**Nancy Boeckel’s Statement**

Regarding being charged and arrested

On 34 counts of Animal Cruelty

Charges brought against me by Martha Stephens, Assistant, Part-time Animal Control Officer.

Seizure of 30 dogs and 3 cats took place Sept. 26, 2013

Ed Edelson, First Selectman, Marilyn Murtori, The Animal Control Officer (ACO), Martha Stephens, The Part-time, assistant Animal Control Officer (ACO).

I am making my statement as it was been brought to my attention by a number of people the internet is full of reports and opinions of me that are extremely negative and most of all untrue. I am going to tell what really happened in order to get the truth circulated in the world of the internet.

I was told by my attorney 20 – 30 Animal Control Officers invaded our home. I personally lost count, as all I could focus on was watching them getting out of their vans with metal hooks on a long pole and nets. The dogs were crying, yelping and barking. It was sheer horror to listen to. I have never felt so helpless; I could not protect the dogs I worked so hard with to gain their trust. My Mom, brother and I had to wait in the front yard guarded by two police officers; additional police officers were standing in the driveway. My poor dogs were being terrorized unnecessarily by ACO. **20-30** trained ACO’s took **3 hours** to capture 30 dogs and 3 cats. They left one behind. When we were finally given permission to re-enter our home, little Jasper (small Chihuahua) came out from underneath a cabinets in the kitchen crying, trembling, and holding his swollen right hind quarters up in the air.

Sadly the once friendly Jasper is now terrified of strangers.

The innocent victims’ were either asleep or playing quietly when our home was raided. I had an excellent reputation among my network of rescue groups and shelters for taking in the very sick; mostly senior dogs were scheduled to die. I worked very hard and patiently with every dog that came into our home. Almost all were fear biters. I worked diligently with each one to gain their trust.

To begin with the **ONLY** reason I accepted the “Accelerated Rehabilitation” offered to me in Criminal Court was because I do not have $10,000.00+ to pay my attorney to proceed with a trial. It haunts me on a daily basis I could not afford to pay for a trial. I learned during my many visits to court, a person is treated as if they are guilty until they prove themselves innocent.

I had believed and been taught it is supposed to be the other way around.

When I appeared in Civil court for the first time, the attorney representing the Town of Southbury/Martha Stephens requested the Judge transfer “ownership” of the dogs and cats from me to the Town. I thank God the Judge denied their request. My attorney explained to me Stephens had prearranged all the animals be taken to an “animal organization” that is known among the rescue network to have a **high** killing rate of animals brought to them.

All the dogs were held captive in the Southbury Dog Pound. Edelson was quoted several times stating the pound is meant to house 3 to 5 dogs. I consider it to be a significantly lower numbers than 30. If you are not familiar with the pound, according to the Town field card it is 490 square ft., surrounded by chain link fencing, located in the Public Works Dept. It was there when the Town purchased the land in 1953. It resembles a dilapidated slightly over-sized chicken coop.

The dogs that were taken from me were 5 large dogs alone. How did they fit the remaining **25** dogs they seized? To this day I do not know where my cats are or how they are. I have asked repeatedly, the only answer I have received is”they are fine”. My cat Pawlee (black &white) has a rare blood disease. His Hematocrit level drops to way below what is considered normal. He has been on Predlisone since was a young cat, he is now 14 years old. I don’t know if he is receiving the correct medication and if he is on the appropriate diet.

I printed out color 8x10 photos of each rescue dog, with their name, age and breed mix on the back of each photo. The Town was given the packet of photos via my attorney. For some unknown reason Stephens renamed all the dogs.

First they had to endure the house being raided by strangers with hoops and hooks, then crammed into a too small of dwelling and to add to their already confused state being called a different name than the one they responded to.

My fenced in back yard is more than twice the size of the pound. My bedroom alone is almost equal in size. Not to mention the rest of the house in size.

Most of the dogs I rescued were extremely malnourished, along with other health and behavioral issues. I began syringe feeding them with baby food and Pedialyte. Once they could digest the baby food, we advanced to Cream of Wheat. Eventually I was able to introduce small amounts of grain free canned food. I remember the day each dog would have enough strength to drink from the water dish on their own and show interest in dog food. My heart would fill with such joy when it became obvious they were on the mend. Of course, they were all vetted and on prescription medications, and daily supplements.

