

Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council

Councilor Rachel Maiore, Chair
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge, Vice Chair
Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III
Councilor Jim Nash

Online Meeting via Teleconference

Meeting Date: March 1, 2022

Time: **6 p.m.****

Virtual meeting

The March 1, 2022 Finance Committee meeting will be held by remote participation. The public can follow the committee's deliberations by joining the virtual meeting by phone or computer. The meeting will be recorded for later broadcast on Northampton Open Media (Channel 15) and uploaded to the Northampton Government Video Archive on YouTube.

****Please note the regular meeting time has been changed from 5 to 6 p.m. to accommodate greater public participation****

Live public comment will be available using telephone call-in or video conferencing technology beginning at 5 p.m.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CALLING IN OR JOINING THE MEETING

Join virtual meeting; <https://bit.ly/3gmwD8D>

MEETING ID: 846 8845 3008

PARTICIPANT #: #

PASSCODE: 642684

1. Meeting Called To Order
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment
4. Approval Of Minutes From The Previous Meeting
 - A. Minutes Of February 8, 2022 And January 12, 2022 Organizational Meeting

Documents:

[02-08-2022_finance committee minutes.pdf](#)

5. Financial Orders

**A. 22.025 An Order To Acquire Property Located At 196 Cooke Avenue,
Referred By City Council - 2/17/2022**

Documents:

[22.025 an order to acquire property located at 196 cooke avenue.pdf](#)

[22.025 berkshire design group memo.pdf](#)

6. Scope And Responsibilities Of The Finance Committee

Discussion of possible guidelines or priorities to recommend to the mayor in constructing the FY2023 budget.

7. New Business

-Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

8. Adjourn

Contact: Rachel Maiore at rmaiore@northamptonma.gov

or 413-923-4318



Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council

*Councilor Rachel Maiore, Chair
Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Vice Chair
Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III
Councilor Jim Nash*

Virtual Meeting
Meeting Date: February 8, 2022
Time: 5 p.m.

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** At 5 p.m. Councilor Rachel Maiore called the meeting to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were committee members Councilor Rachel Maiore (Chair), Councilor Marianne LaBarge (Vice Chair), Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III and Councilor Jim Nash.
3. **Announcement of Audio/Video Recording**
Councilor Maiore announced that the meeting was being audio and video recorded.
4. **Public Comment**
There being no general public comment, Councilor Maiore moved to the next item on the agenda.
5. **Second Quarter Financial Report**
Presentation by Finance Director Charlene Nardi.

Finance Director Nardi presented the revenue and expenditure reports for the General Fund and enterprise funds for the second quarter of FY2022, highlighting significant findings.

For General Fund highlights, with estimated annual receipts of \$250,000 and actual year-to-date receipts of \$465,177.26, hotel/motel tax has already exceeded estimated revenue by 186%, Director Nardi presented. Similarly, estimated annual receipts for meals tax revenue was \$500,000 and, halfway through the fiscal year, the city has already collected \$366,426.88, or 73%, so that revenue too is trending above projections. Adult marijuana too was budgeted at \$1.1 million and the city has collected \$650,292.75, so collections have reached 56% of the amount estimated. The mayor's office is keeping an eye on this as more and more retail shops come on line since the city's market share may change, she reminded. This is much lower than the revenue seen two years ago, but they are hoping this is where receipts will level off.

In looking at parking revenue, the city collected about \$691,000 for the second quarter, much improved from the \$361,000 collected last year at the same time but still not back to pre-pandemic levels. It is running at about 70%, so this revenue is rebounding but not quite as quickly as hotel/motel and meals.

City Council Committee on Finance Meeting Minutes for February 8, 2022

Ambulance services was budgeted at \$1.9 million and has already reached \$1.4 million, so they are ahead of projections there. This has been a significant source of revenue for the city for the last few years for all the reasons they are aware of, she continued.

In Charges for Services, Director Nardi said they noticed that building inspector services are down and said they believe this might be because of supply chain issues.

Enterprise fund revenues are tracking pretty much as expected. Water is down a bit from last year, sewer and Stormwater are up about \$100,000 and \$120,000, respectively and solid waste is about the same.

As far as General Fund expenditures, in looking at departmental budgets, she generally looks at the percent used to make sure nothing jumps out at her as exceeding 50%, Director Nardi explained. Everything looks good and is tracking as expected, she reported. Noting that the DPW highway division has only used 36% of its personnel services budget and 31% of its ordinary maintenance budget so far, she pointed out that the majority of construction projects generally take place in the spring, accounting for the lower expenditures in the fall/winter months.

