



City of Hampton, Virginia

Ordinance - Coded

22 Lincoln Street
Hampton, VA 23669
www.hampton.gov

File Number: 12-0224

Enactment Number: 12-0030

Ordinance To Amend And Reenact Chapter 5 "Animals", Of the Code Of The City Of Hampton, Virginia Section 5-42 "Control Of Dangerous And Vicious Dogs; Penalties" To Comply With The State Code Regarding Reporting To The Dangerous Dog Registry And Collection Of Fees Due To The State Veterinarian For The Maintenance Of The Virginia Dangerous Dog Registry.

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of Hampton, Virginia, that the Code of the City of Hampton, Virginia, be amended and re-enacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE III. - DOGS AND CATS GENERALLY

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Sec. 5-42. - Control of dangerous and vicious dogs; penalties.

(a) As used in this section,

"Dangerous dog" means a canine or canine crossbreed that has bitten, attacked, or inflicted injury on a person or companion animal that is a dog or cat or killed a companion animal that is a dog or cat. However, when a dog attacks or bites a companion animal that is a dog or cat, the attacking or biting dog shall not be deemed dangerous (i) if no serious physical injury as determined by a licensed veterinarian has occurred to the dog or cat as a result of the attack or bite, (ii) both animals are owned by the same person, (iii) if such attack occurs on the property of the attacking or biting dog's owner or custodian, or (iv) for other good cause as determined by the court. No dog shall be found to be a dangerous dog as a result of biting, attacking or inflicting injury on another dog or cat while engaged with an owner or custodian as part of lawful hunting or participating in an organized, lawful dog handling event. No dog that has bitten, attacked, or inflicted injury on a person shall be found to be a dangerous dog if the court determines, based on the totality of the evidence before it, that the dog is not dangerous or a threat to the community.

"Vicious dog" means a canine or canine crossbreed that has (i) killed a person; (ii) inflicted serious injury to a person, including multiple bites,

serious disfigurement, serious impairment of health, or serious impairment of a bodily function; or (iii) continued to exhibit the behavior which resulted in a previous finding by a court or, on or before July 1, 2006, by an animal control officer as authorized by local ordinance, that it is a dangerous dog, provided that its owner has been given notice of that finding.

(b) Any law enforcement officer or animal control officer who has reason to believe that a canine or canine crossbreed within his jurisdiction is a dangerous dog or vicious dog shall apply to a magistrate of the jurisdiction for the issuance of a summons requiring the owner or custodian, if known, to appear before a general district court at a specified time. The summons shall advise the owner of the nature of the proceeding and the matters at issue. If a law-enforcement officer successfully makes an application for the issuance of a summons, he shall contact a local animal control officer and inform him of the location of the dog and the relevant facts pertaining to his belief that the dog is dangerous or vicious. The animal control officer shall confine the animal until such time as evidence shall be heard and a verdict rendered. If the animal control officer determines that the owner or custodian can confine the animal in a manner that protects the public safety, he may permit the owner or custodian to confine the animal until such time as evidence shall be heard and a verdict rendered. The court, through its contempt powers, may compel the owner, custodian or harbinger of the animal to produce the animal. If, after hearing the evidence, the court finds that the animal is a dangerous dog, the court shall order the animal's owner to comply with the provisions of this section. If, after hearing the evidence, the court finds that the animal is a vicious dog, the court shall order the animal euthanized in accordance with the provisions of Virginia Code, § 3.2-6562. The procedure for appeal and trial shall be the same as provided by law for misdemeanors. Trial by jury shall be as provided in Article 4 (§ 19.2-260 et seq.) of Chapter 15 of Title 19.2. The burden of proof shall be beyond a reasonable doubt.

(c) No canine or canine crossbreed shall be found to be a dangerous dog or vicious dog solely because it is a particular breed. No animal shall be found to be a dangerous dog or vicious dog if the threat, injury or damage was sustained by a person who was (i) committing, at the time, a crime upon the premises occupied by the animal's owner or custodian, (ii) committing, at the time, a willful trespass upon the premises occupied by the animal's owner or custodian or (iii) provoking, tormenting, or physically abusing the animal, or can be shown to have repeatedly provoked, tormented, abused, or assaulted the animal at other times. No police dog that was engaged in the performance of its duties as such at the time of the acts complained of shall be found to be a dangerous dog or a vicious dog. No animal that, at the time of the acts complained of, was responding to pain or injury, or was protecting itself, its kennel, its offspring, a person, or its owner's or custodian's property, shall be found to be a dangerous dog or vicious dog.

(d) If the owner of an animal found to be a dangerous dog is a minor, the

custodial parent or legal guardian shall be responsible for complying with all requirements of this section.

