received one proposal from Interstate Waste Services. The evaluation committee which included Rockland Green staff and the Village requested the best and final offer from the proposer. We did receive a best and final offer. We agreed with the Village that we are going to move this for recommendation to be awarded this evening.

9. Introduced by: Powers/Kohut Unan. September 28, 2023

**RESOLUTION NO. 63 OF 2023
AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE
SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM**

10. Introduced by: Monaghan/Paul Unan. September 28, 2023

**RESOLUTION NO. 64 OF 2023
AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE KOMATSU WA475**

Damiani: We are looking for authorization to replace the 2010 Komatsu WA480 that is assigned to our Concrete and Asphalt Crushing Facility with a 2022 Komatsu WA475-10. We went out under the Sourcewell purchasing co-op. The purchase price is \$431,700.40.

Damiani: Rockland Green had a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Materials Recovery Facility attended by the Commissioners and the public. We are very proud of this facility, and we invested over \$35 million in the most advanced technology related to dual-stream processing facility that will generate revenue for Rockland Green and the unit users substantial monies throughout the year.

Phillips: We are talking about glass, plastic, paper and cardboard and it is less labor intensive and at the same time we can take outside Rockland County municipalities because we have the capacity. It is going to be less expensive if we had to ship this out to a different contractor.

Damiani: Correct.

Phillips: I want to thank the members for being there yesterday. Mostly though for their work and diligence throughout this time building this new MRF. It really is an amazing technological feat that we can do this today and offer the residents and a future generation this type of technology. Executive Director, what else do you want to bring forth to the Commissioners.

Damiani: Update on what has taken place since September 21. On September 21, 2023, the Board of Commissioners of Rockland Green voted to terminate the agreement with Hi-Tor Animal Care Center. The time period stretching from approximately 11:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. the Hi-Tor organization aggressively pursued pathways of adoption and transfers to unknown rescue organizations of some of the animals under its' care and custody. Of the 40 dogs that were being housed by Hi-Tor as of September 15, only 23 dogs remain today. Some dogs that were adopted had bite histories. Additionally, there may have been up to 30 cats adopted but no records required under the New York State Agriculture Markets law Chapter 69 Article 26C Section 423 were available when Rockland Green took possession of the shelter on the evening of September 21. There may have also been fostered dogs that were adopted by their fosters accounting for the animals that have been transferred or adopted is ongoing. According to a former Hi-Tor employee, each recipient of the animal apparently was supplied with large bags of pet food upon receipt of the animal. If the animal required any medication, they were given their months' worth of supplies. Animal housing areas were dirty, moldy, infested, food encrusted and unhygienic. It appears that the trailer has not been deep cleaned for over a year. The Commissioners have photos in front of you, and we are providing video this evening of the cages being removed to reveal the dirt and mold and insect build up. All inventory statistics may not be entirely accurate, for the time period beginning September 15 through September 20 multiple requests were made to the shelter manager and the Executive Director to produce the requested Petpoint reports, animal inventory reports, animal inventory summary, a report listing animals in foster care and who was fostering them including names, addresses and phones numbers. Animal intake report, animal outcome report, animal bite history and animal medical history. The last reporting statement to us was sent on August 15.

Social Media panic. Members of the public as well as former employees of Hi-Tor organization have promulgated the lie that Rockland Green intends to euthanize all the animals at the Hi-Tor shelter. News was spreading on social media when the Hi-Tor agreement was terminated, panic erupted culminating in the mass adoption and transfer of cats and dogs. Hi-Tor failed to quell this panic as evidenced by posts of community of "One Paw at a Time Rescue" that is available to take 10 dogs and 2 cats from the shelter.

