

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-0706A

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ANIMAL CONTROL POLICIES FOR
WARREN COUNTY, INDIANA**

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Warren County, Indiana, established an Animal Control Department and subsequently codified the County's animal ordinances, which included rules and regulations for dogs running at large; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has received recommendations regarding the need to update the County's regulations for animals kept in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners finds that revision of the County's animal regulations would promote the health, safety, welfare and convenience of the citizens of Warren County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Warren County, Indiana that Chapter 53 of the Warren County Code is hereby repealed and replaced as follows:

CHAPTER 53: ANIMALS

Section

- 53.01 Definitions
- 53.02 Running at Large
- 53.03 Dangerous Animals
- 53.04 Impoundment
- 53.05 Care Required
- 53.06 Inoculation

§ 53.01 DEFINITIONS

(A) **AT LARGE.** An animal is at large when it is off the premises of the owner while not under the control of the owner or other person by leash, cord, chain or other device of actual physical restraint.

(B) **DANGEROUS ANIMAL.** A dangerous animal shall mean any animal (i) that has displayed behavior which constitutes a threat to human beings; (ii) that has attacked any person in a matter such as to threaten bodily injury to such person; or (iii) that has bitten any animal causing bodily injury.

(C) **OWNER.** Any person or persons, fire association, fraternal group or corporation owning, keeping or harboring an animal.

§ 53.02 RUNNING AT LARGE

(A) It shall be unlawful for any person being the owner of or having immediate custody of any animal, to suffer or permit such animal to run at large in the County. Whenever any Animal Control Officer or law enforcement officer shall find any dog or other domestic animal running at large as defined in this title, he or she shall, if possible, pick up and impound such animal.

(B) This subsection shall not apply to dogs when engaged in lawful hunting and accompanied by the owner or custodian or any other activity expressly permitted under Indiana Law.

§ 53.03 DANGEROUS ANIMALS

(A) It shall be unlawful for any person to harbor or keep within the County any animal without keeping such animal securely confined on the owner's or keeper's premises and under such restraint that persons lawfully on the premises, or elsewhere, may not be attacked or bitten by such animal. Animal Control shall have the ultimate discretion as to whether such animals are being kept sufficiently secure. An animal alleged to be a dangerous animal shall be impounded and confined by Animal Control if said animal is unlicensed, without proof of rabies inoculation, or not in physical control and restraint by the animal's owner.

(B) Upon receipt of a valid report of a dangerous animal, the County Animal Control shall investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding the allegation that said animal is dangerous and will prepare a written report summarizing the findings and may also impose reasonable conditions on the owner of the animal in order to ensure the effective restraint of the dangerous animal as well as public safety. If the owner of the dangerous animal agrees to the proposed conditions, then immediate disposition of the animal may be determined. If upon investigation it is determined by the County Animal Control that there is probable cause to believe the animal in question poses a threat to public safety due to vicious behavior, then the County Animal Control has the authority to impound the animal, at the owner's expense, until a decision regarding the final disposition of the animal has been.

(C) If Animal Control investigates the allegation of a dangerous animal and finds that the claim is not substantiated then the animal shall be released to its owner after compliance with all impoundment and release procedures and settlement of all impoundment and redemption fees.

(D) During the course of the investigation of a report of a dangerous or vicious animal, the matter may be referred to the County Prosecutor's Office in accord with any suspected criminal violations under I.C. § 35-46-3, et seq. of the Indiana Code.

(E) If there is no means by which any dangerous or vicious dog or animal can be safely seized and impounded, the County Animal Control or County Sheriff's Department, shall have the power to destroy such dog or animal; provided however, that any destruction of such dangerous and vicious dog or animal shall be done in a reasonable manner taking into account the location, and possible harm or damage to life, personal, or real property, or to the public at

large.

§ 53.04 IMPOUNDMENT

(A) Any animal which is found by an animal control officer to be in violation of this chapter may be impounded and confined in a humane manner until reclaimed by its owner or otherwise disposed of in accordance with this chapter.

