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## Dog officer: Attack 'was one of the worst I've seen'

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TOWNSEND -- Animal control officer Kathleen Comeau was shocked by Saturday's dog attack on a 5-year-old boy.

"It was one of the worst I've seen," said Comeau, who has served the town since 1976.

The attack left the 5-year-old with 16 puncture wounds. The boy suffered bites on both arms, both legs, his buttocks and his neck.

Comeau said she had seen multiple-bite attacks before, but not on a child.

The boy's grandmother, Kim Burgess, held her grandson in the air and tried to pull him away during the attack.

The two dogs involved in the incident were soft-coated wheaten terriers.

"They're aggressive, they're territorial," Comeau said of the breed. "Anyone that knows dogs knows that terriers have that in them."

A Web site for the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America says the breed is energetic and that children should be supervised when a dog is present.

The dogs must be "carefully fenced" when outside to ensure safety, the site says.

Comeau said the dogs were running free when the attack occurred, though they were not far from their owner's property. The owner, Heidi Leonard, was also a short distance away.

Leonard did not respond to several phone messages Wednesday.

Comeau stressed that the child did not provoke the dogs, and there is no way to know exactly why the attack occurred.

"You can never figure out dog behavior completely," she said.

She also said dogs don't attack children more frequently than any other age group.

"They don't look at it as a child, it's just a moving object," Comeau said.

The boy is currently recovering at his Fitchburg home. His mother, Ryanne Tessier, declined to comment Wednesday.

Burgess originally thought only one dog had been biting the boy. However, the boy reported that both dogs were biting, according to Burgess.

The grandmother has also suggested the attack, which lasted less than a minute, produced too many bites to be from just one dog.

But the Board of Selectmen ordered only one of the dogs euthanized. The other dog must now be kept either on a leash or in a pen at all times. Comeau said Leonard has 10 days to appeal the order in the Ayer District Court.