Upon entering the premises at 6 p.m. on September 21 we first absorbed disarray. Upon inspection of the food pantry, we found two shelves; one of them was almost empty and another that was in pieces on the floor. Disarray of the shelves that consisted of adult dog dry food that was left partially bare. We believe the following items are missing. Sixteen 40-pound bags of Purina Pro Plan dry dog food for large dogs, eight 40-pound bags of Purina Pro Plan adult sensitive skin, three cases of Milk Bones, four bags of Kibble N' Bits, a big bag of assorted treats and several cases of Purina Pro Plan wet food.

The dog inventory. As of September 14, Rockland Green observed on the dog kennel board that there were 40 dogs on the premise. As of September 21, there were 23 dogs onsite. The question remains where did these dogs end up?

The consultants provided the following analysis stating that the following information based upon medical records onsite, 2 dogs did not have intake folders, 4 dogs had no medical records present, 2 dogs were overdue for rabies vaccination, 6 dogs had no proof of rabies vaccination, 15 dogs had no proof of Bordetella and vaccinations, 12 dogs had no proof of distemper vaccination, 14 dogs had no proof of heartworm testing or status.

Bite history. Of the 23 dogs accounted for 15 dogs currently onsite are reported to have severe bite histories. Rockland Green requested reports from Hi-Tor listing all bite history information for the dogs currently in their care and custody. The list merely provided the names and no further information as required by New York State Agriculture and Markets Law. Based off the list we were able to locate records indicating that there were 3 dogs with severe bite histories that were not disclosed to Rockland Green. There are 8 dogs on the bite history list provided to Rockland Green that we were unable to locate any records. Of the 15 dogs with bite history, 2 dogs were overdue on the rabies vaccination and 2 dogs we were unable to locate any medical records. As of September 28, through our consultants, all dogs with no proof of vaccination have been vaccinated for rabies, distemper, and Bordetella.

Cat inventory. Based on visual observation on September 22, there were 120 cats housed in the building, sheds, and trailers. The following information was missing. Forty-two of the 120 cats did not have medical records at all. Eight-two of the 120 cats did not have proof of rabies vaccination and 61 of the cats had no proof of the FVRCP vaccination distemper/panleukopenia. Cats at the shelter have tested positive for ringworm, upper respiratory infections, fleas, feline AIDS, feline leukemia and we have another new outbreak of panleukopenia. In addition to the cats that were housed, there are many cats that have been left outdoors. Some of the stray cats have been trapped, neutered, vaccinated, and released on the grounds. However, there are many more cats that have not been neutered or vaccinated due to being dumped on the grounds after business hours. They may be reproducing and carrying diseases. According to one estimate by a Hi-Tor volunteer, there may be between 80 to 100 cats roaming the property and the adjacent County parkland. According to a former employee, there were several instances where cat staff were encouraged to set cat cages loose on the grounds due to difficulty dealing with their behaviors. This allegation has yet to be substantiated. As of September 22, consultants believe that there also may be outbreaks of coccidia, giardia, and intestinal parasites. All of which can be deadly if left untreated in both cats and kittens.

Cat trailers. There are three trailers that house cats in cages. All three were dirty, moldy, infested, food-encrusted, and unhygienic. Items were found under the cages, including an animal identification card

that was from September of 2021. Rockland Green can attest that the trailers have not been deep cleaned since before January 2023.

Cat Lobby. The main building was left in disarray. There were traps on the floor with bait in it and several items were strewn about the room. Cats had gotten loose and were hiding in an exposed area under the wall of crates. The exterior of the cages had not been cleaned in some time. The walls were covered with cobwebs and mold, and floors under the shelving were filled with dirt, mouse droppings, and encrusted old food.

Cat sheds and outdoor cats. There are two sheds in the rear, western side of the property. Earlier this year, after a group of approximately 30 cats that had ringworm were transferred from the premises. Rockland Green had paid a contractor to re-paint the walls and re-floor the shed. There was a brand-new shelving system for cat cages that had been assembled in the cat shed. On the evening of September 21st, we saw that the shelving had been vandalized and rendered unusable. The rear cat shed also known as “the cattery,” housed several traumatized cats including cats that were pregnant. There were feces on the floor, along with cat stairs and cat trees that had feces and vomit caked on them, rendering them contaminated.