Similarly, at 12%, the Snow and Ice account is surprisingly low, but at the end of December they've only just started the winter, so the number will look entirely different by the end of April and March. On the flip side, worker's compensation insurance and contributory retirement are already 99% expended because these are paid in lump sum payments at the beginning of the year. When she looked at this, everything looked really good with revenue and expenditure accounts tracking as expected, she concluded.

The last piece - enterprise expenditures – are also looking good. "We're looking really good with our revenue and expenses," she observed.

Director Nardi fielded questions and comments from councilors.

6. Financial Orders

A. 22.016 An Order Authorizing A Five-Year Contract For IT Services Department Equipment And Software, Referred By City Council - 2/3/2022

The Finance Committee discussed item 22.016 An Order Authorizing a Five-Year Contract for IT Services Department Equipment and Software along with the charge from City Council to consider if there is a "socially responsible" rubric that could be applied to this decision. Present to speak to the order were IT Director Antonio Pagan, Procurement Officer Joe Cook, City Solicitor Alan Seewald, and Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra.

City Solicitor Seewald reviewed the city's ordinance allowing them to disqualify doing business with entities in the nuclear arms industry. He shared that enactment of this ordinance required a Home Rule Petition and a Special Act of the Legislature. Procurement Officer Cook spoke to the Commonwealth's process for assessing qualified vendors by weighing a business's "Skill, Ability, and Integrity", where integrity in this case has to do with honoring terms of contracts, not "socially responsible" practices. Director Pagan fielded several questions about the proposed dashboard camera system.

The following members of the public spoke to 22.016: Ashwin Ravikumar of Amherst, Elliot Oberholtzer of Holyoke, Ya-ping Douglass of Turners Falls and Northampton residents Amy Coffin, Dana Goldblatt, Rachel Weber, Dan Cannity, Lemy Coffin, Amy Bookbinder and David Kris. All raised concerns about the City Council Committee on Finance Meeting Minutes for February 8, 2022

order and asked that City Council not approve the five-year contract order. Thoughts shared by members of the public:

- Less police and less surveillance result in less harm
- Concerns about data security and data sharing between law enforcement agencies and corporations
- Approving the order would be an expansion of surveillance in our community
- The system could be used to target immigrants and people of color
- The city should divest from harmful companies and consider a human rights impact study around vendors
- The proposed vendor is on a UN black list, and lacks integrity
- Do we even need dashboard cameras? What is their value and efficacy?

During deliberations Finance Committee members agreed that coming up with a socially responsible rubric was a complex endeavor and not possible in the timeframe allowed. A motion to send the order back to City Council with a neutral recommendation failed (2-2) with Councilors Maiore and LaBarge opposed by voice vote. A motion to recommend that City Council not proceed with a contract until there is a community forum on dashboard cameras was approved (3-1) with Councilor Nash opposed by voice vote.

7. **New Business**

-Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.
None.

8. **Adjourn:** There being no further business, Councilor Nash moved to adjourn. Councilor Thorpe seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No. The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Contact: Alex Jarrett @ajarrett@northamptonma.gov or (413) 320-4700



Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council

*Councilor Marianne LaBarge
Councilor Rachel Maiore
Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III
Councilor Jim Nash*

Virtual Meeting
Meeting Date: January 12, 2022
Time: 5 p.m.

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** At 5:05 p.m. Acting Chair Marianne LaBarge called the meeting to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were committee members Councilor Marianne LaBarge (Acting Chair), Councilor Rachel Maiore, Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III and Councilor Jim Nash.
3. **Announcement of Audio/Video Recording**
Councilor LaBarge announced that the meeting was being audio and video recorded.
4. **Election of Chair/Vice Chair**
Councilor LaBarge opened the floor to nominations for chair.

Councilor Nash nominated Councilor Maiore. Councilor Moulton seconded.

There being no further nominations, Councilor LaBarge closed the nominations.

The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote. Councilor Maiore was elected chair by acclamation.

Councilor Maiore opened the floor to nominations for vice chair. **Councilor Nash nominated Councilor LaBarge. Councilor Moulton seconded.**

There being no further nominations, Councilor Maiore closed nominations.

