



Levy County Board of County Commissioners

PO Box 310, Bronson, Florida, 32621

310 School Street, Bronson, Florida, 32621

Phone: 352.486.5218

To: The Board of County Commissioners
From: Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
Date: September 2, 2025
Subject: Animal

Commissioners,

Levy County's current Animal Control Ordinance, codified in Chapter 14, Article II, was written primarily to address animals at large and basic nuisance complaints. While it has served as a foundation for enforcement, the ordinance has not kept pace with the county's growth, evolving community expectations, and modern standards of animal welfare.

In October 2020, a proposed animal control ordinance—spanning 39 pages and paired with two companion ordinances — was introduced in a county commission workshop. The proposed ordinances never progressed to final adoption.

Animal Services Manager Brandy Cannon and I recommend the following changes to the county's current ordinance:

1. Establish minimum care requirements (adequate food, water, shelter).
2. Provide clear guidelines on tethering, confinement, and humane treatment.
3. Require Confinement of Animals in Estrus. Owners of female dogs or cats in heat (estrus) are required to humanely confine such animals indoors or in a secure enclosure to prevent unwanted breeding and public nuisance.
4. Encourage responsible pet ownership through updated ID, spay/neuter, and vaccination provisions.
5. Protect public health with rabies prevention and vaccination enforcement that require clearer provisions.
6. Increase fines as a deterrent to violating the ordinance.



Commissioners

Charlie Kennedy, District 1

Rock Meeks, District 2

Desiree Mills, Chair, District 3

Tim Hodge, Vice Chair, District 4

Johnny Hiers, District 5

7. Create an Enjoinment Registry listing individuals prohibited by court order from owning, possessing, or residing with animals within the jurisdiction of this County or the State of Florida. Violation of such orders shall result in fines, penalties, and potential criminal charges.
8. Bite Reporting, Quarantine, and Public Safety: animal bites shall be reported in accordance with the Florida Administrative Code. Quarantine, testing, and—where warranted—humane euthanasia protocols shall be followed to ensure public health and safety.
9. Establish Mandatory Microchipping: Any dog impounded as a stray or runaway shall be microchipped before release to the owner. The cost of microchipping shall be borne by the owner and is required before the animal may be reclaimed.
10. Establish Tethering Regulations: All tethering must allow the animal unrestricted movement, access to necessities, and shall not pose harm or risk.
11. Require sterilization of all animals before their release from Levy County Animal Services.
12. Improve public safety and enhance enforcement authority for animal issues, reducing ambiguity. Dangerous dogs, neglect investigations, animal cruelty, nuisance complaints, chronic offenders, etc., shall be referred to and addressed by the Sheriff's Office.

Updating this ordinance is essential to improve public safety, protect animal welfare, and provide clear direction on the roles and responsibilities of both Animal Services and the Levy County Sheriff's Office. At this time, I am requesting direction from the Board of County Commissioners as to whether there is support for any or all of the aforementioned changes to the ordinance. Following direction from the Board as to the specific priorities, I will work with staff to begin the process of updating the ordinance.