HVAC and air purifiers. In July, the air conditioner in the main building required a service call. Rockland Green immediately contracted an HVAC specialist to visit the shelter to diagnose and fix it. It turned out that Hi-Tor staff had not replaced the standard filter and this led to a build-up that led to the repair costs of several thousands of dollars.

Rockland Green instructed Hi-Tor to change the filters frequently to avoid this breakdown in the future. Upon entering the closet where the system is housed, we found that the area surrounding the filter system was stacked with various items that impede a person’s ability to get near it, and the filter had not been changed in some time.

In January 2023, Rockland Green purchased several Ogena Solutions air purifiers for each trailer, shed, and main building area. Upon entering the facility on the evening of September 21st, we observed that they were all missing.

Report by Veterinarian from an email we received from Dr. Laura Murphy, DVM. “There was a concern of the lack of sanitation and ventilation of all of the buildings on the property. Cages were stacked on top of each other with layers of debris (rodent droppings, larvae, mold, and organic material) in between the cages that the cats were housed in. The floors were dirty with debris being swept into the corners of the room. The odor in the building was foul and intense. The air-conditioning units were filled with mold and clogged with debris. There was also no system in place for decreasing disease transmission. As a result, the number of panleukopenia cats were spreading.

The feral cat population on the premises was also very concerning. There are multiple, and I was quoted possibly 100, feral cats are outside the facility. These feral cats, if not spayed or neutered and vaccinated will continue to overpopulate the facility and contaminate the environment with diseases and parasites.

I was informed that the previous Hi-Tor administration also confiscated most of the intake forms of the animals so the majority of the animals, especially the overwhelming cat population, had no information.

As a result, they all needed to be retested for infectious diseases, treated for parasites, and vaccinated. This to me is very disturbing in light of the nature of why we are involved in this profession. All of us involved with animal care should be stewards of the animals first and foremost. By removing the animal records, they were put under unnecessary stress, so all pets in the facility can have the documentation needed to help ensure that there is limited disease transmission.

I can already see tremendous improvement in the facility in 2 days. Daily, the structures housing the pets are being tackled. The buildings are being emptied and cleaned and the cages are individually being brought outside to be thoroughly sanitized. There is a separate building to house and treat the panleukopenia kittens and a protocol is now in place for preventing the transmission of this deadly disease to the other cats in the facility. However, this process takes time, manpower and patience.

I am hopeful that the care of these animals and the facility that they are housed in will continue to improve on a daily basis. The new administration has the knowledge and the manpower to continue their hard work in making the new shelter a place we can be proud of.”

Phillips: Do you have any videos or photos to put up on the screen?

Damiani: Yes.

Phillips: I along with some other elected officials we have been questioned by the media, we are on the radio, and we were asked why you took over Hi-Tor. Anybody sitting here tonight and saw those videos, unfortunately, nobody can really show you the air quality that existed in these containers where these cats were. It was horrible. It was a disgrace. We hired a contractor to do the job, but the job was not being done. We are elected officials. We are responsible for the people of Rockland County. We are not going to sit by and allow an operation to run amok and to put in danger animals whose only reason why they are stuck in these cages is because of human neglect. We went with a different consulting contractor. We think they are going to do a good job. We have confidence in them, but if anybody thinks we were wrong in doing this, or we didn't have legal grounds in which to do this, you are wrong. The outbreak in diseases alone gave us the right to go in there and do this. I was up there the next morning, and I went in after they had cleaned up and put the air purifiers on and they said to me the air quality is much better in the containers, I walked in, and I said I can't breathe this. It was just despicable, horrible conditions. We will not put up with that. We took it over and we are going down a new road. We are asking everybody who wants to be a part of this to get on the bus with us. Because, we are going to go to bigger and better heights. We are building a new shelter. This shelter is unfortunately a temporary means to get to where we are going to go. We are going to offer the people of Rockland County a real professional shelter. It is going to take some time to get there, but we all are going to be very proud at the end of the road when we finally get to open this new shelter. Now I will take questions.