**Fact**: I was a dog rescuer for three (3) years. Muratori was aware of it.

I rescued dogs that were scheduled to be killed. I focused primarily on Senior dogs with health and/or behavioral issues.

**Fact**: I was NOT running a business. I was one person making a difference in a dog’s life that had been thrown away. Once a dog walked (if they were capable of walking) through our front door I was totally committed to helping each and every one of them.

Sad Tails, Happy Endings was my Pet Finder and website name ONLY. I explained this to each person who contacted me regarding a dog.

**Fact**: Stephens had **not** been in our home for **nine (9) months** prior to serving me with a warrant and subsequently having me arrested.

**Fact**: I reported the negative issues I has experiencing with Stephens to her direct report Muratori earlier in the winter. Muratori believed I had valid complaints against Stephens and promised to keep Stephens away from me.

**Fact**: Stephens began her second round of harassment against me (on the telephone and in person) while I was in the hospital recovering from a Stroke I had on July 12, 2013.

**Fact**: Muratori told me while I was in the hospital, if I obtained licenses for all rescue dogs they would leave me alone. I agreed to have them all licensed by September 3, 2013.

**Fact**: Stephens reported to Mark Massoud (Zoning Officer, at the time, while Muratori was on vacation) I was running an outdoor kennel and dogs were sleeping outside. After an investigation, Massoud called me to say the accusation was unfounded.

He promised he or Muratori would call and schedule an appt. with me to discuss my rescued dogs and Stephens. Never did.

**Fact**: My brother, Joey, went to the Town Hall on Sept. 3, 2013 to obtain the remaining dog licenses. Muratori told him she had to speak to Massoud before he could obtain the licenses. She would call us after speaking with him. She never did. I called her several times; she did not return my calls.

**Fact**: I have known Muratori for 20+ years in her capacity as the ACO. I trusted her!

**Fact**: My brother and I had a consultation with an attorney on another matter. I told him all that had been going on regarding my rescued dogs and I believed something was going on behind my back. He asked me if he could call Muratori to offer his help. Muratori told the attorney she would talk with Massoud, after she had, she would call the attorney back. She never did.

**Fact**: Thursday morning, September 26, 2013 Muratori, Stephens and a police officer were on our front porch. When I answered the front door, Muratori asked me if they could come in. I told her I was advised by an attorney not to let them in. Muratori turned to her part-time assistant, Stephens and asked “now what”, Stephens replied “that is her right”.

Approx. 4 hours later they returned with a warrant to seize all the dogs and 3 cats. Before we were escorted by police officers from our home, Stephens went into my Mom’s bedroom where she was sleeping with her dog Flurry in her arms and proceeded to snatch Flurry out of my Mom’s arms, without saying a word walked out of the room carrying Flurry. Flurry is an approx. 14 year old small white Poodle mix.

**Fact**: My Mother was extremely distraught without her companion Flurry. It was affecting her health and mental status in a very negative way.

She asked my brother to take her to Edelson’s office as she believed he would help her get Flurry back. After my brother called twice to speak with Edelson, he was told both times he wasn’t there. I suggested to my brother to take Mom anyway as I could see her determination. What a surprise Edelson was sitting in his office when they arrived within 10 minutes after brothers last call. Mom walked in his office, extended her arm to shake his hand and told him she wanted her dog back. He firmly told her he could not help her.

**Fact**: When I appeared in court in January, 2014 I took with me a letter written by my Mom’s doctor explaining the reasons he felt were imperative my Mom get Flurry back. The Judge made an immediate ruling Flurry be returned to my Mom that very day. He also ruled the pound be open to the public and the adoption process begin. All adoptions had to be approved by me.

**Fact**: When I went to the dog pound to pick up Flurry, while I was waiting all the dogs heard my voice and they began crying. I ran out of the building crying. Stephens brought Flurry outside to me wrapped in a blanket. When I un-wrapped from the blanket I was shocked by what I saw. From the middle of her back down to her tail was dried urine stains, fleas, double ear infection and painfully thin. What she needed the most was to be reunited with my Mom and I was able to care for her with the rest of her problems.

