



General Government & Planning (GGP) Committee

April 28, 2026

Summary and Motions

Committee members Liz Sheehan (Chair), Shayla Lynch, J.D. (Vice Chair), Dan Wu, James Brown, Chuck Ellinger II, Emma Curtis, Dave Sevigny, Jennifer Reynolds, and Hil Boone were present. Committee member Whitney Elliott Baxter was absent. Council members Tyler Morton, Tom Eblen, and Amy Beasley were present as non-voting members. Chair Sheehan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF MARCH 10, 2026 COMMITTEE SUMMARY (Sheehan)

A motion by Wu to approve the March 10, 2026 Committee Summary was seconded by Sevigny and approved unanimously.

II. CHARTER REVIEW (CIVIC ASSEMBLY) (Wu/CivicLex)

CivicLex presented on the outcomes of Lexington's first civic assembly, a three-year effort culminating in a March 2026 deliberative process involving a randomly selected, demographically representative group of residents. The assembly, funded entirely through philanthropic grants, produced three primary recommendations related to council compensation, council accountability, and ongoing charter review.

CivicLex emphasized that the assembly model is designed to engage a representative cross-section of residents in informed, structured deliberation on complex policy issues. The selection process included over 10,000 outreach mailings and resulted in a final participant group closely aligned with Lexington's demographic composition across multiple measures.

Assembly members presented three recommendations, each adopted by supermajority vote. The first recommends increasing Council compensation to the equivalent of Lexington's average annual income (\$59,987), adjusted annually for inflation, with implementation beginning in 2031. Assembly members cited the expanded demands of the role, lack of competition for seats, and barriers to broader participation in public office as key factors supporting the change.

The second recommendation focuses on council accountability, proposing a charter amendment that requires the Council to establish publicly accessible standards for attendance and performance by ordinance. The intent is to improve transparency and provide voters with clearer information about councilmember engagement.

The third recommendation calls for a mandatory charter review every eight years, conducted by a randomly selected and demographically representative body, with a defined 12-month process timeline. CivicLex noted this approach is intended to ensure the charter remains current and reflective of community needs over time.

A dissenting assembly member presented concerns regarding the scale of the proposed compensation increase, potential unintended incentives for long-term incumbency, and the structure of accountability

measures. There was also interest in expanding the scope of the future charter review to include issues such as term lengths.

CivicLex clarified that all three recommendations would require charter amendments to advance and that draft language is still under development in coordination with the Department of Law. Key implementation questions include the appropriate level of detail for charter language versus ordinance, as well as how best to reflect the intent of the compensation benchmark over time.

Committee discussion reflected broad appreciation for the assembly process, particularly its representative nature and ability to engage residents not typically involved in local government. Members raised questions about implementation timelines, ballot structure, and whether certain elements—particularly accountability measures—could be addressed through Council action without a charter amendment. There was also discussion of the challenges associated with placing multiple items on an already lengthy ballot.

Motion by Wu to accept the recommendations of the Civic Assembly regarding council compensation, council accountability, and charter review, as set forth in today's presentation, and to refer the proposed amendments regarding the same to the full Council. Seconded by Reynolds and approved unanimously.

This will come to the full Council for discussion at the June 2, 2026 Work Session, where draft ordinance and ballot language are expected to be presented.

III. LANDLORD AND TENANT ADVISORY GROUPS (Lynch/Lanter)

An update from the Department of Housing Advocacy & Community Development on the landlord and tenant advisory groups was provided by Commissioner Charlie Lanter. He described ongoing efforts to gather stakeholder input through informal advisory structures, noting persistent challenges in tenant participation due to time constraints, personal sensitivities, and structural barriers. In response, the department has shifted toward more flexible engagement strategies, including community-based forums and partnerships with service organizations.

Councilmembers discussed the importance of maintaining accessible, purpose-driven engagement opportunities and acknowledged the inherent imbalance in participation capacity between landlords and tenants. While there was interest in strengthening feedback mechanisms, the Commissioner advised against formalizing the advisory groups at this time, citing the need for flexibility and the difficulty of sustaining consistent participation under a formal structure.

IV. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE (Sheehan)

Motion by Reynolds to remove two items from the committee: *Recommendation 8 of the Planning & Development Study* and *Recommendation 10 of the Planning & Development Study*. Seconded by Ellinger and approved unanimously.

Motion by Brown to remove *Efficiencies In Our Development Processes and Compliance with HB 443* from the committee. Seconded by Curtis and approved unanimously.

Chair Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 2:23 p.m.