Kerry Walsh: I work for the Hudson Valley Humane Society. My views and the questions I ask do not don't represent the Humane Society I am speaking for myself. I have been with the Humane Society for three and a half years and I have been in animal care for twelve years. Like everyone else here today, we have seen a lot of things going on and there is a lot of misinformation that I came to get to the bottom of. My biggest question is when was the last time there was an inspection by Agriculture and Markets

at the facility? Was there someone from Rockland Green that would inspect the facility? How was it that there was nobody auditing or checking in on the contractor?

Phillips: We had an employee, but they were trying to prohibit our employee from going into different areas.

Kerry Walsh: If you are elected officials, couldn't you have called the police and bring them in? There have been issues in the past where animals that were victims of abuse and neglect have been brought to Hi-Tor and Hi-Tor has not informed the Humane Society which is the ASPCA of Rockland County. What going forward is going to be done to make sure that the animals that are experiencing cruelty are brought to the proper authorities that they can get justice. When a check or donation comes in, is it going into an account specific to Rockland Green or is that going into an account specific to Four Legs Good? How long will Four Legs Good be the contractor, because if something happens in a few months and the contract ends what happens to that money? Will the facility remain no kill?

Phillips: Yes.

Kerry Walsh: Do you know how many animals were euthanized in the last few weeks? Because there has been a lot of information online that there have been 30 or 40 cats with panleukopenia that were euthanized, but nobody knows that.

Phillips: They did not give us that information. We know that at least 35 cats died from the disease.

Kerry Walsh: There was a pet food pantry set up by the whoever was running Hi-Tor in the past, is that going to continue? Same thing with the rabbit fosters and adoption program there was a very dedicated rabbit and guinea pig adoption program that was started years and years ago before the previous administration and considering that rabbits are the most abandoned pet in America it is important that it continues moving forward.

Phillips: We want to do a very aggressive adoption program with all animals.

Kerry Walsh: Are there plans for hiring vet techs and vet assistants at the facility to aid in medication administration and treatment of illness. The supplies that were stolen, were those supplies that were donated; or were those specifically bought by Rockland Green and budgeted in; or were those bought by Hi-Tor at the contracted facility?

Phillips: In the beginning of the year, we have been funding that contractor. Of course, we are no longer funding them, but we increased their budget by approximately \$900,000 to \$1.4 million. So, they were probably buying through the contract, but people do donate. It could have been both. Hopefully, we are going to investigate and get some answers.

Kerry Walsh: Going forward will there be random inspections or drop ins to make sure that the same thing isn't occurring. Because as we saw in those videos, they won't survive nine months in that.

Phillips: One of the things we asked for is complete transparency which we weren't receiving. They were prohibiting employees from even talking to our employee. Yes, we believe now that we have a consultant that will give full access to the entire shelter.

Donna Hansen: I work for the Department of Social Services, especially with families that become homeless. A lot of times they have pets. In previous years, not recently, Hi-Tor would keep pets temporarily until DSS would rehome the families so they could get their pets back. I don't know what the policy in the future is going to be.

Phillips: This came up at previous meetings and we would like to be able to offer that once again, but we just need to make sure that the family is just not taking the animal, giving it to us, and then coming back at a later time. We need to have real proof of a medical reason or financial reason why they need to give it up.

Eric Goldman: You mentioned the over populousness of cats that are in that area, that is not just a problem. Those cats are everywhere in Rockland. There is a whole slew of volunteer people that feed the colonies that are around. They are actually having a food drive where they ask people to donate. I am wondering if you could be part of that.

Phillips: We already are. When the disease broke out, the Executive Director contacted them immediately because they were going to have a cat adoption program that weekend. He said to them what are you doing you just had this outbreak. How do you know if any of these cats contracted the same disease? They stopped it, but only because we intervened. We began this August with the trap, neuter, and release.

