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LOCAL

Dover shelter: 12 dogs seized from 'hoarding' conditions and help is needed

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DOVER — Pope Memorial Humane Society - Cocheco Valley recently took into custody 12 dogs, including three 2-week-old puppies. The dogs were seized by police from a home where they were neglected and living in unsanitary, hoarding conditions, according to shelter leaders.

The dogs included eight approximately 6-month-old dogs, along with a mother and her puppies.

Molly Shanahan, development and marketing manager at Pope Memorial Humane Society, said Thursday shelter leaders cannot release the name of the city or town where the dogs were seized, nor the police department involved, because the investigation is ongoing and charges are pending.

More local news: Somersworth landlord calls arrest while attempting to file complaint 'insane, unfair'

The dogs, taken into custody Tuesday, March 21, are all being medically evaluated. Shanahan they said will be spayed/neutered and given all needed vaccinations before they are put up for adoption, which is expected in about one month.

"We are looking for foster homes for them right now," Shanahan said. "The dogs need to be socialized. They need to learn to be dogs. We think they had never been outside, and never put on a leash."

Amy Drapeau, shelter manager, was at the home when the dogs were taken.

"We got a call from the animal control officer of the town, asking for our help," Drapeau said. "We went to the home but stayed outside while police had the animals signed over to

our custody. The dogs were brought out one at a time. They were filthy. We put a slip lead on them, and it was clear they had never been on one, or even outside. The dogs appear to have born in that house. Several had some environmental hair loss, due to the unsanitary conditions they were living in."

Drapeau said the dogs that are about 6-8 months old weighed about 40-70 pounds.

Fearful dogs starting to become affectionate, shelter staff says

In addition to medical needs, the dogs all came to the shelter extremely fearful, according to Drapeau.

Caryn Fugatt, the shelter's foster care coordinator, said the dogs had made a large transformation since they arrived.

"When we first brought the dogs in from this case, they were terrified," she said. "Many cowered at the back of their kennels during their first days at the shelter, refusing to make eye contact or come close to staff. After just a week, they have become excited, affectionate, and engaged when interacting with staff and volunteers."

Niki D'Alessandro, the shelter's adoption supervisor, said the dogs are starting to show personalities.

"I have really enjoyed seeing these dogs blossom into true dogs over the last week," she said. "They were never really given the chance to do that before. Now they are playing outside in the grass, learning to walk on leashes, and playing with plenty of toys."

Shelter seeking donations to help care for dogs

The shelter has taken in a total of 17 dogs in the past week, including strays and owner-surrenders. Due to the high number of animals at the shelter, they are in urgent need of some everyday items as they work through medical care, socialization and training.

Donations are accepted at popememorialcvhs.org/donations or by mailing checks to: Pope Memorial Humane Society - Cocheco Valley, 221 County Farm Road, Dover, NH 03820.

"We also welcome linens, bleach and cleaning detergent," Drapeau said. "Or consider visiting to learn about foster homes for our dogs."