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To: Eric D. Batista, City Manager
From: Alexandra H. Kalkounis, City Solicitor
Date: November 10, 2026
Re: Ordinance Related to Rodeo Standards

As requested, please find a draft ordinance related to standards applicable to rodeo events that take place on municipal property. The draft ordinance prohibits the use of tools of torture, torment, and any painful, injurious techniques or devices to induce animal performance at rodeos or rodeo-related events on municipal property. Specifically, the ordinance includes language prohibiting any practice, technique, service, or device that causes or is likely to cause physical injury, torment, distress, or suffering to animals, such as 1) electric prods or shocking devices; 2) flank straps or bucking straps; and 3) any tools designed to inflict pain or induce fear for the purpose of performance.

Sincerely,



Alexandra H. Kalkounis
City Solicitor

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER EIGHT OF THE REVISED ORDINANCES OF 2008 RELATIVE TO RODEOS

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Worcester, as follows:

Section 1: Chapter 8, of the Revised Ordinances of 2008 is hereby amended by inserting the following new section 46, entitled "*Standards for Rodeos"*:

(a) Purpose and Intent. It is the purpose and intent of this section to safeguard public safety and protect animal welfare during rodeo events held on municipal property by prohibiting certain practices involving unnecessary pain and suffering.

(b) Definitions.

Flank Strap (or Bucking Strap) is defined as any strap, rope, or physical material placed around the flank (abdominal area just in front of the hind legs) of an animal. This definition includes, but is not limited to, sheepskin or neoprene-lined straps. This definition specifically excludes the bull rope (held by the rider in bull riding), or any part of the saddle (such as the rear cinch).

Electric Prod (also referred to as a "hot shot," "cattle prod," "electric prodder," or "electronic stimulator") shall mean any handheld device, instrument, or implement designed to deliver an electric shock or high-voltage pulse to an animal. For the purposes of this section, the term includes any device that uses battery power or other energy sources to discharge an electrical current through electrodes upon contact with an animal's body, whether used for the purposes of movement, direction, inducing a bucking response, or held for purported handler safety or any other purpose.

Cruel Rodeo Practices shall mean the use or application of physical irritants (burrs, thistles, wires, and tacks), caustic chemical irritants (hot pepper, Oil of Mustard, Croton Oil, Turpentine, Kerosene and Diesel Fuel), beating with wooden sticks, pipes, or rods, or handling techniques limited to tail twisting, tail raking, or ear pulling on any animal during any phase of a rodeo event.

(c) Prohibitions. Cruel Rodeo Practices shall not be permitted on municipal property.

1. No rodeo event shall be permitted in which animals are induced or encouraged to perform through the use of any practice or technique, or any chemical, mechanical, electrical or manual device that will cause, or is likely to cause physical injury, torment or suffering. Animals shall not be used in a cruel or inhumane manner as lure or bait in a race, game, or contest.

2. It shall be unlawful to use or apply any of the methods or substances defined as Cruel Rodeo Practices**,** or any device or substance used in violation of M.G.L. c. 272, § 77, during any phase of a rodeo event held on municipal property. The use or

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application of electric prods or shocking devices, flank or bucking straps, wire tie-downs, and sharpened or fixed spurs or rowels is strictly prohibited on any animal during a rodeo event.

(d) Harmonious Construction. The provisions of this section shall supplement and be construed harmoniously with the animal cruelty statute found in Massachusetts General Laws c. 272, § 77. This section shall not apply to lawful veterinary procedures performed by a licensed veterinarian, or standard agricultural practices conducted on a commercial farm, ranch, agricultural operation, or by an accredited educational institution, provided that such practices are not conducted as part of a rodeo event held on municipal property.

(e) Violations. This ordinance may be enforced by civil process, criminal process or by non-criminal disposition as provided in General Laws, Chapter 40, §21D. Any person in violation of this ordinance shall be punished by a fine of not more than three hundred dollars ($300.00) per offense. Each day on which a violation exists shall be deemed to be a separate offense. Each animal subjected to Cruel Rodeo Practices shall be deemed to be a separate offense.

*Section 2***.** Chapter 15, Section 2(b), of the Revised Ordinances of 2008 is hereby amended by deleting inserting the following new subsection (39) as follows:

(39) Standards for Rodeos, R.O. c. 8, § 46

Enforcing Persons	Commissioner of Inspectional Services Police Chief, others as authorized by the City Manager
Penalties:	$300.00 per offense

Violations of this section shall be subject to a fine of three hundred dollars ($300.00) per offense. Each day on which a violation exists shall be deemed a separate offense. Each animal subjected to cruel rodeo practices shall be deemed a separate offense.

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