Damiani: Rockland Green is hosting four events this year. The first event we had in August, the next event is scheduled for October 5 with our consultants at Four Legs Good to roll out the Counties trap, neuter, and release program specific to the community of feral cats. We are excited about this initiative in reducing the overall population. We learned over time from the needs assessment in designing this new shelter that unless we control the community cat populations, we could never build a big enough facility. For 2024 we are going to roll out monthly trap, neuter, vaccinate and release program with TARA from Orange County. They will come down to our new location in West Haverstraw, New York and hold those events.

Phillips: How many cats did we trap in August?

Damiani: Fifty-one community cats were spayed or neutered.

Phillips: How many agencies participated?

Damiani: Rockland Green, Four Legs Good and some of the local trappers.

Goldstein: The food for these colonies that do exist, after they are trapped and they get released and they will be around for 10 to 15 years until they pass on then they are not going to produce and end up

at the shelter, I get that. Meanwhile, the people that take care of these colonies are basically begging outside the grocery store trying to get food.

Phillips: Let us sit down with you to see if we can come up with something.

Sandra Siegel: I have always helped with the shelter by donating and taking pictures of the cats so people would come and adopt them. I have to say that those pictures that you showed were very disturbing. You hired Rick?

Phillips: No. Just to be sure Hi-Tor went out and hired the Executive Director. When he came here to the meeting, we asked him extensive questions as to whether other people interviewed or did, they go through an agency. Do you have experience in shelters? We were quite taken back because the correct answers were not there, and he was very reluctant to tell us.

Sandra Siegel: I believe that. The fact that he wouldn't let you in to see the animals and see the shelter and the fact that he had no experience in doing anything with the shelter and from what I have heard, he was not even there at the shelter most of the time he was working in Westchester. Are you going to press charges against him because he should be criminally charged for animal abuse and mistreating the animals and not doing what he needed to do? I am very disturbed by the whole thing.

Phillips: I can imagine. Their Board let him go. I don't know under what circumstances they had, and they never communicated with us. Let us try and walk down this road together. There are a lot of things we have to account for. Taxpayer money. We believe it is over \$100,000 in these accounts that we have to have come back to us. We mentioned the missing food and the missing supplies. There are a lot of things we may have to go after. But I can't just say to you tonight we are going to focus on one person.

Sandra Siegel: What about the money that was collected to rebuild Hi-Tor?

Phillips: We are going to ask them for that. Because we think it should go to the new shelter.

Sandra Siegel: That is the shelter in West Haverstraw? Where the dump was?

Phillips: Why don't you say where the beautiful park is?

Sandra Siegel: Ok. I just want to make sure for the animals. I really feel horrible for these animals.

Phillips: I don't think we got to this point because we don't agree with you. I think it is because we do agree with you.

Sandra Siegel: So why did it take so long to get involved with it?

Phillips: Remember, we hired them in January. We went through a number of different communications back and forth trying to get information from them. It takes time. I will tell you, the government can't move as fast as we would love it to move. Government is slow and the bigger the government the slower the government. But we are at this point now and I am seeing a new sunrise and I want to concentrate

on that. We will go after whatever we can get back and whatever is due to us. We are moving down the road and I hope you are with us.

Sandra Siegel: I am, I care about the animals. In fact, I have supplies at my house that I physically could not bring to the shelter because of a past surgery. A couple of years ago before Covid, I went there to try to take pictures of the animals to put them on one of my community pages, and they were not cooperative with that.

Maureen Benedict: I want to congratulate all of you for hiring Michael back. Michael was a wonderful manager that was very concerned about the animals. After he was let go, the people that came in and I have been involved for years, have been pretty bad. I am really happy that you hired him back because he does care about animals. The trap and release program, a couple of my friends were trappers and said it went very well. I hope it continues.

