



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF  
WATONWAN COUNTY  
JARED BERGEMAN, SHERIFF

Chief Deputy: Mark Slater  
Investigator: Adam Butler  
Records: Shay Forstrom

Deputies: Brandon Sprenger  
Nery Garcia  
Jalyn Woratschka  
Erik Gratz  
Arturo Martinez  
Shawn Odegaard

PO Box 168  
St James, MN 56081  
Phone: 507-375-3121  
Fax: 507-375-1246

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE  
Watonwan County Sheriff's Office  
November 20, 2025

#### Animal Neglect Investigation

On **November 15, 2025, at approximately 1910 hours**, the Watonwan County Sheriff's Office received a report from a property owner regarding concerns at a rural property they own but do not reside at. The owners advised that a friend had been permitted to operate a nonprofit pet rescue on the premises. Upon checking the location, the owners discovered that multiple dogs appeared to be in poor condition. The pet rescue owner was contacted and given an opportunity to address the animals' health concerns.

On **November 16, 2025, at approximately 1818 hours**, deputies were called back to the same property by the property owners, who reported locating several deceased dogs on the premises. **Watonwan County Investigator Adam Butler** responded to assist with the investigation. The **Animal Humane Society** was also contacted and responded with their Critical Response Team.

The Humane Society, working alongside Investigator Butler, removed all surviving dogs from the property and transported them to their facility for veterinary evaluation and treatment.

An investigation report has been forwarded to the **Watonwan County Attorney's Office** for review. This case remains under active investigation and is pending potential charges.

No further details will be released at this time.