

The Ad Hoc Feral Cats Committee for the Village of Monroeville met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 6:05 pm, for the purpose of discussing a proposed feral cat ordinance.

Present were: Committee members Chris Raftery, Sue Rogers, Tammy Schlachter, and Jim Ehrman; and Fiscal Officer Eunice A. Collene.

Ms. Raftery noted that she had read the feral cat ordinance for the City of Oak Harbor and thought it was good. Ms. Rogers reviewed it and said she is fine with adopting the language from Oak Harbor's ordinance. There was a discussion concerning the draft ordinance that Mr. Barney had previously prepared. Ms. Collene said that the mayor had polished it to suit the village. Ms. Rogers inquired whether they should include the section from Oak Harbor's ordinance about animal cruelty, specifically section 9005, to which Ms. Raftery agreed. Ms. Rogers asked if there was already a state law regarding animal cruelty. Ms. Collene said that she was uncertain how this applied to what the Chief is able to do. Chief has to comply with Ohio laws, but Ms. Collene was unsure whether a local ordinance would allow him to enforce them more effectively. Ms. Rogers said she was unsure whether additional language was necessary for animal cruelty since it is already covered by state law. Ms. Collene explained that the Ohio Animal Cruelty Law, specifically ORC (Ohio Revised Code) section 959.131, the Goddard's Law, prohibits torturing, neglecting, abandoning, or cruelly beating animals, knowingly causing serious physical harm to companion animals, dogs, and cats, and is a fifth-degree felony, and this protection extends to strays. The violations may result in imprisonment, fines, and forfeiture of the animal. Ms. Raftery asked if that language could be adopted as a reference point. Ms. Collene responded that since it references ORC code 959, which is Ohio Law, it wouldn't be necessary to incorporate that language into the ordinance.

Upon reviewing an ordinance from Swanton, Ohio, it includes provisions regarding the prohibition of farm animals. Ms. Collene asked if there was a current village ordinance that addresses farm animals. Ms. Schlachter said that the ordinance from Oak Harbor doesn't specify penalties. Ms. Collene said that there is a \$1,000 fine outlined in section E of the Oak Harbor ordinance. She remembered that Ms. Rogers had mentioned in a previous meeting her belief that the fine was excessive. Ms. Collene was unsure about who would determine the fine amount or whether it would need to be decided in court, as there is language about an unclassified misdemeanor. Ms. Rogers said she thinks Chief would likely establish that fine, or whoever is responsible for its enforcement.

Everyone agreed that the ordinance from Oak Harbor includes the language that suits the village, and this language can be adopted and applied to the village. Ms. Collene asked the committee to review page 2, which reflects the draft ordinance concerning cats at large. Ms. Rogers and Ms. Raftery said they approve of the proposed draft. Ms. Raftery asked if guidelines should be established for the police department regarding fines and/or warnings. Ms. Collene explained that the fine could reach up to \$1,000. Ms. Rogers questioned whether a warning or multiple warnings should be issued. Ms. Collene noted that the ordinance from Swanton, section 90.99, provides additional details. For example, section 9099 addresses the feeding of stray animals and outlines the penalties under section 9099. Upon reviewing the penalty, it says a \$100 fine for each day that any violation of such provisions continues, and each day is considered a separate offense. Ms. Collene explained that this outlines the "tiered" charges if the committee wishes to incorporate similar language for the village. Ms. Raftery asked at what point the matter would proceed to court. Ms. Rogers said that if it is classified as a misdemeanor, she is unsure whether court proceedings would be necessary. Ms. Collene said that she is unsure if it's similar to a traffic violation, where the individual would either pay the fine or appear in court, and that would be a question for the Chief. Ms. Collene asked if the committee would like her to draft that section of the ordinance according to the Chief's perspective, put it together, and provide an explanation when it is presented for reading. Ms.

Raftery confirmed. Ms. Raftery stated she does not want to impose an extreme fine amount. Ms. Collene asked if they wanted to consider establishing a \$100 fine for each violation. Ms. Rogers responded no, and the individual could face a penalty for an unclassified misdemeanor, with the fine determined by either the police department or the court. Ms. Raftery said she would like to see the first warning be issued at no cost. Ms. Collene said that she believes the Chief prefers to have something similar to Swanton's ordinance, which would provide a consistent structure and tiered guidelines. Chief could still issue a warning, as previously discussed. Ms. Raftery said she would prefer the first violation to be treated as a warning, with the second violation incurring a \$50 fee. Ms. Collene advised that she would make these draft modifications and send them to the committee. They can review it and decide on presenting it to Council. Mr. Ehrman said he would like to vote to add it to the Council agenda. Ms. Schlachter questioned whether the ordinance would require three readings or if it could be treated as an emergency. Ms. Raftery said it's her preference for two readings. Mr. Ehrman suggested that it be presented as an emergency measure to avoid extending the process by another 90 days. Ms. Collene agreed, noting that Chief has been receiving numerous calls about the cat issues. Ms. Raftery, Ms. Rogers, and Ms. Schlachter agreed to present it as an emergency measure. Ms. Collene said that she would forward it to the committee for approval before including it in the Council packet. Ms. Schlachter proposed a motion to present the feral cat ordinance to Council at the next regular meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Ehrman. Motion carried with no discussion.

There being no other business to come before them, Ms. Schlachter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ehrman, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eunice A. Collene, Fiscal Officer

The minutes of this meeting were recorded by Administrative Specialist Heather Alicea. Fiscal Officer Eunice A. Collene examined them for both form and content and subsequently approved them as transcribed.