Phillips: I hope you spread that.

Maureen Benedict: The price is fair. I have been trapping and neutering through TARA and the price is fair. Even at \$75 to \$85 dollars when I had stray cats, for other trappers it is tough.

Phillips: Every Commissioner on this Board cares about animals. We are in complete agreement with you and again I think we are on a new path.

Nixie Gueits: I want to thank everybody from the bottom of my heart for moving forward with this and just trusting us to move forward for the County. I did want to answer a couple of questions. Michael knows Mark Kissel very well and AnnMarie. He has a very positive working relationship and during his time at Hi-Tor when there were instances of animal abuse or neglect, he worked very closely with them. As I said we both have a very positive relationship with them.

Phillips: You are not making any of your employees sign any confidentiality agreements?

Nixie Gueits: No. I know Jennifer Dunn very well. As a matter of fact, she was a volunteer at H-Tor, and she has remained with us. She even fostered kittens for us because she did not want them at the shelter. She is taking care of the small animals now. Michelle, who heads Cotton Tails, I have worked with Michelle for many years so I am sure that relationship will remain positive for the small animals.

Some of the vet techs that were there like the ones that diagnosed the panleukopenia outbreak, immediately withing an hour of our arrival on Friday, are also trappers. They are vet techs for Dr. Muphy. Dr. Murphy was there on her own free time and they will continue to volunteer, and they will be a part of what goes forward. There should be no concern regarding having vet techs on staff. It is very important to note that you do not have to be a vet tech to vaccinate for panleukopenia VRCP can be administered by staff. Michael cross trains many of his staff to do this. Animal are vaccinated upon intake. We do not have to wait for a vet tech to come in or vet. Blood testing for FIV and FELV is done by a simple blood draw and a drop test. That will save substantially on medical costs going forward. Same thing with micro chipping. Micro chipping will be an in-house cost. As far as food for ferals, we have good relationships with re-donation programs where we get pallets of food for pennies on the

dollar. We have a very good relationship with many feral groups that feed ferals in the County. We regularly share pallets of food and that will continue to happen. I just want to assure the Board at Rockland Green that our relationship will be one built on a foundation of compassion, transparency, accountability, and community participation. Most importantly we are going to have dedicated experts and professionals who have their priorities straight. They will be fixed on animal welfare, and they are all going to have the courage to put all those commitments in place. Thank you all again. In the Journal News the Executive Director of Hi-Tor said if the right people had known about the disease, the outbreak, it would not have happened. I just want you all to know that the right people are in place and that the outbreak will not happen again.

Mary Ciani: I wanted to share my story. Last August 2022 I adopted a kitten at Hi-Tor. Within four days of bringing her home we were at a hospital at Nanuet. She had diarrhea with blood in it. Tests were done and she tested positive for coccidia. Two days later I took her to an animal hospital in New City and they did extensive tests because the antibiotic she was on was not helping. She tested positive for cryptosporidium which is a parasite that attacks the cat's intestines. They lay eggs and they take six weeks to hatch. By then when they hatch, the intestines have been damaged. Long story short, my cat is okay now, but it did cost me almost \$8,000 in medical bills. She is cured and she is on medication for the rest of her life as well as prescription diet food. The cryptosporidium is a test that has to be done with a stool sample PCR test which is more extensive. The other test that they ran at the animal hospital didn't come up. I hope that this helps, and I am thinking that is the disease that is going around. I did call Hi-Tor when I found out about it. I called twice and their response was the cats are fine here what do you want us to do with that information. I explained to them that the disease is highly contagious, and the cat should be kept quarantined and any area that the cat touches needs to be cleaned with ammonia.

Phillips: None of us are people that would say, or elected officials would say government has to do this. If ever there was something that shouted out, screamed out for need of government oversight it is this shelter.