(B) Immediately after the impounding of any animal, a reasonable effort shall be made to notify the owner of the animal as soon as possible if the same can be determined by license or tag and located. Additionally, the owner of the impounded animal shall be provided with a summary of the facts and circumstances surrounding the impoundment, the disposition procedures, and redemption requirements as set forth under this Chapter.

(C) Impounded animals, except those suffering from an injury or physical condition which causes the animal to suffer, shall be kept and maintained by Animal Control for the following stated periods:

1. Impounded animals: not less than three days, not including Saturdays, Sundays, and state recognized holidays.
2. Quarantined animals: ten days from the date the bite and/or scratch occurs.

(D) Animal control officers are authorized to go on or about private property to seize an animal. If an animal is seized, the animal control officer shall issue a written notice of seizure and leave it with the owner or affix it to the premises from which the animal was seized.

(E) Animals not reclaimed by their owners within the applicable time period may thereafter be placed in suitable homes or may be humanely euthanized. Unclaimed animals that have been placed under quarantine shall be humanely euthanized.

(F) In addition to or in lieu of impounding an animal, Animal Control, the County Sheriff's Department or any other law enforcement agency, may issue the animal's owner a citation for violations of this Chapter and may return the animal to the owner's property if the animal can be secured safely, and such return is determined by the impounding Officer to be in the best interests of the animal.

(G) An owner redeeming an impounded animal shall pay all necessary treatment costs, transportation fees, and daily fees incurred as a result of the animal's impoundment.

(H) The daily fee for impounding an animal shall be fifty (\$50.00) dollars per day. An owner of an animal impounded pursuant to this Chapter may redeem the animal upon compliance with the following requirements:

1. Proof of ownership of the impounded animal;
2. Proof of identification, such as a driver's license or state issued identification card;
3. Payment of the redemption fee, payment of any necessary medical fees

incurred during the animal's impoundment, and any necessary medical fees incurred during the animal's impoundment, and any other fees incurred by County Animal Control and/or the County Sheriff's Department;

4. Proof of current rabies vaccination. If proof of vaccination is not available, a receipt showing pre-payment of scheduled rabies vaccination must be presented before the animal is released to the owner.

(I) An animal that has been previously impounded and is now being redeemed for the third or subsequent redemption within a twelve (12) month period is required to be:

1. Implanted with a microchip at the owner's expense for the purpose of future identification and recovery; and

2. Spayed or neutered by a licensed veterinarian at the owner's expense prior to the County relinquishing the animal to the owner. If owner is unable to pay the full costs associated with spaying or neutering the animal, County Animal Control may enter into a payment agreement with the owner, or the owner may sign over ownership rights to the County.

§ 53.05 CARE REQUIRED

Every owner/guardian/caretaker of an animal within Warren County shall see that his/her animal(s):

(A) Is kept in a clean, sanitary and healthy manner and is not confined so as to be forced to stand, sit, lie in or continuously come into contact with its own excrement;

(B) Has proper and adequate food, water, shelter and protection from the weather;

(C) Is given due medical care and treatment for any obvious or apparent ailments, and if diseased segregated from other animals so as to prevent the transmittal of disease in accord with the guidelines set forth in I.C. § 15-17-10, et seq.;

(D) If kept in an enclosure, that the enclosure is appropriate to the individual species and/or breed of the animal, and that said enclosure provides for the following:

1. Keeps the animal clean and dry;
2. Prevents the animal's injury or escape;
3. Permits the animal to rest on a solid surface; and
4. Appropriate flooring, which does not permit the animal's feet or legs to fall through;

(E) No person shall beat, torment, overload, overwork, or otherwise abuse an animal.

(F) No person shall willfully or maliciously administer poisonous substances to any animal and/or expose any poisonous substance with the intent that the substance shall be taken and consumed by the animal; however, this provision is not meant to prohibit the use of commercially sold poisons for the control of rats, mice groundhogs, moles or other similar rodents so long as the person administering the poisons takes reasonable care to ensure that

domestic pets and livestock are not exposed to the poisons.

