

# HSUS to begin rehoming effort

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OSSIPEE — Now that Christina Fay agreed to give up 78 Great Danes held in the care of the Humane Society of the United States, which is now working to match the dogs with loving homes.

In mid-March, a Superior Court jury found Fay, 60, guilty on all charges. She had a sentencing hearing in May, but several issues remained unresolved. The case wound up in Superior Court after Fay appealed a guilty verdict that followed a bench trial in Ossipee Circuit Court.

Fay was convicted of neglecting roughly 75 Great Danes she owned, withholding water and allowing medical conditions to fester in an atmosphere rife with urine and feces. The Great Danes had been kept in and on the property of her Wolfeboro mansion.

Since a raid last June by police and The Humane Society of the United States, most of the dogs have been held in a secret location in the care of the HSUS, and Fay was allowed to keep one.

Last week at her sentencing hearing, her attorney said she would appeal to the Supreme Court but would not contest the forfeiture of the dogs. Still at issue is a year long jail sentence that was suspended if she attends counseling and pays \$1.9 million in restitution to the HSUS.

"The state is now able to work with us on a plan to get them into homes," said Lindsay Hamrick of the New Hampshire HSUS on Friday.

On Monday, she said the HSUS "sorted through" its plan to have the dogs fixed. That process is expected to take three months or so. They will start with 20 dogs that should be sent to homes sooner than later for health or behavior reasons. Dogs will be able to be released into homes as soon as they recover.

"We are going to move as quickly as possible without compromising the care for the dogs," said Hamrick. "We couldn't spay and neuter them before because you are not legally allowed to until you get this kind of decision."

The HSUS is also working on the application for dog adoption and is waiting for feedback from some other agencies who are helping with that effort.

Hamrick said HSUS is working with the Carroll County Attorney's Office to make sure their process complies with the verbal orders that Judge Amy Ignatius issued. On Friday, she said there are housing options for the dogs in the most need.

"We want to make sure those dogs who have those complex medical issues are in a home first if at all possible," said Hamrick adding the dogs were seriously neglected under Fay and their rehabilitation will continue in their new homes and that "may or may not be challenging" for whomever adopts them.

The HSUS is working with "reputable" Great Dane organizations to find homes. The dogs won't be placed with anyone who is affiliated with Fay. Owners will need "significant resources" to afford paying for the care of many of the dogs because of their various medical conditions.

She said plenty of people have already sought to adopt the dogs. Whether the dogs would do well in a family setting with children or other dogs depends on the individual dog's personality.

"When this case happened we received hundreds and hundreds of emails with interested adopters," said Hamrick adding that not all would be suitable to take dogs. "This is not a case where there is a lack of interested adopters.

"The task that we have before us is to pair each individual dog with the family that best meets their needs."

At the sentencing hearing last Thursday, Fay's defense team suggested a woman named Nancy Fantom of Saddleback Pet Services in Northwood could arrange for new homes.

Judge Amy Ignatius said Saddleback could assist the HSUS in finding new homes. She said all the animals must be spayed or neutered. She also said the HSUS cannot simply transfer the dogs wholesale to another organization. Fay and her associates cannot end up with the dogs. No dogs may be euthanized because a home cannot be found.

The HSUS must report to the County Attorney's Office if they can't find homes for dogs after three months or if a dog is too dangerous to be placed.

"What the public can be assured of is unless we have reported that concern to the court all of the dogs will find forever loving homes," said Hamrick.

The HSUS wouldn't release the names of adopters unless there was a court requirement to do so.

She added anyone who wants a Great Dane but didn't get one from this case is encouraged to look for dogs from Great Dane rescue organizations.

"We hope that this raises some awareness that there are a lot of Great Danes that are looking for loving homes," said Hamrick.

For now Fay doesn't have to pay the restitution because it's stayed on appeal. Asked what the public can do to help the dogs, Hamrick at this point the HSUS is celebrating that the dogs have been forfeited to the state. She is pleased with the support they have been given.

"At this point we are just thankful to our supporters for the donations that they've given so we can continue this work," said Hamrick. "We haven't brought in even close to the amount of donations that we have spent on these dogs."

The HSUS has brought in \$180,000 financial donations and \$200,000 in in-kind donations compared with the almost \$2 million it spent.