

# Investigation ongoing into animal's death

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T-H Staff Writer

Mayor Gordon McCoy is investigating an incident that occurred over the weekend at the Forrest City Animal Shelter.

According to a report from the Forrest City Police Department, officers were called to the animal shelter Sunday just before 11 p.m., by a member of the Forrest City Humane Society who was seeking assistance from officers with stopping several dogs from fighting. The report said the dogs were left out of their pens and one dog had been injured due to the fighting.

McCoy confirmed this morning that the incident took place and that it is currently under investigation. According to McCoy, one of the city's animal control officers, whom he did not identify, let the animals out to play and left them unattended. McCoy said at least one of the female dogs was in heat and that one of the male dogs attacked another, which led to several dogs mauling the dog. The dog that was attacked died due to injuries suffered in the attack.

"I do have an investigation ongoing so that we can find out exactly what happened, but I  
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can say this. On days when it is pretty out, the officers let the dogs out into a common area that we have so they can get out and play. The officer who was working that day didn't notice that one of the females was in heat, which led to the incident. One of the males attacked another and the others joined in and severely injured the dog. It was an oversight by our employee, and it's one we're not taking lightly," said McCoy.

As part of the investigation, McCoy said he's trying to clarify a policy he said has been in place for quite awhile.

"Like I said, it's common for us to let the dogs out into that common area, and I've been told that often the city workers let them out in the afternoon and the Humane Society volunteers let them back in when they come out in the evening. It just so

happened this weekend that when the dogs were let out you had one in heat and everyone knows what can happen in that situation," said McCoy.

"By no means are we excusing what happened or placing any fault on the Humane Society volunteers. Someone should have known there were dogs in heat and should have kept those dogs separated from the others. When we take these dogs into our care at the shelter it is our responsibility to take care of them and our employees failed in that this weekend. It will be dealt with," said McCoy.

Forrest City Animal Control Director Roy Hamilton declined comment, only saying that McCoy's assessment of the incident was accurate.

Humane Society President Janie Hicks declined to comment on this story on the advice of the group's attorney.