Marge Hook: First, I would like to say thank God for Michael Sanducci and Nixie Finklestein because they have done so much work. I went to the shelter on Friday, and it was the first time I had been there for about 10 years. I volunteered there for 20 years from 1990 to 2010 when they got rid of Don and Ken, which is when I left. I think Michael and Nixie belong in heaven for taking care of those animals because no one can do it any better. I have a sign that says abuse an animal, go to jail. Any volunteer that is here tonight from Hi-Tor I doubt very much the volunteers really knew what was going on. I think the Executive Director and the person they refer to as the dirty cop, they should be in jail. She took a pure hound down to Georgia that could have been turned over to a local police department. She was paid \$40 an hour to make that trip because she is going to open up a shelter down South. Well, is that where our dogs are going to end up? Where they are killing dogs left and right. This is a disgrace. As far as the Executive Director is concerned, he is working in a place called Houlihan Lawrence. It is a commercial real estate in Rye Brook, New York. He is getting \$79,000 from Hi-Tor which thank God has been put off now and he was making money over there on the time he is supposed to be at the shelter.

Phillips: I think you were here the night that I asked him the question are you full-time and are you working there full-time, and he said yes.

Marge Hook: He originally was supposedly hired part-time, and he corrected it and said I am hired full-time. If he was hired full-time that is 8-hours a day at least five days a week. We know from people that are up there he is never there. Go after them for that money, go after him for the money they just got a \$50,000 grant from somebody that died. Go after them for all the food that was taken, and they were saying they spent \$53,000 a month on veterinary, no wonder the way the animals were treated. The volunteers were told when you take care of the cats, to feed them and water them, however often that happened don't do the litter boxes. So, the cats were stepping in their own crap and their own pee. How many days where they left like that? Why did they steal all the kitty litter if they are not going to change the litter? A lot needs to be done. I can't understand how the DA office has not gotten involved and I hope he does because these people belong in jail until they come clean. I would call every single volunteer that was up there and put them under oath and get them questioned. I think the volunteers must be absolutely stunned. Some of them, not all of them. You can't be there every day or a few times a week and not see the crap that is going on. I wish you good luck.

Jennifer Dunn: There were three things that were said earlier. One of them was the conditions of the shelter in the videos that were shown. I just want to make it clear and let everybody know that was actually clean compared to prior to May 10 when I quit. Those were clean and that was mostly cat they didn't show dogs and the conditions that the dogs were living in and how they stayed while they were at the shelter. The other thing somebody had said something about, I am not sure who, isn't someone from Rockland Green there all the time. I have witnessed from January 1 if Mr. Damiani showed up or anybody from Rockland Green came there they would never disclose anything to them or allow you into places to see certain things. Because everything was a secret. I hope that nobody would bash the specific individuals that do show up there on a regular basis from Rockland Green, because if they don't know what they are looking for and if they don't know what is going on and everything is kept a secret, they can't speak out about it or address it. There is nothing that can be done unless somebody actually comes forward and says what is going on there. There was something thing about the Humane Society about neglect and abuse cases that used to come into Hi-Tor. While I was there, AnnMarie was probably the only person that I really knew from there for a long time, she was never called. If there was an animal that came in that was a big dog, I can not speak for cats I can only speak for the dogs, a dog that came in whose name I won't say, but nobody was ever called. AnnMarie was not called, and the dog manager and others refused to make those calls. They said that they did. They never did. Moving forward, I know the people that are in charge now will do much better and protect the animals that are at the shelter at this time. But I can speak for previously and I can speak for part of now knowing that everybody that actually cared, was pushed away, and was not allowed to speak.

Phillips: That is so unfortunate, and we heard this over and over. There is full transparency now.

Jennifer Dunn: I 1,000 percent believe that.

Abbey Grasso: For somebody who says they care about the animals, Bueller, Bueller, he's not here. That says a lot.

Lee Vasquez: I have been fighting for a long time for this shelter. I am currently trying to fund raise online, but the public does not understand Rockland Green's part in this. I keep getting pushback stating

well they have a \$1.25 million budget. They don't understand how you guys are involved and how that affects Four Legs Good. People are asking for a statement.

