

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council of the City of Chipley, Florida

FROM: Michelle Blankenship Jordan, City Attorney

DATE: June 8, 2026

SUBJECT: Summary of Revisions to Proposed Chapter 6 (Animal Control) Ordinance

Introduction

This memorandum provides a comprehensive summary of the substantive changes made to the draft Animal Control Ordinance between the initial version dated May 6, 2026, and the final revised version dated June 8, 2026. The final draft incorporates significant policy shifts regarding feral cat management, introduces new public nuisance restrictions, and expands procedural frameworks for handling dangerous animals.

Key Revisions by Section

1. Article I: General Provisions & Definitions

- Sec. 6-2 (Definitions - Animal Shelter): The definition of "Animal shelter" was changed from the "Chipley Animal Control Shelter" to "Animal Control of West Florida, or any facility contracted by the City of Chipley for animal control."
- Sec. 6-2 (Definitions - Trap-Neuter-Return): The definition for "Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)" was completely removed from the definitions section.
- Sec. 6-5(f) (Authority of Animal Control Officer): Language empowering officers to issue citations for "unauthorized feeding or colony management activities under Sec. 6-52" was removed to align with the elimination of the TNR program.
- Sec. 6-10(b) (Feeding Stray Animals): The exemption that allowed city-authorized Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) activities to feed stray or feral animals on public property was removed. The revised ordinance now only exempts temporary feeding necessary for animal capture.

2. Article II: Nuisances

- Sec. 6-27 (Animal Nuisances - Solid Waste): A brand new subsection (c), "Removal and disposal of animal waste," was added. It mandates that owners or custodians must immediately remove and sanitarily dispose of feces deposited by their animals on public property or the private property of another.
- **Waste Collection Device Required:** Sec. 6-27(c) also dictates that handlers must possess a suitable device or container for waste removal when off their premises. An exemption is provided for service animals accompanying individuals whose

disabilities make compliance impractical. Violations are penalized under the tiered civil schedule in Sec. 6-64.

3. Article III: Dangerous Animals

- Sec. 6-41 (Confiscation and Destruction of Dangerous Dogs): This entire section is a new addition to the ordinance, detailing comprehensive protocols for the handling, confiscation, and humane euthanasia of dangerous dogs and non-dog dangerous animals.
- **Post-Designation Attacks:** It establishes a mandatory 10-business-day impoundment and quarantine period following written notice to the owner if a designated dangerous dog attacks/bites a person/animal or causes severe injury/death to a human. A similar 10-day notice and destruction protocol applies to previously undesignated dogs that cause a human death.
- **Two-Stage Appeal Process:** Sec. 6-41(e) introduces a formalized local appeal system:
 - *Stage One:* An administrative hearing before an independent, Florida-licensed Special Magistrate designated by the City Council, requested within 10 business days of the destruction notice.
 - *Stage Two:* An appeal of the Special Magistrate's final order to the Circuit Court of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.
- **Confinement and Costs:** Animals cannot be destroyed while a timely appeal is pending. Owners are restricted from relocating or transferring ownership during proceedings, must securely confine the animal if not held by the city, and remain strictly liable for all boarding costs regardless of the outcome.
- **Euthanasia Standards:** Euthanasia must be performed exclusively by a licensed veterinarian or certified technician following the rigid standards of F.S. § 828.065 . Non-dog dangerous animals are governed separately under F.S. chapters 166 and 828.

4. Article IV: Feral and Domesticated Cat Management

- Sec. 6-51.1 (Outdoor Domesticated Cat Identification): This new section requires owners of domesticated cats that access the outdoors to ensure their pets carry active identification. Compliant methods include a breakaway safety collar with an owner contact tag, a GPS/electronic tracking device on a breakaway collar, or an active, registered microchip. Unidentified outdoor cats may be impounded and owners penalized under Sec. 6-64(a).
- **Sec. 6-52 (Feral Cat Management Program Reversal):** The city has completely reversed its policy on feral cats. The original text establishing and protecting a managed Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program and private feral colonies was

entirely deleted. The updated Sec. 6-52 explicitly states that "The city does not maintain or support a Trap-Neuter-Return program" and that feral cats found at large will be impounded and processed under standard procedures.

- Sec. 6-53 (Enforcement Clean-up): References to citations for "operating a feral cat colony without required property owner authorization" or maintaining unsanitary colony conditions were removed to reflect the complete prohibition of feral colony management.

Conclusion

The final version of the ordinance shifts the City of Chipley away from a managed feral cat colony framework (TNR) toward an impoundment model, while adding public health protections regarding pet waste and outdoor cat identification. It also secures constitutional due process for citizens by establishing a clear Special Magistrate mechanism for the destruction of dangerous animals.