



February 20, 2024

Dear Commissioners,

We are scheduled to meet on Thursday, February 22. Dog Warden Missy Houghton will be joining us to discuss the noise levels in the kennel areas of the dog shelter and what we propose to do to bring those noise levels down.

In 2019, when the shelter had a fraction of the number of dogs that are currently being housed, an industrial hygienist from the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) conducted an assessment of the noise levels in the kennel areas. That study showed that the noise levels were still over the OSHA action level and were approaching the OSHA Permissible Exposure Limit. Kennel Attendants were given hearing protection and we started looking into ways to change the environment to reduce the noise. In 2020, BWC discontinued the safety grants and once the pandemic hit, the kennel saw a dramatic decrease in the number of dogs they housed.

BWC brought back the safety grants so in November of 2023, we asked them to do another assessment of the noise levels at in the kennel areas. The industrial hygienist placed dosimeters on several kennel attendants to get an accurate measurement of the overall noise exposure in a typical work shift. He also placed dosimeters in each of the kennel areas. Of the seven samples taken, five exceeded OSHA's permissible exposure limit and all seven exceeded the OSHA action level. Based on these results, the Dog Shelter must draft and follow a hearing conservation program.

While we can hope that the number of dogs in the shelter will decrease, we need to look back at 2019 and see that even if the numbers normalize again, we will still be exposing shelter employees and volunteers to high noise levels in the kennel areas. To combat these exposures, we are asking for permission to apply for the BWC safety grant. This grant will pay up to \$40,000 with a 4 to 1 match to purchase certain safety equipment. We have consulted with several vendors and we found a company called Acoustical Systems that has worked with other counties to make acoustical upgrades to their kennel areas and they provide the reports needed to satisfy the BWC's requirements for the grant. Acoustical Systems is proposing to install PVC panels on the upper parts of the wall and the ceiling above the sprinkler heads. Pricing is as follows:

North Wing:	Actual Price: \$11,800	BWC reimbursement: \$8,850	County portion: \$2,950.
Main Kennel:	Actual Price: \$18,208	BWC reimbursement: \$13,656	County portion: \$4,552
West Wing:	Actual Price: \$10,999	BWC reimbursement: \$8,249.25	County portion: \$2,749.75
Isolation:	Actual Price: \$9,931	BWC reimbursement: \$7,448.25	County portion: \$2,482.75

We plan to focus on the main kennel areas and west wing with this project. Our hope is that the acoustical products will provide enough relief that we no longer have to participate in a hearing conservation program. Please contact Missy or me if you have any questions prior to our meeting on Thursday.

Thank you,

Jenny Phelps

Richland County Risk Management

Jenny Phelps, Loss Control Program Coordinator
597 Park Avenue East
Mansfield, OH 44905

Phone: 419-774-6318
Fax: 419-774-3581
Email: JPhelps@richlandcountyoh.gov