ORDINANCE NO. _____ - 2026

AN ORDINANCE PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO SECTION 4.05 OF THE CHARTER OF THE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE THAT, EFFECTIVE WITH THE TERM OF OFFICE BEGINNING ON JANUARY 6, 2031, ALL DULY ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL SHALL RECEIVE AN ANNUAL SALARY WHICH SHALL NOT EXCEED \$59,987 PER ANNUM, ADJUSTED TO EQUATE WITH THE PURCHASING POWER OF THE DOLLAR USING 2027 AS THE BASE YEAR; MAKING THE AMENDMENT EFFECTIVE FOR THE TERM OF OFFICE BEGINNING ON JANUARY 4, 2027, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE SET FORTH HEREIN; AND PLACING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT ON THE BALLOT AT THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT:

Section 1 – It is proposed that Section 4.05 of the Charter of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government be amended to read as follows effective for the term of office beginning on January 4, 2027, except as otherwise set forth herein:

No person shall be eligible to serve as a member of the Urban County Council unless he or she shall be a qualified voter and a resident of the County of Fayette or the Merged Government for a period of at least one (1) year prior to filing as a candidate for a seat on said Council. No persons shall be eligible to serve as a district council member unless he or she shall have also resided within the district for at least six (6) months immediately prior to filing as a candidate for a seat on the Council. A district council member must continue to reside within the district from which he or she was elected throughout the term of office.

All duly elected members of the Council shall receive an annual salary to be fixed by the Council, which shall not exceed \$6,000 per annum, or the maximum set by the General Assembly of Kentucky for Urban County Governments. Effective with the term of office that begins on January 6, 2031, all duly elected members of the Council shall receive an annual salary which shall not exceed \$59,987 per annum, adjusted to equate with the purchasing power of the dollar using 2027 as the base year. In no case shall any change in the annual salary of council members voted by the Council become effective during the current term of any council member.

Section 2 – That the Clerk of the Urban County Council be and hereby is directed to forward a certified copy of this Ordinance to the Fayette County Clerk for placement on the ballot at the next general election on November 3, 2026.

Section 3 – That this Ordinance shall become effective upon the date of its passage.

PASSED URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL:

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CLERK OF URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLISHED:
MSC:4912-9256-4911, v. 1

ORDINANCE NO. _____ - 2026

AN ORDINANCE PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO SECTION 4.07 OF THE CHARTER OF THE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE THAT THE URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL SHALL, BY ORDINANCE OR RESOLUTION, ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR COUNCIL MEMBER ATTENDANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY, WHICH SHALL BE REVIEWED AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH COUNCIL TERM, AND FURTHER PROVIDE THAT RECORDS DOCUMENTING COMPLIANCE WITH ATTENDANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS SHALL BE PUBLIC RECORDS; MAKING THE AMENDMENT EFFECTIVE FOR THE TERM OF OFFICE BEGINNING ON JANUARY 4, 2027; AND PLACING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT ON THE BALLOT AT THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT:

Section 1 – It is proposed that Section 4.07 of the Charter of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government be amended to read as follows effective for the term of office beginning on January 4, 2027:

The presiding officer of the Council shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Merged Government, to be known as the "Mayor." As presiding officer, the Mayor shall have a vote on all matters, substantive and procedural, only in the case of a tie vote among the elected members of the Council. In no case shall the Mayor, as presiding officer, be denied the right of introducing, presenting or otherwise inserting into the record of the Council any resolution, recommendation, or proposed ordinance.

In the absence of the Mayor, the presiding officer of the Council shall be the Vice-Mayor, who shall be the at-large member of the Council who received the highest number of votes in the last preceding general election of the Merged Government at which at-large Council members were elected. In the event the at-large member receiving the highest number of votes in the general election should be or become unwilling, unqualified or unable to serve, the at-large member who received the next highest number of votes and who is willing and qualified to serve shall become Vice-Mayor. In the event of a tie between at-large members as to the highest number of votes received in the general election, the Vice-Mayor shall be chosen by a majority vote of the Council from among the tied at-large members of the Council at a special meeting of the Council immediately following the installation of the Council members elected in the general election of the Merged Government at which at-large Council members were elected. The Vice-Mayor shall serve for a term of four (4) years and shall assume office on the first Monday in January following his or her election. The powers of the Vice-Mayor as presiding officer of the Council shall be the same as those prescribed for the Mayor, except that the Vice-Mayor shall be entitled to vote on all matters, substantive and procedural, when serving as presiding officer of the Council.

Official action by the Council shall be by the adoption of ordinances and resolutions only. No ordinance or resolution shall be passed until it has been read on at least two (2) separate days; except that the Council may, by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members, vote to suspend the rules and proceed with the second reading, except in matters pertaining to appropriations, taxation or finance. All official actions by the Council, except as otherwise provided in this Charter, shall be by a vote of a majority of all Council members. Voting, except on procedural motions, shall be by roll call and the yeas and nays shall be recorded in the official record of the Council.

No official action shall be taken by the Council except in meetings open to the public; and the Council shall meet in regular, public meetings at least twice a month. The Council shall prescribe the time and place of all public meetings, provided that the time and place prescribed for regular public meetings shall not be changed except by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council. All changes in the prescribed time and place of regular Council meetings must be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in the area served by the Merged Government at least seven (7) days prior to the implementation of such change. A quorum for all meetings of the Council shall consist of not fewer than ten (10) of the fifteen (15) members of the Council.

