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Fairfield Police Charge New Canaan Woman Who Had Remains of Dogs in Crates in Her Apartment

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Two months after [finding the remains of dogs](#) in crates inside the Fairfield home where she had been living, Fairfield police on Tuesday arrested a 31-year-old New Canaan woman by warrant and charged her with five counts of animal cruelty.

Heidi Lueders, now of Marshall Ridge Road in New Canaan, also was charged with first-degree criminal damage to a landlord's property by a tenant, Fairfield police announced on Wednesday.

— *This article [previously was published](#) by NewCanaanite.com. Bully Breed Rescue, the organization Lueders headed, has had adoption events in Darien in the past.*

Police launched an investigation on Nov. 14 after responding to a report of animal cruelty at 37 Prince St. in

Fairfield.

There, officers found “several animal carcasses, which are believed to be canine remains, in crates within the residence,” the announcement said.

“Fairfield animal control officers and detectives responded to the house to further investigate. The remains were removed after a search warrant for the residence was conducted.”

Lueders had served for years as president of Bully Breed Rescue, a New Canaan-based dog rescue nonprofit focused on pit bulls.

Police completed an arrest warrant application Nov. 29 and it was signed by a judge from state Superior Court in Bridgeport, with bond set at \$50,000. The warrant was not immediately served, as detectives in the Fairfield Police Department coordinated the terms of Lueders’s surrender, according to the announcement.

She turned herself in Jan. 15, he said, and was released on bond with a court date of Jan. 29.

As news spread on social media of the police investigation, a message appeared on Bully Breed Rescue’s website under Vice President Chris Antolini’s name saying that the organization “immediately began cooperating with local police and detectives” on learning of the police investigation.

“It is with great sadness that we confirm all five dogs on Prince Street were dogs of Bully Breed Rescue, Inc. under the care of President Heidi Lueders,” the statement said. “Over the last seven months, Ms. Lueders had previously communicated to members and volunteers that she had sent four of these dogs to a sanctuary and the fifth dog was in a foster which she was monitoring. None of these dogs were known to be within the residence of Prince Street.”

Her statement continued: “We will continue cooperating with the investigation and anything that is needed to help find justice for our dogs. We, like everyone in this community, share in your grief and shock. Our focus now is continuing to ensure the safety and health of the dogs in our rescue and protecting all of the volunteers and adopters who graciously donated their time to a cause we all believe in.”

The status of Bully Breed Rescue is unclear. The organization’s website appears to have come down.

Bully Breed has held adoption events in New Canaan, and many town residents have found dogs through it. Its secretary is listed as Peggy Lueders, according to a [2016 tax return](#). That year, the organization took in about \$67,000 in contributions, gifts and grants, according to the group's IRS Form 990. Heidi Leuders was listed on the form as working 60 hours per week.