(e) The owner of any animal found to be a dangerous dog shall, within forty-five (45) days of such finding, obtain a dangerous dog registration certificate from the local animal control officer for a fee of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) in addition to other fees that may be authorized by law. The local animal control officer shall also provide the owner with a uniformly designed tag that identifies the animal as a dangerous dog. The owner shall affix the tag to the animal's collar and ensure that the animal wears the collar and tag at all times. By January 31 of each year, until such time as the dangerous dog is deceased, all certificates obtained pursuant to this subsection shall be renewed annually for the same fee and in the same manner as the initial certificate was obtained. The animal control officer shall post registration information on the Virginia Dangerous Dog Registry.

(f) All dangerous dog registration certificates or renewals thereof required to be obtained under this section shall only be issued to persons eighteen (18) years of age or older who present satisfactory evidence (i) of the animal's current rabies vaccination, if applicable, (ii) that the animal has been neutered or spayed, and (iii) that the animal is and will be confined in a proper enclosure or is and will be confined inside the owner's residence or is and will be muzzled and confined in the owner's fenced-in yard until the proper enclosure is constructed. In addition, owners who apply for certificates or renewals thereof under this section shall not be issued a certificate or renewal thereof unless they present satisfactory evidence that (i) their residence is and will continue to be posted clearly visible signs warning both minors and adults of the presence of a dangerous dog on the property and (ii) the animal has been permanently identified by means of a tattoo on the inside thigh or by electronic implantation. All certificates or renewals thereof required to be obtained under this section shall only be issued to persons who present satisfactory evidence that the owner has liability insurance coverage, to the value of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00), that covers animal bites. The owner may obtain and maintain a bond in surety, in lieu of liability insurance, to the value of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00).

(g) While on the property of its owner, an animal found by a court to be a dangerous dog shall be confined indoors or in a securely enclosed and locked structure of sufficient height and design to prevent its escape or direct contact with or entry by minors, adults, or other animals. The structure shall be designed to provide the animal with shelter from the elements of nature. When off its owner's property, an animal found to be a dangerous dog shall be kept on a leash and muzzled in such a manner as not to cause injury to the animal or interfere with the animal's vision or respiration, but so as to prevent it from biting a person or another animal.

(h) The owner shall cause the local animal control officer to be promptly notified of (i) the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all owners; (ii) all of the means necessary to locate the owner and the dog at any time; (iii) any complaints or incidents of attack by the dog upon any person or cat or dog; (iv) any claims made or lawsuits brought as a result of any attack; (v) tattoo or chip identification information or both; (vi) proof of insurance or surety bond; and (vii) the death of the dog.

(i) After an animal has been found to be a dangerous dog, the animal's owner shall immediately, upon learning of same, cause the local animal control authority to be notified if the animal (i) is loose or unconfined; (ii) bites a person or attacks another animal; or (iii) is sold, given away, or dies. Any owner of a dangerous dog who relocates to a new address shall, within ten (10) days of relocating, provide written notice to the appropriate local animal control authority for the old address from which the animal has moved and the new address to which the animal has been moved.

(j) Any owner or custodian of a canine or canine crossbreed or other animal is guilty of a:

(1) Class 2 misdemeanor if the canine or canine crossbreed previously declared a dangerous dog pursuant to this section, when such declaration arose out of a separate and distinct incident, attacks and injures or kills a cat or dog that is a companion animal belonging to another person;

(2) Class 1 misdemeanor if the canine or canine crossbreed previously declared a dangerous dog pursuant to this section, when such declaration arose out of a separate and distinct incident, bites a human being or attacks a human being causing bodily injury.

The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to any animal that, at the time of the acts complained of, was responding to pain or injury, or was protecting itself, its kennel, its offspring, a person, or its owner's or custodian's property, or when the animal is a police dog that is engaged in the performance of its duties at the time of the attack.

(k) The owner of any animal that has been found to be a dangerous dog who willfully fails to comply with the requirements of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(l) All fees collected pursuant to this section, less the costs incurred by the animal control authority in producing and distributing the certificates and tags required by this section, and the fees due to the State Veterinarian for maintenance of the Virginia Dangerous Dog Registry, shall be paid into a special dedicated fund in the treasury of the city for the purpose of paying the expenses of any training course required under Virginia Code § 3.2-6556.

(m) This section is enacted pursuant to Virginia Code § 3.2-6540(M).

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Adopted at the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Hampton, Virginia held on June 13, 2012. Effective date July 1, 2012.

Signed by _____ **Date** _____
Molly Joseph Ward, Mayor

Attested by _____ **Date** _____
Katherine K. Glass, CMC
Clerk of the Council