



DeSoto County

Special Masters

Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

11:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Connie Collins, Special Master for DeSoto County, gave an opening statement regarding the process governing the hearing and the rules of conduct for the Special Master Hearing. Ms. Valerie Vincente, DeSoto County Attorney was present. Connie Collins called the meeting to order at 11:07am.

SWEARING IN OF ALL THOSE GIVING TESTIMONY

CASES

Craig Lastinger

Attachments:

[BEFORE THE SPECIAL MASTER OF DESOTO COUNTY](#)
[CASE DG 25-0001 Note Outline](#)
[INITIAL DETERMINATION OF DANGEROUS DOG](#)

Valerie Vicente Desoto County Attorney presented the County's evidentiary documents into the record for Case Number DG25-001 findings of the Desoto County Animal Services described as "Bruno" an intact male 2-year-old brown/black Great Pyrenees mix, has been initially determined to be a dangerous dog, pursuant to Section 767.11, Florida Statutes. Susan Brodowsky Desoto County Animal Control Supervisor identified Craig Lastinger as the dog owner. Ms. Brodowsky stated on May 30, 2025, she received a call from the Sheriff's office about a dog bite victim in the Desoto County Memorial Hospital Emergency Room. There were two victims a 5-year-old child and his mother, Mandy Brown. There were three dogs involved in the attack, one of them being Bruno. Ms. Brodowsky testified as to the documentation that was taken during her investigation. She stated when she interviewed Ms. Brown, she reported that the attack happened the day before while she and her son were doing yard work. The dogs ran out of the house and into the yard. Bruno attacked her son first and as she tried to get the dog off her son, she was attacked by the other two dogs and Bruno. The dog owner tried to get the dogs off Ms. Brown so she and her son could escape into his nearby truck. The owner shot the dogs, killing two of the dogs and injuring Bruno. Ms. Brodowsky completed a complaint/witness affidavit and took photographs of both victims' injuries. Ms. Brodowsky testified based on her observation of the victims' injuries both would qualify at 4 or higher on the Dunbar Bite scale meaning: Level 4: A single bite with deep wounds or multiple bites with shallow wounds. Level 5: Multiple bites with deep wounds.

Ms. Brodowsky stated after a few hours at the hospital she and another officer went to collect the dog. She stated that once Mr. Craig Lastinger surrendered Bruno, Bruno was growling at the officer and was demonstrating aggressive behavior. On 5/30/2025 when Bruno was collected Mr. Craig Lastinger signed an Owner Release Agreement as well as an Authorization to perform euthanasia form and was informed the animal would need to complete a 10-day bite quarantine then animal would be euthanized. He then later came in and recanted, stating he did not want the dog put down. Ms. Brodowsky testified that Bruno has been in custody for one month and was still exhibiting aggressive behavior and animal control had to add chains to the dog's kennel to keep him from breaking out. On cross-examination Mr. Craig Lastinger testified that he has not noticed that Bruno has been acting aggressive when he has gone to see him, nor has anyone at the facility said he has been. He did admit to Bruno not being fond of children due to being abused by a child as a puppy. He feels that if he had socialized Bruno more and if the child's parents had allowed him to feed the dog more often the dog would not have acted out.

Ms. Vicente then called Ms. Mandy Brown who stated she was cleaning up yard debris when she heard the dogs running out of the house and then Bruno attacked her son by biting him on the head. She then covered her son with her body and the other dogs and Bruno attacked her from behind. Then Mr. Lastinger tried to pull the dogs off her which caused greater injury. She was then able to get her son into the vehicle. In order to stop the attack Mr. Lastinger shot and killed the two female dogs. Ms. Brown feels that if Bruno were returned to Mr. Lastinger, she and her son would be very frightened of the dog. She does not feel that Mr. Lastinger, in his current condition, would not be able to control Bruno. There was further discussion between Mr. Lastinger and Ms. Brown in regard to Bruno never getting out of the yard and having a failsafe method to keep the dogs from getting out.

Ms. Vicente called Mr. Jason Lastinger who testified, that he and Mandy Brown had been attacked by his father's dogs and Bruno in the past and would be very concerned for his family if his father were to have Bruno back on the property. Mr. Lastinger closed by saying he would work more to socialize Bruno, and he would get him certified as a service dog due to his current illnesses. He feels that Bruno is remorseful.

In closing Ms. Vicente stated the County has proven its case showing that Bruno should be classified as a dangerous dog. The attack was unprovoked, and Mr. Craig Lastinger testified that he has not socialized the dog and admitted he needs fail safe and keep the dog away due to the dogs aggression. Based on the Counties Animal Service Supervisor Bruno is still showing aggressive behavior and due to the injuries that have occurred there is potential for future attacks. The County proposes that the dog be euthanized , per Florida Statue 767.12(5)(b). Special Master determined that Bruno is a dangerous dog as alleged by the County. Based on the testimony and evidence presented, including photos of the injuries sustained and due to the future threat to public safety, health and welfare the dog is to be destroyed. The respondent will have 10 business days once the order is received to appeal the order. The respondent shall pay costs incurred by Animal Control in the amount of \$721.58.

Mr. Lastinger requested he be able to spend time with Bruno before he is euthanized. He also requested to have Bruno's remains to bury on his property. It was explained that he has 10 days during the appeal time frame to spend with the dog.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Master adjourned the Hearing at 12:24 PM.

ATTEST:**APPROVED:**

Marilyn Padilla
TRANSCRIBING SECRETARY

Connie Collins
SPECIAL MASTER

NOTE: If any person desires to appeal any decision with respect to any matter considered at these meetings, such person may need a record of the proceedings; for this purpose, such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Cc: Special Magistrate, County Attorney, Code Enforcement Department and Transcription Secretary.