



## **Social Services and Public Safety Committee**

August 26, 2025

### **Summary and Motions**

Chair Jennifer Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Committee Members Vice Mayor Dan Wu, Council Members Chuck Ellinger II, Tyler Morton, Shayla Lynch, Lisa Higgins-Hord, Joseph Hale, Amy Beasley, Whitney Elliott Baxter, and Hilary Boone were present. Council Member Emma Curtis was present as a non-voting member.

#### **I. APPROVAL OF JULY 3, 2025 COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

Motion by Ellinger to approve the July 3, 2025 Committee Summary. Seconded by Baxter. Motion passed without dissent.

#### **II. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Shayla Lynch, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Councilmember, provided an overview of issues and concerns related to Code Enforcement. Town hall meetings were held across Lexington to gather feedback on these issues, especially regarding landlord-tenant condemnations. She reviewed the practices the Division of Code Enforcement has implemented, including staffing on weekends. According to research, there are no specific recommendations for condemnations. Concerning the Administrative Hearing Board, she highlighted the research and review process used to address problems. Recommendations include developing a targeted recruitment strategy for the board, creating a database of hearing officers, and offering annual training. To improve the hearing and appeals process, suggestions include updating the physical space, reducing staff levels during hearings, providing pre-hearing consultations, and developing an online case management system for property owners and residents to monitor the status of appeals.

Lynch mentioned that there are no current recommendations, but she plans to follow up in a year with a status update to determine if any ordinance changes are needed. Director Steele has been working on implementing changes since his appointment to ensure tenants can access the necessary resources. The Administrative Hearing Board is not meeting at this time, but it is hoped that they will hold their annual meeting and turn it into a training session. Lynch emphasized that serving on the board is not exclusive to lawyers. **No action was taken on this item.**

#### **III. STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN FOR LEXINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Jason Wells, Chief of the Lexington Fire Department, presented the department's growth plan. He acknowledged his team, which has been instrumental throughout this process. He explained the methodology for selecting a new firehouse, using a three-axis risk model that considers frequency/probability, consequence, and impact. He reviewed the risk scoring approach, which combines these three factors into a formula that produces a score. For Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the goal is to have six people on scene within 13 minutes. For high-risk fire incidents, the goal is to have 17 personnel on site within 13 minutes. Incident types include EMS medium-risk and fire high-risk. Focusing on these, a map is generated for each and overlaid to produce a composite score. He described how risk assessment scores are created based on risk levels and census tracts. Fire risk assessments are more complex due to the growth in these areas. The composite risk assessment identifies locations that would benefit most from the construction of a new fire station. There are four recommended site options: Winchester/Polo Club (Station 25), Richmond Road/Athens (Station 26), MOW/Parkers Mill (Station 27),

and Newtown/I-75 (Station 28). He reviewed the staffing and apparatus needs for each station to ensure full operational capability. Moving on to implementation, he discussed strategic budget priorities, capital projects, personnel/staffing growth, and the action plan. They may save money by designing multiple stations simultaneously. In FY 26, they aim to finalize the design and construction of the fire training academy.

Wells explained that placing a station in a specific district has secondary effects on nearby districts, easing the burden on surrounding fire stations and improving response times. Wells said the paramedicine team is very agile and can respond quickly, but he prefers not to go too far out of the way. There may be a need for two or more crisis response teams, as they encounter an increasing number of lift-assist calls, which will necessitate a team that responds specifically to these calls. Next steps include developing a plan and supporting the expansion of services as needed. **No action was taken on this item.**

#### **IV. AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 4: KEEPING OF CERTAIN ANIMALS**

Amy Beasley, 8<sup>th</sup> District Councilmember, provided an overview of amendments to Section 4 of the Code of Ordinances related to keeping certain animals. Key changes include a limit on the number of roosters and increased penalties. Currently, there is no limit on the number of roosters, and Beasley noted that this only applies to non-ag zones (neighborhoods). The current fine is \$5, and the proposal is to raise it to \$100. The penalty for noisy animals currently ranges from \$5 to \$15, and the proposal is to increase it to \$100 per day per animal. The Fayette County Attorney's office will issue enforcement citations based on the number of violations, animals involved, and duration of the infraction. The goal is to reduce the number of complaints, among other benefits. Today's request is for the committee's support and approval.

Gabbi Thatcher, an attorney in the Law Department, clarified that the area is classified as residential property, not an agricultural zone. Gabbi explained that the ordinance pertains to animals that produce excessive noise. One animal could be responsible for noise, but having more than one could violate both the noise ordinance and regulations regarding the keeping of multiple animals. Beasley added that with more animals, they crow at each other all day. Beasley confirmed that the change would be announced before the November 1 effective date. There was concern about the \$100 fine, as it seems excessive for each animal per day. Regarding the one-animal limit, it was suggested that this is a compromise rather than an outright ban. It was also noted that the PIO offices could issue notices. Gabbi explained that a noisy animal is any animal that makes noise and disrupts the neighborhood. This has not been enforced in the past, prompting questions about the timing. Beasley stated it is the same process as before, but fines have increased, and the new rules also limit the number of animals. Gabbi pointed out that there are two separate noise ordinances, but both address the issue of noisy animals.

Motion by Beasley to approve amendments to Section 4: Keeping of Certain Animals. Seconded by Morton. Motion passed with a 9 - 1 vote.

Motion by Beasley to suspend the rules and report the amendments out at today's Work Session for the November 1 effective date. Seconded by Morton. Motion passed with an 8 - 2 vote.

#### **V. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE**

Motion by Morton to remove the review and assessment of the noise ordinance from the committee. Seconded by Baxter. Motion passed without dissent.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.