



Social Services and Public Safety Committee

June 9, 2026

Partial Summary and Motions

Chair Jennifer Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:01 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, Emma Curtis, Liz Sheehan, Dave Sevigny, and Hil Boone were present as non-voting members.

ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL ORDINANCE CHANGES

The proposed Animal Care & Control ordinance amendments were developed following community concerns raised in 2025 regarding animals left outdoors during extreme heat, cold, and other unsafe weather conditions. A collaborative review involving Council offices, Animal Care & Control, the Fayette County Attorney's Office, LFUCG Law Department staff, and community advocates identified several areas where the ordinance would benefit from modernization, clarification, and stronger enforcement tools.

The proposed changes establish clear protections for animals during unsafe weather by defining extreme weather conditions and making it unlawful to leave unattended domestic animals outdoors during those conditions. The revisions also update tethering regulations by expanding protections from dogs to all animals and modernizing outdated collar provisions while maintaining safeguards against improper tethering.

Additional amendments address gaps in the handling of animals seized in cruelty cases. Current ordinance language authorizes impoundment but provides limited guidance on long-term custody, resulting in some animals remaining in protective care for months or even years while cases proceed through the courts. To address this issue, the proposal introduces a "cost of care" process similar to laws used in more than 40 states. Under this framework, courts may require owners to post a bond to cover ongoing care expenses or forfeit ownership, allowing animals to be adopted or transferred to rescue organizations rather than remaining indefinitely in shelter custody.

Overall, the amendments are intended to strengthen animal welfare protections, improve enforcement clarity, reduce burdens on shelter resources, and align local regulations with current best practices and public safety expectations.

Motion by Morton to approve an ordinance amending Chapter 4 and Sections 4-2, 4-9, 4-12.4, 4-12.5, 4-14, And 4-21 of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government code of Ordinances to define unsafe weather conditions, set standards for tethering and confinement of domestic animals, implement a statutory scheme for the impounding and custody of victimized animals, and adopt urban county animal control officer as the Uniform Identification within this chapter, for officers of Lexington-Fayette Animal Care and Control, all effective following passage of Council. Seconded by Beasley. Motion passed without dissent.