As council president, he is not seeking leadership roles on the committees he serves on since he thinks it's important that other councilors step forward as leaders, Councilor Nash related. He appreciates the work he and Councilor Maiore have done together on plastic reduction and hopes to continue that work and appreciates her comment at the council's organizational meeting that they are the most diverse council the city has ever had. In that spirit, he wanted to nominate her as chair today.

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In the same vein, he wanted to recognize Councilor LaBarge. She is the longest-standing member of council now and, he's pretty sure, the longest-serving woman ever. He said he appreciated her work in the past, citing their work together on the resolution for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and TPS (Temporary Protected Status) as some of the most personally moving accomplishments they've shared.

She really enjoys the Finance Committee and has been on it for quite a long time, Councilor LaBarge said. It is seriously one of the biggest committees that there is. People in the city of Northampton care about where their dollars are being spent. Being on council for 20 years since 1998, she hears people asking why their money is going here or there. She is very honored to take the vice chair position because she finds this to be a very high priority as a city councilor. She thanked Councilor Nash for the nomination.

Councilor Maire expressed appreciation for Councilor Nash's willingness to serve as a mentor of junior councilors. She appreciates Councilor LaBarge as one of the most independent thinkers on council who has the ability to ask tough questions, she added.

Councilor Maire called the nomination to a vote, and **the election of Councilor LaBarge as vice chair was unanimously approved 4:0 by roll call vote.**

5. Minutes of December 16, 2021

Councilor Nash moved to approve the minutes of December 16, 2021. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

6. Set Meeting Schedule For 2020 – 2021

Councilor Moulton expressed his understanding that it is necessary to sync Finance Committee meetings in between full city council meetings so they are able to handle referred financial orders in a timely way.

Councilor Nash proposed developing an overall schedule for meeting the Wednesday following the council meeting at 5 p.m. There will be a lot of scheduled meetings but he imagines they won't be using many of them since it will only be necessary to meet when items are referred. The scheduled meeting will not be utilized if there is no referral.

Councilor Maire asked about having the regular meeting on a day other than Wednesday, such as Monday or Tuesday. However, it was noted that other council subcommittees meet on Mondays (City Services, Legislative Matters, etc.), so Mondays would present possible conflicts.

Councilor Nash said he would be comfortable just setting the date of the next meeting now and putting scheduling on the agenda for discussion again. Members reached the consensus to hold the next meeting Tuesday, January 25, 2022 @ 5 p.m. [Note: Since there were no financial orders referred at the January 20, 2022 City Council meeting, the next meeting was actually February 8, 2022 @ 5 p.m.]

Members noted that it would be evident at the end of each council meeting if a Finance Committee meeting the next week would be required. Members may sometimes have their own agenda items to discuss, too.

Councilor Moulton said he would like to reflect on and raise a question about the role of this brave new committee. He looked at Finance Committee members' role as laid out in the rules. They react to a lot of things but do have jurisdiction over financial matters. He has heard a lot over the last two years about the relative balance of power between the mayor and the council and he knows that the council reacts to a lot of financial matters. He wonders if there is a role for the Finance Committee to be more proactive in coming
City Council Committee on Finance Meeting Minutes for January 14, 2020

up with guidelines or priorities that could be sent as an advisory to the mayor as she is constructing the budget. Particularly with a new mayor and a Finance Committee that has taken on a new role he thought this would be a good time to think about that. He wanted to suggest that they think about whether they could be a bit more proactive in helping to shape the budget.

Both Councilor LaBarge and Councilor Maiore expressed enthusiasm for this idea, with Councilor Maiore saying she thinks it's wonderful and Councilor LaBarge pronouncing it 'an excellent idea.' She has been a fan of participatory budgeting in other communities, Councilor Maiore said, and she likes the proactive approach instead of waiting to the other end and critiquing the mayor's budget. It is kind of a service to the mayor, she suggested.

Regarding the balance of power, she has heard what Councilor Moulton is saying about councilors losing their power from many people in the city, Councilor LaBarge observed. On the Ordinance Review Committee one of the members suggested taking a look at the charter with regard to the balance of power.

Councilor Moulton said he thinks this is a way without any specific change to the charter that the council can push the envelope a little bit in terms of what powers they have.

