

Spring 2018 Town Meeting Warrant Items Concerning Animal Bylaws
Animal Advisory Committee

Rehoboth's Board of Selectmen and Animal Advisory Committee are pleased to propose some by-law changes concerning companion animals, mainly dogs. The changes have these main goals:

- To have our bylaws be current with new Massachusetts laws.
 - To ensure the safety and health of the public by better enforcement.
1. Updates bylaws on dangerous and nuisance dogs to follow new 2014 state law.
 - Establishes a clearer due process for citations, hearings, judgments, and appeals, protecting both the town and all people concerned.
 - Increases the fines from a negligibly low \$10 to first, second, and third offenses at \$100, \$200, and \$300, providing a better incentive to comply.
 2. Updates the penalties for not vaccinating dogs and cats for rabies, which is always fatal. It imposes the maximum fine in new state law, which is \$100.
 3. Revises the fees charged for dog kennels but retains unchanged the current low fees for individual dog licenses. A kennel is a group of dogs licensed as a whole.
 - Moderately increase fees based on a scale of the number of dogs the kennel holds.
 - Kennel fees will remain a lot lower than for individual dogs.
 4. Updates penalties for serious violations of the dog licensing requirements.
 - Include new state law in our bylaws, imposing the minimum fine, \$50.
 - Charged in addition to the late fee, in extreme cases when other requests fail.
 - Protect public safety and health through rabies vaccinations and licensing of dogs.
 5. Adds references to important new state law on proper care of dogs.
 - Section 174E protects dogs from neglect and abuse by regulating how people must treat them in such matters as tethering, shelter, feeding, and protection.
 - Section 174F protects dogs in hot or cold closed cars.
 - Residents need to follow these laws both to care for their dogs and comply with the law.
 - Animal Control will give advice and use warnings before imposing fines, but repeat offenders will see increasing fines.

The Town's Animal Control Officer, Robert Johnson, welcomes these changes. They provide a strong and fair set of tools for good enforcement, protecting both people and animals.

The state laws can be found at <http://massanimalfund.com/animal-control-laws/>.