



Orange County Animal Services
501 W. Franklin St, Suite 106, Chapel Hill, NC 27516 (919) 968-2287

MEMO

To: Brian Curran, Chief of Police, Chapel Hill Police Department

From: Bob Marotto, Director of Animal Services, Orange County

Date: January 28, 2009

Re: Financial Implications of Tethering Regulation in Chapel Hill

I am writing in response to the request made by Chapel Hill Police Department attorney, Terrie Gale, regarding the financial implications of adding additional regulations to Chapel Hill's animal ordinance pertaining to dog tethering.

Orange County's Animal Services Department (the "Department") currently enforces Chapel Hill's animal ordinance within the Town pursuant to a written agreement by and between the Town and the County. The Department is not able to provide a detailed financial estimate of what, if any, cost increase may be expected over and above the costs of the current year's agreement if the Town adopts new tethering amendments without first knowing the content of the amendment Chapel Hill enacts. However, based upon our recent experience here in Orange County in adopting new tethering regulations, there are some general areas in which costs can be expected.

First, costs will be incurred during the process of evaluating a proposed tethering ordinance. In Orange County, this process involved a considerable investment of staff time, as well as time from the Board of County Commissioners. In addition to staffing the BOCC-appointed Tethering Committee and presenting their findings at five (5) BOCC meetings at which tethering was discussed, staff also spent a great deal of time preparing documents and reports for such meetings, as well as working with the County Attorney to draft, review and revise the actual ordinance language .

Second, costs can be expected for public outreach and education, both before an ordinance amendment is adopted and in the course of its implementation. Outreach and advertisements were implemented before each public hearing that Orange County held in order to inform the public and allow them to comment on the consideration of such an amendment.

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After the adoption of the tethering ordinance amendment in Orange County, the Department is conducting a year-long public relations campaign that is expected to reach a large section of the community and help those wishing to switch to another means of confinement do so in advance of the effective date of the ordinance amendments. Staff estimated the hard costs of this public relations campaign not to exceed \$1,500, but considerable costs of staff time are expected in addition to these costs as documents are prepared for such outreach and Animal Control Officers spend time in the field educating the public of upcoming changes.

The third area in which costs can be expected are in the enforcement of an ordinance amendment itself. As mentioned at the onset, it is not possible to estimate the direct costs of enforcement without knowing what amendment, if any, Chapel Hill will adopt. However, it is the Department's view that the costs of enforcing an ordinance prohibiting tethering, similar to the one adopted recently by Durham County, will be less than the costs associated with enforcement of an ordinance limiting tethering, such as the one adopted in Orange County. Regardless of the exact type of amendment Chapel Hill adopts, an additional investment of staff time will be necessary in order to enforce an amendment change, even given the year of outreach and education.

I am glad to answer any further questions you may have about our experience in Orange County with new tethering regulations, and I look forward to working with you to further estimate the increased costs to the current agreement for the provision of animal control services by the County within the Town if Chapel Hill opts to adopt ordinance amendments relating to tethering. However, as I do not have additional information regarding the exact costs Chapel Hill may expect if it decides to implement new tethering regulations at this time, please accept this letter in lieu of my attendance at the Town's public hearing on this matter.

Cc: Gwen Harvey, Assistant County Manager, Orange County
Brian Ferrell, Office of the County Attorney, Orange County
Terrie Gale, Attorney, Chapel Hill Police Department
Irene Phipps, Manager, Animal Control Division, Animal Services