As council president, he is meeting with the mayor tomorrow with the thought in mind of how to establish communication between the council, himself and the mayor's office, Councilor Nash advised. They have a new mayor, and he thinks this mayor will have a different way of doing things than the previous mayor. The mayor has a lot of discretion in the way he/she relates to councilors and the public. He's heard in the past the idea of the public also being more involved a little earlier in budget aspirations. He will bring this up with the mayor tomorrow and let her know there is interest on the part of this committee and the council in having a little more discussion prior to the budget hearing. He hasn't discussed it with Mayor Sciarra, but his sense is that she may want to change the process a little bit or dramatically. Beyond just the budget, he is hoping to clarify the protocols for communication in general with the council and the public within the next few weeks, he indicated.

He suggested having a discussion of the scope and responsibilities of the Finance Committee as an agenda item on the next agenda.

7. Financial Orders

None.

8. New Business

-Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

None.

9. Adjourn: There being no further business, Councilor Nash moved to adjourn. Councilor Thorpe seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No. The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Contact: Alex Jarrett @ajarrett@northamptonma.gov or (413) 320-4700

City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council, February 17, 2022

Upon the recommendation of Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra and Office of Planning & Sustainability

22.025 An Order to Acquire Property Located at 196 Cooke Avenue

WHEREAS, The City's Capital Plan, approved by City Council, provides funding to develop an animal control facility for the Police Department and Animal Control Officer use; and

WHEREAS, The City identified 196 Cooke Avenue, the former Moose Lodge property owned by Apple Tree, LLC or some or all of their principals, as the best place for an animal control facility, with opportunities for sound mitigation from the nearest homes and for limited parking to serve the adjacent Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway, in a rural yet relatively central location;

WHEREAS, The City has entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement and Option with Apple Tree, LLC, to purchase 196 Cooke Avenue for \$100,000, subject to due diligence and City Council approval;

Ordered, that

The City Council hereby authorizes the acquisition by purchase, gift, eminent domain, or otherwise of the property located at 196 Cooke Avenue (Hampshire Land Court Plan Book 3, Page 214, 2/27/1950).

Further, the City Council authorizes the Mayor to execute such documents and instruments as may be necessary to achieve the purposes of this Order.

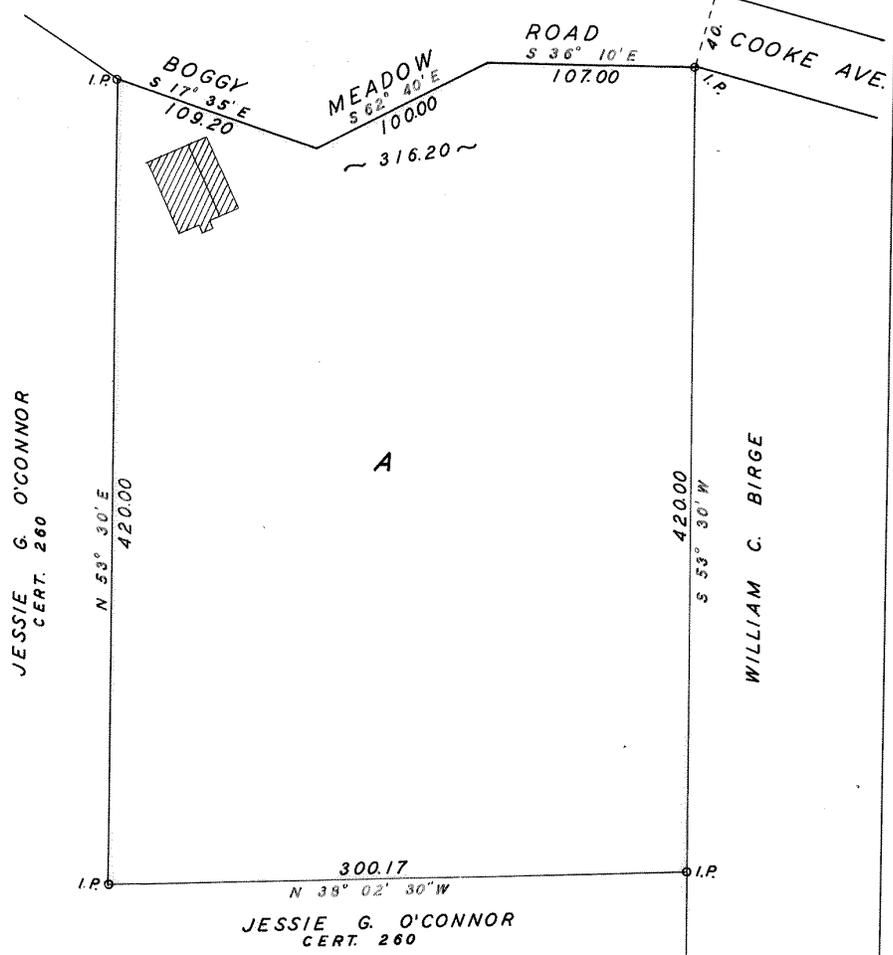
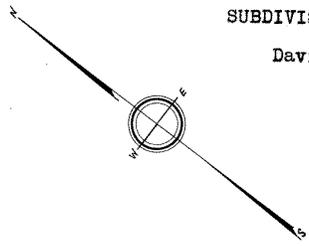
Further, the City Council appropriates the \$100,000 from the Receipts Reserved for Appropriation - Sale of Land Account.

