



Wauchula Police Department

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Date: August 7, 2026
To: Wauchula City Commission
From: Chief Ron Curtis
Thru: City Manager Olivia Minshew and
City Clerk Stephanie Camacho
Ref: Chapter 4: Animal Control Ordinance

Inter-Office
Memorandum

Commissioners,

Several months ago, the Wauchula Police Department was notified that the Hardee County Clerk of Courts would no longer process civil citations issued for violations of City ordinances. While the City assumed responsibility for accepting payment of those citations, it was not until two recently contested animal-at-large citations that we discovered a significant procedural gap in the existing ordinance.

Upon review, it became apparent that the current Animal Control Ordinance relied on the County Court and Clerk of Courts to process contested citations. With the Clerk no longer accepting or processing these cases, the ordinance provided no administrative process for the City to handle contested citations, unpaid citations, or other enforcement actions through the City's Special Magistrate. As a result, the City lacked a legally established mechanism to resolve these matters when a respondent simply refused to pay or contest a citation.

To identify a practical solution, Chief Curtis met with County Judge Horton, Circuit Judge Barber, and representatives from the Clerk of Courts. After evaluating several options, it was determined that returning these cases to the County Court was not feasible due to existing court workloads, other legal limitations, and the requirement for approval from the Chief Judge.

To address this issue, Chief Curtis worked with the City Attorney to comprehensively revise the Animal Control Ordinance, with the exception of the Dangerous Dog provisions, which remain unchanged. The revised ordinance modernizes the language and establishes clear administrative procedures for issuing, paying, contesting, and resolving animal control citations through the City's Special Magistrate process, providing the City with an effective and legally sound enforcement mechanism. The suggested ordinance is attached for your review.

Chief Ron Curtis
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Wauchula Police department

