



Social Services and Public Safety Committee

May 5, 2026

Summary and Motions

Chair Jennifer Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Vice Mayor Dan Wu and Committee Members Chuck Ellinger, Tyler Morton, Shayla Lynch, Tom Eblen, Lisa Higgins-Hord, Joseph Hale, Amy Beasley, and Whitney Elliott Baxter were in attendance as voting members. Council Members James Brown, Emma Curtis, Dave Sevigny, and Hil Boone were present as non-voting members.

I. APPROVAL OF APRIL 14, 2026 COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Motion by Ellinger for approval of the April 14, 2026 Committee Meeting Summary. Seconded by Hale.
Motion passed without dissent.

II. FAMILY SERVICES UPDATE

Director Shelia Horton-Holt presented an overview of the Division of Family Services and the Family Care Center's ongoing efforts to support young families through education, childcare, case management, and early intervention services. The presentation emphasized the program's mission to promote long-term family stability and resilience through a comprehensive, strengths-based service model.

Staff highlighted the division's four core program areas: Early Childcare Education, Family Service Coordination, HANDS home visitation services, and the Parent Education Program. Together, these programs provide early childhood education, intensive family support, parenting assistance, and educational services to approximately 210 clients weekly.

The presentation also outlined several FY25 accomplishments, including playground renovations, expanded referral and delivery services for families, strong volunteer participation, and more than 2,200 home visits through the HANDS program. Parent Education Program outcomes demonstrated high rates of educational achievement, parenting success, and student retention among participating young parents.

Additional updates included accessibility and safety improvements at the Family Care Center, reinforcing the division's continued focus on creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for children and families. **No action was taken on this item.**

III. PERIODIC CODE ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Director Oliver Lee Steele presented the Division of Code Enforcement's 2026 annual update, highlighting continued operational improvements, staff development initiatives, and community assistance programs. The division maintained its accreditation with the International Accreditation Service while expanding certification and training opportunities for inspectors and field staff through state and national professional programs.

The presentation emphasized several homeowner assistance and neighborhood improvement initiatives, including the Housing Repair Assistance Program and the Sidewalk Cost Share Program, which provided financial support to hundreds of households and supported sidewalk abatement efforts throughout the community. Staff also highlighted ongoing outreach efforts with neighborhood associations, tenant rights workshops, homeowner education programs, and community events.

Operational updates included continued coordination with the Lexington Fire Marshal's Office, Salesforce system enhancements, and internal process reviews. Performance metrics showed more than 6,800 cases opened and closed, improved response timelines for complaints and re-inspections, and substantial citation and lien activity.

Looking ahead, the division identified goals to expand advanced inspector certifications, improve employee retention, and strengthen data-driven enforcement practices through enhanced tracking dashboards and proactive hotspot analysis. **No action was taken on this item.**

IV. EVICTION DIVERSION AND RIGHT TO COUNSEL

Charlie Lanter, Commissioner of Housing Advocacy and Community Development, presented an overview of the Housing Stability Services Program, which provides eviction prevention, mediation, and housing stabilization services to Fayette County households experiencing housing insecurity. The program operates through partnerships with Legal Aid of the Bluegrass, the Lexington Housing Authority, Fayette District Court, and community mediation partners.

The presentation highlighted the program's focus on early intervention strategies, including legal assistance, mediation, and targeted financial assistance typically under \$2,000 per household to prevent eviction, utility shutoffs, and homelessness. Staff noted that these smaller interventions are often more cost-effective than emergency shelter placements and help stabilize households before crises escalate.

Program history and funding updates were also discussed, including the transition from federal Emergency Rental Assistance funding to local general fund support. Presenters noted that additional funding allocations have allowed the program to continue through August 2026, with further funding proposed in the FY27 budget.

The presentation concluded with a discussion of future priorities, including stabilizing long-term funding sources, improving data collection and outcome tracking, coordinating with broader homelessness prevention initiatives, and strengthening integration with existing rental assistance and support services across the community. **No action was taken on this item.**

V. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

No action was taken on this item.

The meeting adjourned at 2:09 pm.