20769B

SUBDIVISION PLAN OF LAND IN NORTHAMPTON

Davis Engineering Co., Surveyors

June 5, 1947



FEB 17 1950

Subdivision of part of land
 Shown on plan 20769A
 Filed with Cert. of Title No. 260
 Registry District of Hampshire County

Hampshire Registry District of
 Hampshire County. Received and Recorded
 February 27, 1950.

Attest: *Raymond A. James* Assistant Recorder.

Separate certificates of title may be issued
 for LOT A as shown hereon
 By the Court *W. T. Fairclough*
 E.E.B. 4, 1949 Recorder.

Copy of part of plan
 filed in
LAND REGISTRATION OFFICE
 FEB. 4, 1949
 Scale of this plan 60 feet to an inch
 W. T. Fairclough, Engineer for Court



MEMORANDUM

To: Wayne Feiden, Director Planning & Sustainability

From: Berkshire Design Group

Date: February 10, 2022

Project: Animal Control Facility, Moose Lodge Site, 196 Cooke Avenue

Re: Noise review

Berkshire Design was asked to look into the level of noise associated with dog barking at a potential animal control facility located at 196 Cooke Avenue. This memo includes information about typical sound levels and noise reduction associated with building construction, outdoor sound barriers and distance from the facility.

1. Typical sound levels in decibels (dB)

Quiet rural area	30 dB
Library or quiet night-time neighborhood	40 dB
Quiet neighborhood daytime	50 dB
Normal conversation	50-60 dB
Snow blower/lawn mower	85-90 dB
Chain saw	120 dB

2. Published information on dog barking level of noise

Single dog barking	80-100 dB
Inside kennel dog chorus (range)	85-122 dB
Inside kennel dog chorus (common)	85-100 dB

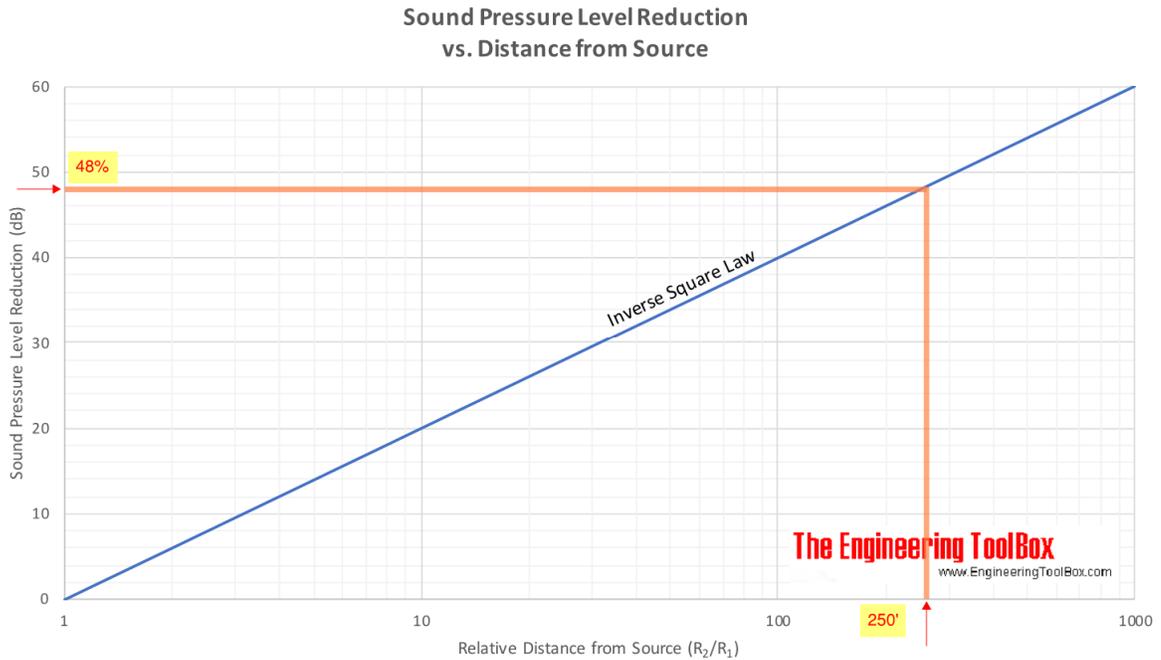
3. Sound reduction based on building construction, distance to neighbors and other factors

