



City of Waukesha
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Committee: Finance	Date: 12/3/2024
Agenda Item Number: 24-11294	Date: 12/10/2024
Submitted By: Brian Running	City Administrator Approval: Anthony W. Brown, City Administrator
Finance Department Review: Joseph P. Ciurro, Finance Director	City Attorney's Office Review: Brian Running, City Attorney
Subject: Resolution increasing dog and cat license fees.	

Details:
 State law requires all dogs over 5 months of age to be licensed, and sets the minimum fee for licenses at \$3 for a spayed or neutered dog, and \$8 for dogs that are not spayed or neutered. State law allows cities to increase their fees above those amounts, but the total amount can't exceed the city's total cost of licensing, enforcement, and impoundment for the previous year. The City's current fees for dog and cat licenses are \$10 for a spayed or neutered animal, and \$15 if not spayed or neutered. There are 1,908 dog licenses presently issued. If we assume that the maximum \$15 fee applied to every one of those licenses, that would total \$28,620. Of course, that assumption is not true, most pet dogs are neutered or spayed, so the actual total dog-license fee revenue is less. We are looking at maximum figures to ensure that we stay below the state-mandated limit.

The City contracts with HAWS for animal control and impoundment services, and the annual fee paid to HAWS is just over \$45,000, and is proposed to go to \$46,991.69 for the contract renewal term. That is just the HAWS fee, and doesn't include any of our internal administrative or enforcement costs, so the actual total costs to the City are greater than that. The current fees clearly do not even approach the maximum allowed.

In order to bring our fees more in line with actual costs, it is proposed that dog and cat license fees be increased by \$10, to \$20 for neutered or spayed animals, and \$25 for those not neutered or spayed. Again assuming that all 1,908 dogs are not neutered or spayed, that would result in fee revenue of \$47,700. The City's internal administrative and enforcement costs are certainly more than the \$709 difference between the revenue and the HAWS contract, and the large majority of dogs are going to be spayed or neutered, so we can be reasonably certain that the proposed new fees will not exceed our actual costs, and will result in the City being reimbursed more fully for its expenses.

State law does not mandate licenses for cats (City ordinance does) or set any limits on the fees, but the general proposition that all fees must bear a reasonable relationship to the actual costs of the services still applies. 396 licenses at the maximum \$25 fee results in \$9,900 in revenue, which will be much less in

reality because most of the pets will be spayed or neutered. This additional revenue will help to offset the internal costs of administration and enforcement activities. Note that other cities of size comparable to Waukesha have dog and cat license fees of much greater amounts.

Options & Alternatives:

No alternative is recommended. Obviously, the fees could be set at some lower amount, but that would not result in the greatest reimbursement of our costs.

Financial Remarks:

Increasing each license fee by \$10, as proposed, would result in an additional \$23,040 in revenue, based upon this year's license numbers.

Executive Recommendation:

Approval of a \$10 fee increase for cat and dog licenses, and recommendation to the Common Council to pass the accompanying resolution.