

NEW DOG CONTROL SERVICES

In last month's Lyme Light, Supervisor Aubertine wrote about our new program for dog control. As he explained, the towns of Lyme, Brownville, Clayton and Cape Vincent have joined together to create and institute a new system for dog control that will both better serve our residents and save literally thousands of dollars in the future. You may recall that the dog control services provided by Jefferson County never extended to those dogs owned by residents of the Village of Chaumont, despite the payment to the County of 53% of the license fees for those dogs. These monies were over and above the payment from residents' county taxes, both town and village, in the amount of \$11,000 in 2016. As Supervisor Aubertine explained, the annual cost to our residents for this service would continue to escalate as the burden of the dog control operating budget was shouldered by fewer and fewer towns.

Over the years, attempts had been made by the Town Supervisors' Association to work with the County to identify possible remedies to both the high cost of services and the refusal to extend those services to half of the dog population within the town. Unfortunately, it became clear to some town leaders that it was time to move on and try a different approach. This is where we find ourselves today. I am happy to report that the collaboration of our four towns has resulted in what we believe to be a sound and practical solution- one that will provide services to all of our town residents-both human and canine, resulting in significant cost savings for our taxpayers. Our long-term goal is to eventually convert this program to a user-fee basis.

Effective January 1, 2017, we will no longer be serviced by Jefferson County for dog control. Each town has successfully entered into a contract with the Jefferson County SPCA for their services. New policies and procedures have been drafted with the guidance of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to ensure compliance. We have offered employment to Amy Funk, the DCO for the Village of Clayton, and each town is entering into an Inter-Municipal Agreement with Cape Vincent, the town selected to become her official employer, handling all aspects of her hire. Beginning in January, you may contact DCO Funk at 315-778-6034.

Beginning January 1, 2017, all dog license fees will be raised by \$5.00. In addition, a fee of \$10 will be added to the cost for those owners who fail to license or renew when required by law. Despite the many reminders sent to owners delinquent in their license obligations, there are nearly 100 dog licenses that remain unpaid at this time. In order to bring our census into compliance, there will be an amnesty period running through January 15, 2017 during which owners may avoid this penalty by coming in to renew. Please remember that proof of current rabies vaccination is required.

In the next few weeks, a mailing will be sent to all dog owners in Lyme with a detailed explanation of all aspects of our new Dog Control Program. If you would like to learn more about the new system, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to call me at the Town Office -315-649-2788.

Robin Grovesteen
Executive Assistant to the Supervisor