Building construction:

Building construction standards include ratings for *Sound Transmission Class (STC)*. The higher the STC rating, the better sound isolation within the wall assembly. The STC translates into a decibel reduction. STC can vary from 37 to much higher values such as 50-65. The actual reduction in noise provided by the building is dependent on the noise source, windows etc. For the animal control facility, we will assume a STC rating of 50 and conservatively assume that this results in a 25 dB reduction in sound to the outside.

Effect of distance:

Sound volume reduces with distance from the source and the noise reduction can be calculated using the *Inverse Square Law*. For every doubling of distance, the sound level reduces by 6 dBA. The following chart illustrates graphically how sound diminishes with distance.



A sound reduction of 48% is obtained at a distance of 250 feet (approximate distance to nearby homes).

Topography and landforms:

Topography and landforms can effectively reduce sound propagation. For example, an earth mound will reflect a portion of the noise, thus reducing the external noise as long as the source is lower than or level with the barrier. The reduction of sound is approximately 10 dB.

Vegetation:

Vegetation is not very effective at reducing noise. However, it appears that a wide belt of high-density trees and shrubs can achieve some noise reduction. For example, a 100' wide belt can reduce sound 5 to 8 dBA.

Noise Abatement inside the building:

Sound proofing with foam and sound absorbing products can be added inside the building to decrease the dog chorus noise. This can reduce the sound within the facility by 8 to 10 dB.

4. Summary

Building construction and distance will have the largest effect on noise reduction. Table 1 illustrates how an initial sound level of 100 dB (high end of dog chorus) will be reduced with good building construction and 250 feet of distance from the facility.

Table 1 – Building and Distance

	Dogs inside facility	Dogs outside the facility – Dogs will only be outside when the animal control officer is present
Noise level within building	100 dB	-
Noise level outside of building – building constructed with STC of 50 minimum	75 dB*	100 dB
Noise level 250 ft away from facility	39 dB	52 dB

* It is assumed that STC 50 construction will result in a minimum of 25 dB reduction.

Table 2 illustrates how the addition of an earth berm or a sound wall would affect the noise levels from the facility.

Table 2 – Add Earth Mound or Sound Wall

	Dogs inside facility	Dogs outside - Dogs will only be outside when the animal control officer is present
Noise level within building	100 dB	-
Noise level outside of building – building constructed with STC of 50 minimum	75 dB	100 dB
Noise level outside with berm/wall	65 dB	90 dB
Noise level 250 ft away from facility	34 dB	47 dB

Table 3 illustrates how the addition of noise abatement inside the building affects the noise levels from the facility.

Table 3 – Add noise abatement inside building

	Dogs inside facility	Dogs outside - Dogs will only be outside when the animal control officer is present
Noise level within building with noise abatement	92 dB	-
Noise level outside of building – building constructed with STC of 50 minimum	67 dB	100 dB
Noise level outside with berm/wall	57 dB	90 dB
Noise level 250 ft away from facility	30 dB	47 dB

5. Conclusion

Building construction and distance as well as earth berms and noise abatement can all be effective means of reducing the noise from an animal control facility. The above calculations indicate that a dog chorus from animals within the building can be reduced to the level of a quiet night-time neighborhood at a distance of 250 feet from the facility. The calculations also indicate that the sound of a dog barking outside the building (dogs will only be outside when the animal control officer is on site) will be reduced to under 50 dB or the sound of a quiet day-time neighborhood.

6. References

<https://extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/va/va-18-w.pdf>
<https://www.controlnoise.com/about-netwell/who-is-netwell/>
https://www.engineeringtoolbox.com/inverse-square-law-d_890.html
https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hearing_loss/what_noises_cause_hearing_loss.html
<https://www.enoisecontrol.com/landscaping-sound-wall-earth-berm-noise-ordinances/>
<https://www.soundproofcow.com/>