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Animal Control officer arrested

FCAHS members claim animals not cared for at shelter

David Nichol
T-H Staff Writer

Forrest City's chief animal control officer has been charged with animal cruelty, but it's hard to find someone who wants to talk about it on the record.

One exception is the mayor, who said the subject may be brought up at Tuesday's city council meeting, and that "appropriate action" will be taken.

According to a report from the St. Francis County Sheriff's Department, Roy Hamilton, 24, of 121 Early Cove, was arrested at 8:20 a.m., Wednesday and charged, according to the report, with cruelty to animals and

members of the Forrest City Area Humane Society.

One member whose name appears in the accusations, Gayden Schwartz, said she felt that she should not comment on the charges. Attempts to contact Kim Hudspeth, also with the FCAHS, were unsuccessful.

Contacted this morning, Hamilton said he had no comment on the charges.

Also contacted this morning, Mayor Gordon McCoy seemed angered by the charges.

"It's crazy, man," he said. "It has gone too far, that's all I can say. I'm fixing to take appropriate action and do what I

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need to do. That is the bottom line."

He declined to say what he meant by appropriate action.

"I won't say right now," said McCoy. "I'd rather not comment on that. I have to wait until I finish meeting with legal counsel. But I want everyone to know that we are firmly supporting Mr. Hamilton, with any means we possess. He is a city employee and he represents us."

As far as any other comments, McCoy said, "I'm just going to wait. I certainly intend to discuss it Tuesday night."

The charges against Hamilton make up the latest chapter in the on-going dispute between the city and the Humane Society.

Last October, Brook Goodbar resigned as animal control

director, and there was some concern that animals at the shelter might be euthanized. In November, McCoy announced that Hamilton had been hired to lead up animal control.

In January of this year, following a dispute at the humane shelter over the care of animals, McCoy recommended that the city and the Humane Society make a complete break.

"Sometimes you've got to realize when some things are working or not working," McCoy said at the time. "Recently we've had a lot of discussion between Forrest City Animal Control and the Humane Society... This is part of my job, but not all of it. I owe Forrest City more than that. I wasn't elected to spend all this time with animal control," he said.

No council action has been taken on the matter.