Special meetings may be held on call of the Mayor, or a majority of the members of the Council, provided that: All members of the Council shall be given at least twenty-four (24) hours written notice; and the time and place of special meetings shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to convening any special meeting.

Except as otherwise provided in this Charter, the Council shall determine its own rules and order of business and shall provide for keeping a record of its proceedings. This record shall be a public record. The Urban County Council shall, by ordinance or resolution, establish standards for Council member attendance and accountability, which shall be reviewed at the beginning of each new Council term. Records documenting compliance with attendance and accountability standards adopted hereto shall be public records. Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter, amend, expand, or restrict the procedures for the removal or discipline of a Council member otherwise applicable under Kentucky law.

Section 2 – That the Clerk of the Urban County Council be and hereby is directed to forward a certified copy of this Ordinance to the Fayette County Clerk for placement on the ballot at the next general election on November 3, 2026.

Section 3 – That this Ordinance shall become effective upon the date of its passage.

PASSED URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL:

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CLERK OF URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLISHED:

MSC:4913-9971-6271, v. 1

ORDINANCE NO. _____ - 2026

AN ORDINANCE PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO SECTION 14.04 OF THE CHARTER OF THE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE THAT COUNCIL SHALL CONVENE A CHARTER REVIEW ASSEMBLY AT LEAST ONCE EVERY EIGHT (8) YEARS, COMPRISED OF NOT FEWER THAN TWENTY-FOUR (24) REPRESENTATIVES, TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE CHARTER, THAT COUNCIL SHALL ESTABLISH, BY ORDINANCE, SELECTION PROCEDURES USING A REPRESENTATIVE LOTTERY AND MINIMUM PROCEDURES FOR THE ASSEMBLY TO CONDUCT ITS REVIEW AND PUBLISH ITS RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, AND THAT COUNCIL SHALL ESTABLISH, BY ORDINANCE, A STANDING CHARTER REVIEW BOARD TO SERVE AS A PERMANENT ADVISORY BODY FOR PURPOSES OF IDENTIFYING AND ADVISING THE COUNCIL ON APPROPRIATE CHARTER AMENDMENTS BETWEEN EIGHT (8) YEAR REVIEW CYCLES AND FACILITATING THE WORK OF THE CHARTER REVIEW ASSEMBLY; MAKING THE AMENDMENT EFFECTIVE FOR THE TERM OF OFFICE BEGINNING ON JANUARY 4, 2027; AND PLACING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT ON THE BALLOT AT THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT:

Section 1 – It is proposed that Section 14.04 of the Charter of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government be amended to read as follows effective for the term of office beginning on January 4, 2027:

The Council shall be authorized to establish by ordinance a Charter Revision Commission to hold hearings and to make recommendations to the Council with respect to amendments to this Charter. Said Commission shall consist of not fewer than twenty (20) citizens.

Without limiting the amendment and revision procedures available under this article, and commencing in 2027, the Council shall convene a Charter Review Assembly at least once every eight (8) years to conduct a comprehensive review of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Charter. The Charter Review Assembly shall be comprised of not fewer than twenty-four (24) representatives and shall be established pursuant to an ordinance adopted by Council which shall, at minimum, establish selection procedures using a representative lottery and shall further establish procedures for the assembly to conduct its review and publish its recommendations, which shall include opportunities for public engagement.

The Council shall further establish, by ordinance, a standing Charter Review Board to serve as a permanent advisory body to identify appropriate Charter amendments between eight-year review cycles, to facilitate the review conducted by the Charter Review Assembly as set forth herein, and to advise the Urban County Council not less than annually on appropriate Charter amendments.

Section 2 – That the Clerk of the Urban County Council be and hereby is directed to forward a certified copy of this Ordinance to the Fayette County Clerk for placement on the ballot at the next general election on November 3, 2026.

Section 3 – That this Ordinance shall become effective upon the date of its passage.

PASSED URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL:

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CLERK OF URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLISHED:
MSC: 4916-2614-3407, v. 1

**PROPOSED BALLOT LANGUAGE
CHARTER AMENDMENTS**

Are you for or against ratification of an amendment to the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Charter to provide that members of the Urban County Council shall receive a salary in the amount of \$59,987 per year, adjusted to equate with the purchasing power of the dollar, effective for the term of office which begins January 6, 2031?

Are you for or against ratification of an amendment to the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Charter that would require the Urban County Council to adopt attendance and accountability expectations for its members, effective for the term of office which begins January 4, 2027?

Are you for or against ratification of an amendment to the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Charter that would require the Charter to be reviewed at least once every eight (8) years by a deliberative body of individuals selected by representative lottery and provide for the establishment of a permanent advisory body to make recommendations for amending the Charter, effective for the term of office which begins on January 4, 2027?