(G) No person shall tether a domestic pet for more than one (1) hour without immediate access to food, water and shelter, or in such a fashion that violates the sections of this Chapter and Indiana State Law; or to tether any un-sterilized dog for any period of time unless it is monitored by a competent adult for the duration of such tethering; or to tether or confine an animal at a vacant structure or premises for any purpose or time when it is not monitored by a competent adult who is present at the property for the duration of such tethering or confinement.

(H) No person shall leave any animal unattended in a vehicle when the conditions in that vehicle would constitute a health hazard to the animal by exposure of the animal to extreme heat, cold, or other dangerous condition.

(I) Any person who is the operator of a motor vehicle which strikes or injures any domestic pet or domestic livestock should stop at the scene of the accident and may render any such assistance as is safe and practicable and at a minimum report the accident to the appropriate law enforcement agency for the purposes of rendering aid to the animal and identifying its owner.

(J) It shall be unlawful for any owner of any dog, cat or other animal to abandon the same within the corporate limits of the County.

§ 53.06 INOCULATION

It is hereby declared to be a nuisance and unlawful to keep within the County any dog not properly immunized against rabies. Proof of vaccination shall be maintained by the owner and displayed if requested by County Animal Control, and/or any law enforcement officer employed by the County Sheriff's Department. If a dog is caught which has not been inoculated against rabies, the dog shall be released to the owner who has forty-eight (48) hours to meet this requirement and shall deliver proof of such to Animal Control.

§ 53.07 ENFORCEMENT

(A) Any violation of this Chapter shall be punishable by a fine of up to Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) per violation, per occurrence. In addition, the following steps may be taken.

(B) For violations witnessed by members of the Sheriff Department or Animal Control, the responsible party may be issued a Citation for the code violation, in the officer's or Animal Control's discretion. Immediately upon issuing a Citation, the Citation will be sent to the County Attorney and the Clerk. The County Attorney shall take the appropriate steps to enforce the penalty. If such penalty is not paid within ten (10) days, the Citation may be filed as an Ordinance Violation.

(C) Alternatively, after witnessing a violation, or after receiving a complaint of an

animal nuisance, inspecting the alleged violation and agreeing that a code violation has occurred, the Sheriff Department or Animal Control should:

1. Document the condition violating the County Code and identify the responsible party (e.g., owner of animal, owner of real estate, tenant or occupant).
2. Prepare a Notice of Violation to the responsible party, identifying the date, time and place of violation, the Code section(s) violated, and the date by which the responsible party must correct the violation, allowing no less than fifteen (15) days after mailing the Notice via first class mail, or ten (10) days after personal service, leaving a copy at the responsible party's residence or by electronic service at an email address provided by the responsible party, of the Notice.
3. After the time for correction has passed, the Sheriff Department or Animal Control shall re-inspect the alleged violation and document the condition violating the County Code. If the violation has not been corrected or abated, the Sheriff Department or Animal Control shall issue a Citation to the responsible party. The Citation shall identify the date, time and place of violation, the Code section(s) violated, the per-day penalties associated with the violation, which shall commence on the date of the Citation, and explain that the violation may be admitted, corrected and paid before the Clerk within thirty (30) days after sending the Citation, or if not, it will be filed with the appropriate court as an ordinance violation. The Citation shall be sent by first class mail, personal service on the responsible party, leaving a copy at the responsible party's residence, or by electronic service at an email address provided by the responsible party.
4. If the Citation is not admitted, corrected and paid to the Clerk's Office within thirty (30) days, the Citation shall be filed with the appropriate court as an ordinance violation and a copy will be sent to the County Attorney.

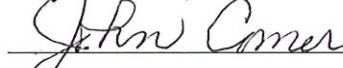
This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its passage and publication according to law.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 6th day July, 2026.

WARREN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Clay Andrews, President



John Comer



Craig Greenwood

ATTEST:



Robin Weston-Hubner, Auditor