

ANIMAL CARETAKERS ARE CHARGED WITH ABUSE OF DOG IN WORCESTER

Paula J. Owen, Millbury- Sutton Chronicle, June 2016



The photo submitted by Marcus Keilch is of his dog Debo at the veterinarian's to have the muzzle removed.

WORCESTER — The former manager of the Fitchburg animal shelter and Holden's former animal control officer are facing animal cruelty charges after they allegedly abused a Rottweiler in their care.

Former Fitchburg Animal Shelter manager Amy J. Egeland, 49, and Sean P. Stanton, 50, former Holden ACO, both of 13 Cambridge St., were arraigned this week on one charge each of animal cruelty, according to Timothy J. Connolly, spokesman for Worcester District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. They were released on personal recognizance and ordered by the judge not to acquire any more animals. Their case was continued to July 28.

The pair operated Balance Your Bully K9 Training Rehabilitation services at 939 High Rock Road, Fitchburg, where the now defunct city shelter was located, before renting a facility at 13 Cambridge St. in Worcester.

On Feb. 10, Marcus Keilch, 36, of Middletown, Conn., dropped his Rottweiler Debo off at Balance Your Bully in Worcester for a week while he went on a family vacation. When he returned, a plastic muzzle was embedded into his dog's face and had caused an infection, he said. After getting Debo immediate medical treatment, Mr. Keilch complained to the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

In her report dated May 13, MSPCA Officer Christine Allenbere said Ms. Egeland and Mr. Stanton insisted Debo had arrived wearing a muzzle.

Mr. Keilch was in contact with Ms. Egeland and Mr. Stanton while he was away and was updated about Debo's care and training, according to Ms. Allenbere's report. Mr. Keilch was told by the pair that Debo had an infection under the muzzle and had been treated by a veterinarian with pain medication and antibiotics, and his condition was improving.

When Mr. Keilch returned, Ms. Egeland and Mr. Stanton insisted he pick up Debo, the report said.

"When Mr. Keilch arrived to pick up Debo he was still wearing the same muzzle, had lost weight, was depressed and had a foul odor," the report said. Mr. Keilch took Debo to his veterinarian for immediate medical care, Debo was placed under anesthesia and "the tight-fitting muzzle removed."

"Debo's face was swollen and had a foul odor," the report said. "He was dehydrated and had numerous red, inflamed malodourous lesions surrounding his face, neck and muzzle areas. The medical issues were caused by the muzzle being left on and caused him pain, discomfort and distress. He was prescribed antibiotics and pain medication."

Ms. Egeland and Mr. Stanton admitted they required that Debo arrive muzzled; that they noticed a smell coming from him and gave him antibiotics prescribed to Ms. Egeland, instead of taking him to a veterinarian for treatment; and that he should have been treated by a veterinarian, the MSPCA report said.

The pair allegedly inflicted unnecessary cruelty on the dog, according to the MSPCA, and "knowingly and willfully permitted Debo to be subjected to unnecessary torture, suffering and cruelty and failing to provide necessary veterinary care."

When contacted, Mr. Stanton advised a reporter to call his attorney. His lawyer, Steven Power of Worcester, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Mr. Keilch, 36, said he would like to see Ms. Egeland and Mr. Stanton punished.

The dog, who lost one of his back legs in a car accident several months ago, started shaking and peed on himself, Mr. Keilch said, when Ms. Egeland entered the room the day he picked him up from Balance Your Bully.

“I would love for them to get some jail time,” he said on the phone Friday. “I would also love for them to have to donate \$20,000 to the MSPCA for animal welfare and never be allowed to work with animals in any capacity again.”

He said he is trying to recoup the \$800 in vet bills through their insurance.

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