

**Ordinance Committee**  
**Thursday, December 19, 2024**  
**Bushor Conference Room**  
**City Hall or Remote via Zoom. Burlington, Vermont**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Councilor Shannon (Chair), Councilor Bergman, Councilor Brown McKnight

**Staff Present:** Kim Sturtevant (Assistant City Attorney), Sarah Montgomery (Assistant City Clerk), Cassandra Sterling (BPD CSO Manager)

**Public Present:** Lori Kettler, Dana Dean, Todd Deluca, Stacey O

Meeting called to order at 10:06 AM.

**1. Adopt the Agenda**

**1.01 Adopt the Agenda**

*Motion to Adopt the Draft Agenda.*

*Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Shannon.*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

**2. Adopt Draft Minutes**

**2.1 Adopt Draft Minutes from November 19.**

*Motion to adopt the draft minutes from November 19.*

*Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Shannon.*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

**3. Public Forum**

Dana Dean: I am the legislative liaison for multiple dog clubs in Vermont. I would like the term “keeper” to be used in the ordinance instead of the word “custodian” when referring to pet dogs.

**4. Dog Task Force Report Review**

Councilor Shannon noted that yearly dog licenses and thus yearly revenue have gone down each year. She asked if there was any enforcement or fines being handed out for people not licensing their dogs.

Councilor Bergman said Jodi Harvey was the most recent dedicated animal control officer and things may have changed when she retired.

Cassandra Sterling (BPD CSO Manager) said that BPD encourages and educates people about getting their dogs licensed and having proper vaccinations but does not currently do enforcement against people that don't license their dogs.

Sarah Montgomery (Assistant City Clerk) said that the Clerk's Office sends out reminders each year to people who registered a dog previously informing them they must do so again. She added that a list of licensed dogs was published to the City Council previously and the Clerk's Office could do so again.

Councilor Brown McKnight asked what kind of communications are sent to people that haven't licensed their dogs yet since it does not seem to be publicized.

Councilor Shannon asked if BPD could check to see the number of fines handed out for the non-licensure of dogs from 2013 or so onwards to get a sense of the trend.

Cassandra Sterling said that BPD does not currently have access to the dog licensing data. Sarah Montgomery said that the Clerk's Office changed databases in 2022, but will give BPD access to the current data.

Councilor Bergman said that the ordinance should also have a provision that if you receive a fine for non-licensure that there is a path to waive the fine if the dog is properly licensed in a set amount of time.

Cassandra Sterling said the CSOs could start issuing tickets for non-licensure as they already have that authority. They also already have the authority to void tickets if the person licenses their dog in a timely period.

Councilor Shannon asked staff to look into what should be done if a dog is not licensed but the owner is not a Burlington resident.

Councilor Bergman said he is unsure if a ticket should be voided completely if the owner licenses the dog because of the work that goes into writing and then voiding the ticket. He said there circumstances when a full waiver might be good, such as if someone just moved to town or just got the dog.

*Attorney Sturtevant shared the updated draft of the ordinance. This draft is available in the agenda packet.*

Councilor Shannon asked Cassandra Sterling to ask the Humane Society if the language regarding unredeemed animals is sufficient.

Councilor Bergman said that Section 5-4 (a)(2) needs further clarification. Cassandra Sterling suggested placing the definitions for this chapter of the ordinance at the beginning of the ordinance to clarify that section.

All councilors agreed that moving the definitions to be at the beginning of the ordinance makes sense.

Councilor Shannon said she would be fine defining a dog bite as one that breaks the skin, but also asked the City Attorney's Office to look at how other municipalities define a bite.

Councilor Shannon said she would like to defer the discussion of ID tags on cats until the public hearing on cat licensure.

Councilor Bergman suggested changing Section 5-16 to allow a prorated licensing fee for periods of time less than one year. Councilor Shannon suggested allowing a half-cost licensing fee if there is less than six months left on the year. Sarah Montgomery said state statute already allows half cost license fees after October 1.

Councilor Brown McKnight suggested leaving space in the ordinance for pet microchips in addition to other identification. Councilor Bergman said microchips should not replace ID tags that the general public can use to identify an animal's owner.

All councilors agreed to incorporate Section 5-14 into Section 5-16 for clarity.

## **5. Any Other Committee Business**

The public hearing on cat licensure will be held on 1/23 at 5:30 PM in Contois Auditorium.

## **6. Adjournment**

*Without objection, Councilor Shannon adjourned the meeting.*

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.