Phillips: Rockland Green, we have all five Town Supervisors. It is up to the towns really to have animal control officers, which we do. We've been intimately involved with the shelter for years. We ran into extreme frustration, as a matter of fact before we went with Hi-Tor we were very upset with Hi-Tor, but no one else came forward to run the shelter and that was a real problem. We couldn't just close the doors. That was never the answer. We went back to Michael, and I have to thank Nixie tremendously because she came forward to our meetings. But it was very frustrating for all of us because we were not getting the two-way working together that we had anticipated. What we gave on the budget, which was 50% more, they didn't have to worry about going out and fundraising. Worry about that they didn't have enough money for food, or enough money for the vets or medical expenses. They had everything they possibly needed. All they had to do was run an efficient shelter and they didn't do that and there was no transparency. They were making their employees more or less sign confidentiality agreements to be silent. It didn't make any sense. It is an animal shelter. In either case, we stepped in, and we think it is the best agency in which to do that. We had permission from the State and authorization. Whether it is a Supervisor or a Legislator, or Mayor or County Executive's representative we are all in this together.

Lee Vasquez: I appreciate that. But the public does not know what you guys are doing and they don't understand why Four Legs needs donations. I am just suggesting it is explained to everybody. Post it on your Facebook page or whatever, so that people aren't like why are we going to help them when they have this large budget.

Phillips: This is a good question, and as we move down the road, you are going to see a lot of answers. We do want to set up a non for profit so donations can be accepted. People want to be part of the shelter to help these animals. If they want to donate, there should be a way we can do that, and it shouldn't just be taxpayer money. None of us are saying government needs to control everything. We don't think that. We think this should be a very open process where everybody is involved.

Damiani: We do have the press release on our website addressing that.

Lee Vasquez: Right, but it basically says that the contract has ended and that was it.

Damiani: No there was a subsequent one stating the appreciation Rockland Green notes that the recent outpouring of public support for the animals that are at the shelter in Pomona along with the support of Four Legs Good the newly contracted consultant. We thank everyone for their kind comments, donations, and concern. Rest assured that Rockland Green's support of the sheltering of our needy animals along with their nutritional, medical and nurturing care is funded and on-going. If you are an animal lover who would like to be more involved with serving Rockland Green animal community, please reach out to Four Legs Good to learn of any volunteering or employment activities that may be available.

Phillips: I really believe that you are going to see more and more information going out there and the word will get out.

Sandra Siegel: One of the issues I have is that in addition to what the shelter is doing, there are other organizations that are trapping. There is one in Nyack that has maybe 50 cats and they wanted me to come and help clean and the smell was disgusting. Those cats are actually abused, and something has to be done.

Hoehmann: I think all the Commissioners would agree we are all in this together. We want to thank Jerry and his staff at Rockland Green and especially Michael and Nixie who took over and made an incredible improvement. Seeing these videos is just heartbreaking. I am thinking back to when I adopted our family dog, Ollie, that died last year and we had him twelve years that we adopted from Hi-Tor. He was one of the best things that happened to our family. It is despicable and I think we should do everything in our powers to ensure that every single penny of public dollars that went to Hi-Tor is recouped and the people have stepped over bounds of misappropriation of funds or items, I strongly urge everyone to take the next step and report that to the Attorney General.

I want to thank Jerry and the team because in Clarkstown we are going to become the second town, it is our goal to have food waste recycling happen County-wide, but we are going to be starting that in Clarkstown in October. We are finalizing the press release and I want to thank Jerry and Howard and all the folks working together to get this done. We had a bunch of residents who have signed up looking forward to this to happen.

Kerry Walsh: What is the name of the new shelter?

Phillips: Rockland Green CARES.

Since there are no other public comments, do we have a motion to adjourn?

Foley: Moved

Paul: Seconded

The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Haggerty