

BARREN COUNTY FISCAL COURT

Animal Control Revisited

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Managing Editor

Barren County Fiscal Court met in a special-called meeting Monday evening to review the proposed amendments to the county's animal control ordinance. A first reading was held on January 20, which passed in a magistrate vote of 5-2. In order for the proposed changes to take effect lawfully, a second reading must pass.

Barren County Magistrates and the county judge-executive spent most of the meeting discussing concerns that citizens had brought to their attention, as well as walking through much of the new changes being proposed.

Glasgow Police Chief Guy Howie defined excessive barking for Magistrate Derek Pedigo, noting that despite "excessive" barking being on the decades-old ordinance, zero citations have been issued for it.

He explained that if a complaint is received, animal control will assess, talk with the owners, and the problem is often corrected. Often-times, he continued, excessive barking can raise suspicion of an unknown person on the property or wildlife.

Howie said in 2025 animal control responded to 1,484 complaints in Barren County that resulted in 187 citations, or 12% of the complaints received.

"The majority of calls that animal control responded to were either unfounded or the people complied with the request of the animal control officer to come into compliance," the chief said, adding that compliance is



▲ Barren County, KY | Screengrab

Barren County Magistrate Marty Kinslow stands as he speaks in place of his constituents in the Feb. 9 special-called fiscal court meeting. Also pictured, from left (seated), are Magistrates Tim Coomer, Ronnie Stinson, and Brad Groce.

the goal, not to obtain money through fines.

However, according to County Attorney Mike Richardson and Howie, local ordinances allow for animal control to set their own citations and fines, whereas without an approved ordinance, the laws for animal control are set by Kentucky Revised Statutes, which are criminal violations.

"Without the ordinance, we're back to KRS and criminal violations," Howie said.

Richardson said the county does not currently have a mechanism for receiving fines for animal control like the City of Glasgow. He pointed out that the ordinance is written to give warnings and seven days to comply, unless dealing with animals running at large or nuisance violations, then those require immediate action responses.

Judge/Executive Jamie Bewley Byrd posed several questions for clarification, to which Howie responded. One of those included the language about adequate ventilation, or "proper air flow," would this disallow dogs from being outside. Howie said it would not be an issue to allow a dog outside.

Byrd referenced KRS 525 when it comes to

using a weapon on an animal causing pain or death, using livestock needing to be euthanized on a farm as an example. Situations like these can be protected to prevent the suffering of an animal.

Byrd also requested clarification on who decides what situations are considered "exigent circumstances"—warrantless, non-consensual search. Chief Howie said that starts with the animal control officer. He added that the ACO will call Major Terry Flatt, the chief, or the county attorney if they have questions.

In 2025, four search warrants were issued for different types of animal control cases, according to Howie.

Byrd asked what is considered "immediate danger" and who defines it?

"Animal control would go out and determine if, in fact, it's an immediate problem," Howie said. "We get a lot of calls what people think are unusual and animal control goes by and determines it's not. People will call back and say [we] aren't doing anything about this and we have to tell them...they are in compliance."

Another question posed was if a car destroys a fence on a

farm and a cow gets out, would the owner be fined? Howie said no. Magistrate Brad Groce, who also sits on the interlocal animal control board that was established nearly a year ago, added that if an owner is notified multiple times to repair such a fence and refuses to do so, then the ordinance would define such penalties.

"Nobody's looking to give a farmer a citation over a cow being in the road," Groce said. "If that person does not fix their fence and it's a continuing situation that they don't take care of the fence, then they should get a citation."

Magistrate Marty Kinslow said, "From what I understand, there are people and there are areas where they don't really give a dang if they get out or not."

Sheriff Kent Keen said in 2025, 170 cows were out that the department responded to. Keen said at least 50% of those were repeat offenders. "We've been to many of those addresses repeatedly" with most due to poor fencing.

Howie clarified that the language states "the first offense" but that it is "not the first offense, it's the first citation."

Kinslow stated he didn't favor the word-

ing and Byrd said this was a noted concern discussed prior to the meeting.

Byrd said she disagrees with the first offense being "an automatic." Byrd said a "warning" isn't listed in the proposed language and while the current administrations can agree on such language now, once those change, how can the assurance be there that farmers are fined left and right because cows being out is a common occurrence.

Howie said there is a KRS that defines allowing cows to roam as being a criminal violation, adding that hasn't been used in years.

The county attorney said even with this language, it is not an "automatic" penalty. "As the sheriff pointed out, we have a problem with repeat offenders."

Byrd brought to the court's attention the language surrounding animals running at large, noting potential repeated language.

"If we go out to a house four or five times and they're not doing their due diligence to comply, then their first citation they get, that's the maximum amount of that fine. The reason we did this is because previously the animal control officers could

give a fine...between \$10 and \$100...but this [new language] keeps that from happening. This takes away that discretion from the animal control officer," Howie said, adding it gives no leeway for an animal control officer to pick and choose who to give a lesser or higher fine to.

Byrd said the language should say a citation instead of an offense in not only this situation but other areas of penalties as well.

COSTS OF ANIMAL CONTROL

Kinslow brought attention to the costs associated with Glasgow-Barren County to operate its animal control last year, which was \$250,000.

Howie explained that the city and county divide the costs 50/50.

"This is not just a whim; this is a real issue," Kinslow said. "And you know what? It's like everything else, it always gets more expensive every year."

SOCIAL MEDIA

Magistrate Ronnie Stinson asked if social media could be used in a positive way for animals brought to the local shelter.

"Is there anyway we can fix where we can use social media in a good way where we can post where there has been animals picked up there and they can see if their animal is there?" Stinson asked.

Howie said he would inquire with Barren River Animal Welfare Association (BRAWA) and see if the local police department can do something similar.

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