

111% Jump In Animal Control Costs Requires First Dog License Fee Increase In Twenty Yrs

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With Hillsborough Township facing a \$67,000 (111%) increase in the cost of animal control services in the next three years, the Township Health Department has recommended increasing dog license fees for the first time in twenty years.

The Township has been notified by St. Hubert's Giralda that animal control services from the non-profit agency will rise from \$60,000 in 2010, to \$87,338 in 2011, \$106,746 in 2012, and \$126,155 in 2013.

An ordinance introduced Tuesday evening will increase the current \$7 dog license fee set in 1991 to \$14.80 in 2011 and \$19.80 in 2012. The state collects an additional \$1.20 in fees that are added to the total dog license cost.

Mayor Frank DelCore said, "Hillsborough is required by state mandate to provide animal control services, which when you strip away the bureaucratic jargon is to have a dog catcher and a pound. That cost has always been paid partially by taxpayers through a budget appropriation and partially by dog owners through licensing fees."

The Mayor pointed out that "The Health Department has surveyed in an attempt to find an equivalent service animal control service with a lower cost and has determined there is no equivalent service at a lower cost available."

Deputy Mayor Gloria McCauley, the Health Department liaison for the Township Committee, added, "I joined Health Officer Dr. Glen Belnay in meeting with St. Hubert's to learn the reasons for the large cost increase. One of the factors is their construction of a new animal hold facility. Without that change, they probably would not have been able to continue to serve Hillsborough."

McCauley continued, "If the Township had to hire the personnel and build its own hold facility, it would require a cost significantly beyond the cost of St. Hubert's proposed contract."

DelCore said, "In order to have dog licensing fees continue to contribute toward its fair share of these animal control costs, the Township must raise the fees. The fee increase in 2011 will provide a total of \$53,000 from fees, toward the total cost of \$87,000 for animal control services. The remainder will have to be appropriated in the budget."

A public hearing on the dog license fee ordinance will be held on December 28, 2010