CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA   **AGENDA #_____5_____**

A G E N D A   R E P O R T   **DATE:** December 19, 2006

ITEM   ORDINANCE 2933, AMENDING OCCGF TITLE 6 CHAPTER 8
                                  PERTAINING TO ANIMALS

ACTION REQUESTED   ACCEPT ORDINANCE 2933 ON FIRST READING AND SET
                                  THE PUBLIC HEARING AND FINAL READING FOR
                                  JANUARY 2, 2007

PRESENTED BY   KORY LARSEN, CHIEF PROSECUTOR

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Commission accept Ordinance 2933 on first reading and set the
public hearing and final reading for January 2, 2007.

MOTION

"I move the City Commission accept Ordinance 2933 on first reading and set the public hearing
and final reading for January 2, 2007 at 7 pm.

SYNOPSIS

Ordinance 2933 amends and replaces the Official Codes of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF)
6.08 pertaining to Animals.

BACKGROUND

Based upon months of hard work by the members of the Blue Ribbon Committee for Animal
Control Issues the city was presented with a proposed amended animal ordinance. It was very
broad in its scope but presented a community consensus for changes to the Animal Ordinance.
After a staff review, some small tweaks were made and the proposed ordinance was presented to
the Commission at a work session earlier this year. After some lively discussion, the
Commission decided that some areas required public comment and input and thus a public
comment period was set. Many community members made comments by email, on the webpage,
by letter and by phone and a few hardy souls actually ventured out and made the effort to come
to the office and actually speak to me about the amended ordinance. Numerous requests were
made for copies of the proposed ordinance and the comments continued to roll in past the
deadline.

Based upon the Commissions suggestions, the numerous citizen commentaries and further
guided by the facts learned by the contract review conducted by city staff shortly after, several
changes were clearly needed. The final version is now ready for final review and adoption. The
changes made since the last review do not entail a major overhaul of the original document
presented, but rather resolve the questions that were raised at the work session. What has resulted
is an ordinance that should have clear community support based upon the plethora of valuable
input provided along the way.

Our existing animal ordinance was re-adopted in 1989 based upon prior code sections adopted in the mid seventies. It is clearly time for a fresh approach to animal issues. With this in mind, the Blue Ribbon Committee reviewed the existing animal control ordinance with an eye for appropriateness, utility, function, effect on animal welfare, and included a review to the current licensing fees and fine schedules with respect to funding of local animal control and welfare efforts. The amended ordinance covers all of these issues and provides a more appropriate fine schedule and fee structure for animal control.

The City Attorney's Office and City staff has reviewed the proposed amendments and fully support the changes.

Attachment A is the newly amended City ordinance. The analysis section below highlights some of the primary ordinance amendments proposed by this draft.

ANALYSIS
The following is a summary of changes contained in the revised ordinance:

- Clarify definitions of "dangerous" vs. "vicious" vs. "nuisance"
- Limit number of animals to 2 dogs and 2 cats (no more than 4 total) without a multiple animal permit and Outlines procedures to be followed for issuance of Multiple Animal Permits
- Clarify barking/nuisance animal behavior and reporting requirements
- Clarify when animals may be impounded by animal control
- Set differing fines for altered versus unaltered animals for certain offenses
- Require registration of cats and dogs for appropriate fees
- Clarifies requirement for removal of excrement and increases penalties for failure to remove
- Clarifies issues related to rabies exposure and quarantine
- "Tightens" the leash law (pun intended)
- Clarifies duties upon striking a pet animal with a motor vehicle
- Increases general penalties and impoundment procedures to provide a better deterrent to repeat offenders