

TO: Don Gerrish & Council
FROM: Linda Morrell
DATE: February 6, 2019
RE: Dog Late Fees

For as long as I have worked in the Clerk's Office, almost 25 years, it has been our practice not to charge a late fee for a **new** dog. Our definition of a **new** dog is one that we do not "currently" have in our files.

If someone comes in to license a dog for the **first** time and it is after January 31 and the late fee has begun, (February 1) we have never charged a late fee. Windham is not the only town that does it this way. I cannot honestly tell you how many other towns there are, and yes, there are towns who charge the late fee no matter what. Many people do not realize that you need to license your dog, especially first-time dog owners or someone who moves here from a state that does not require dog licensing. Those people usually find out once they take their dog to a Maine Veterinarian for a rabies shot, the Vet sends a copy up to Animal Welfare in Augusta and every three months or so Animal Welfare mails those copies out to the Town Clerk's. We then check those certificates against our dog file, update those we have licensed and mail letters out to those who have not licensed their dog.

A puppy does not need to be licensed until it reaches 6 months of age, no matter what time of year it occurs.

In networking with other Maine clerks; the ones who do not charge the late fee for a first-time license is, we felt it was better to get them in to license their dog and have them show proof of having a valid rabies shot, rather than them staying away because they don't want to pay that late fee. We felt it is more important that people are getting their dogs inoculated for rabies.

However, if they have a dog that is currently licensed in Windham, and they come in after January 31, they will be charged a late fee. Those people we have on file are reminded numerous times that their dog license will be expiring on December 31 each year.

We tell them when they register the dog, we give out neon stickers for their wall calendars, we mail out over 2,300 4x6 "Reminder" cards to each dog owner in our file, they can license their dogs on-line and the website is on the card, they can do it by mail, I run ads in the two local newspapers, and one paper is delivered to every household in Windham, I put it on Facebook, we post signs at town hall, and the second week of January we make phone calls to those who still have not come in to remind them they will have a late fee if they are not in by January 31st.