

## Inter-local agreement for animal control approved by county council for one-year only

Written by George Browning  
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During fair week Washington County Animal Control Officer Randy Lee, who also has the title of superintendent of the fair grounds, was busy with the latter duty, leaving a void in the county's animal control service during that time.

The council discussed that at their regular meeting July 1.

"(Animal control) is an expensive service," said Council President David Hoar. "Seems like on the surface looking in, with the total amount of employees that are involved, there should be some way to cover for people who are on vacation or involved with other responsibilities."

In addition to having a full-time animal control officer, the county had been contributing \$20,000 to the City of Salem to help with the cost of animal control.

Late in 2012, the city asked the county to up the amount another \$15,000.

With the increased amount, both the county commissioners and council wanted an inter-local agreement spelling out what is expected.

City Attorney Drew Wright did that, but the agreement just touched on the financials and not any management of animal control.

"This agreement does not address that," Hoar said. "This agreement addresses the money obligation and has nothing to do with the management or how the pound is managed."

"We have issues dealing with the personnel and how they are distributed out to make runs," Hoar said.

The county has one employee for animal control, Randy Lee.

In addition to that role, Lee is also a reserve officer and superintendent of the Washington County Fairgrounds.

"We had an instance this week, with the fair going on, there was a significant amount of calls coming for animal control on the county level," Hoar said. "There was a question as to if we were covering animal control that week. There were shortfalls in there."

Salem has three employees for animal control, one full-time and two part-time.

Hoar said he thinks there are some organizational things with animal control that need to be addressed.

"That's partly because we have four people in there and my personal opinion is there needs to be a drop out of these lines between the city and the county and look at total animal control for the county," he said. "The city owns the pound and has that facility and we are basically paying them to service the animals."

Hoar said the city budgets roughly \$120,000 a year for animal control and the county puts in another \$35,000 and also pays a full-time person.

Hoar estimates the total cost for animal control between the city and county is to be between \$185,000 to \$195,000.

On average 400 animals a year from the city go through the shelter and as many as 1,600 from the county.

The council voted unanimously to approve the inter-local agreement for 2013, but also to meet with the city to iron out some of the things that have come up.

"I think we need to go into conversation on how to cover all these bases that never got covered fair week," said Councilman Ben Bowling. ". . . I say we approve it for this year, but we need to keep working on the issues of who covers what, when, so there is always service in both the county and the city."

The council's next meeting will be Monday, Aug. 5 at 9 a.m. at the Washington County

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Government Building.