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County board spares dog after two bites

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The Otter Tail County Board hopes it has taken the bite out of a dog who has its teeth set on a neighbor.

A one-year-old boxer owned by Tanya Kline has now been ordered confined to a kennel after twice biting a neighbor. The Otter Tail County Board also ordered the dog be under adult supervision when the animal is near children.

Kline's dog allegedly bit her neighbor in April when he was retrieving his mail, according to Kristin Erickson of the Otter Tail County Public Health Department.

The dog bit the man a second time three days later when the man went onto Kline's property to discuss the first bite with her, Erickson said.

The man did not seek medical attention but the public health department received a report from the sheriff's department, Erickson said.

The commissioners held a dog bite hearing to determine if the dog should be euthanized and to also give the owner the opportunity to offer alternative solutions to the problem.

If the dog bites a third time, the only option for the board is to euthanize the animal, Public Health Director Diane Thorson said.

Commissioner Doug Huebsch questioned whether a dog who bites once is always a biter.

Thorson responded that a dog who bites once has an increased tendency to bite again.

Kline told commissioners that her dog hasn't bit anyone else. The dog has been kept on a runner during the day and kept in the house at night, she said.

Thorson questioned Kline as to the location of the runner and if the dog would be able to reach someone at the front door even while chained. The runner is located 50 feet away from the house, Kline said, then offered to move it. Commissioner John Lindquist suggested she move the runner to behind the house out of sight of the street to deter children from running to the dog.

Thorson said the department has been told by a veterinarian that keeping dogs on runners and chains tend to make the dog more territorial. She said her preference is to keep the dog in an area that children can't get into.

Commissioner Lee Rogness asked if the runner is strong enough to hold the dog. Kline said the dog has a collar that prevents the dog from slipping out of it.

Rogness also wanted to know who monitors the situation to ensure that the orders are carried out. Thorson said public health department staff follows up on orders.

The county board has ordered an animal euthanized once in the past, Thorson said.