**Fact**: Stephens **ignored** the court order and did not begin the adoption process until March, with the exception of my personal dog Chloe who was adopted by a wonderful woman who adopted a dog from me in the past. Two months longer my dogs had to be held captive through the harsh winter we experienced.

**Fact**: My dogs Christy and Gabriella were returned to me on June 11, 2014.

Gabriella had a nasty case of Dermatitis. It looked like someone poured a half of box of dried rice on her back. When I separated her dried out hair, I could see a bright read rash running down her spine. I rushed her to my Groomer; she is the one who told me it was a nasty case of Dermatitis. She then gave me a specialized shampoo to treat the problem. The most common ways a dog can get Dermatitis is allergies (which she does NOT have) or poor nutrition. It was obvious to me both Christy and Gabriella were traumatized. They are slowly returning to the happy, secure dogs they were prior to their incarceration.

**Fact**: My attorney filed a lawsuit on behalf **against** Martha Stephens in Civil Court. I have no intention of dropping the charges.

Stephens has stated on several occasions when interviewed by a newspaper reporter dogs had eye infections. Truth, one dog named Jelly Beans has an ulcerated eye from old eye would not properly cared for. He came to me that way, with his medical issues including his eye documented. He was taken to the veterinarian several times. I cleaned his eyes out removing all debris 2 to 3 times a day. He was given 4 different prescription eye medications, depending on the amount of debris removed, depended on which medication was administered. Also mentioned dogs with tumors; 16 year old Lexi (black Chihuahua) she developed mammary tumors after she was taken from me. She did NOT have them while in MY care. Two female dogs had stitches from being spayed. They were not due to be removed until after they were taken from me. Jesse (Black Shepard mix) could not walk when he arrived at our home due to being very malnourished; he also suffered with a severe skin and double ear infection. He hardly had any fur on his body when he arrived. He was taken to the vet several times. Given a prescription shampoo I had to bathe him in twice a week, and then apply a leave in conditioner. He was also on antibiotic therapy. He began eating my regime of baby food, Pedialyte, etc..

He was not 100% cured when they took him from me. To my joy he was able to walk, climb stairs, and run for short periods of time and eat dog food, drink water on his own. He still had the skin infection and was painfully thin (but greatly improved) when they took him from me.

I would like to thank all the people who opened their hearts and homes to my dogs and rescued dogs. I think of them every day, and hope they are all healthy and happy.

I would like to give special thanks to my previous adopters for the letters you wrote on my behalf. I have read them frequently to inspire me. Your letters, people calling with words of encouragement and most of all The Power of Prayer is what has kept me still standing.

I still have all the medical records of the dogs I rescued. It is a travesty the Town Officials, Muratori, Massoud, and Stephens did not have a meeting with me to discuss whatever the issues were they had with me, as promised. Muratori and Stephens suggested I obtain a kennel license. I was not eligible to do so as you have to have at least 5 acres. Why they allowed Stephens to bring false charges against, without any confirmation what she alleged was true.

If we had the meeting, I am sure we could have reached an amicable agreement for whatever problem(s) they thought they had with me.

I have no idea what the incentive was to invade our lives so harshly. The only reason I know for sure is Stephens does not like me personally. She made that very clear. I know the saying is most likely true; “Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer”. I have never developed the knack to do so. I much prefer to keep my enemies as far away from me as possible.

Instead they brought unnecessary heartache to my dogs, Mom, brother and me. Not to mention the cost involved that the tax payers of Southbury are left with.

Sadly our Mother died on March 13, 2014. Flurry was looking all over the house for her crying. When my brother and I went to pay our final respects to our Mom we brought Flurry with us. Fortunately my Mom’s head was still resting on her own pillow and she was still covered with her blanket. I placed Flurry in the casket. Flurry sniffed the blanket, then the pillow. Soon after she leaned forward and gave her Mama a kiss on the cheek. Flurry said Good-bye. She stood up with her paws on the side of the casket; she was ready to be taken out. God bless her, she has adapted and is doing very well.

I have made my statement. I believe I covered all the basic topics.

I will NOT engage in any further discussion. I need time to heal both emotionally and physically. I will appreciate your respect in allowing me to do so.

Sincerely,

Nancy Boeckel