



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes - Final

City Council

Monday, December 15, 2025

5:00 PM

Pre-Council

City Hall
Conference Room
1A/1B
701 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor called the meeting to order at approximately 5 p.m.

Present: 7 - Buffaloe, Foster, Waterman, Peters, Carroll, Sample, and Elwood

Chapter 5 Discussion

Attachments: [Board of Health Recommended Edits](#)
[Presentation](#)

Rebecca Roesslett, Public Health Director, shared information on the cause for this review and some background. The proposed revisions have been reviewed and recommended by the Board of Health. The changes were grouped into the following categories: changes to feral cat ordinance, vicious dog hearings, tethering requirements, and number of dogs/cats allowed in any household.

Rebecca reviewed some of the proposed changes to definitions, including changes to the definition of a feral cat colony.

Kevin Meyers, Animal Control Supervisor, shared information on changes to animal bite cases, specifically related to impounding a pet at home if the animal was current on their rabies vaccine and a current city license obtained within three business days. Kevin noted that for animals impounded at home, it was an honor system to ensure any required quarantine was adhered to.

The proposed changes to the animal neglect section to clearly define "adequate care" to include food, water, shelter, and health care. The changes would also require protection during severe weather.

There were a number of suggested changes to the dangerous or aggressive animals section. The changes would establish a clear and consistent process that would align with similar processes in Boone county. Council member Nick Foster asked about the differences between City and County animal control enforcement. The Mayor noted that it may not be possible to use a County appointed advisory commission.

The current city ordinance allows for 4 pets, with the exception of puppies under 6 months. The Board thoroughly discussed what changes would work in Columbia. Rebecca noted that animal control is a complaint-driven model - they get involved if a neighbor complains about sound, order, dogs outside all hours of the night, etc. The Board proposed clear parameters if an individual exceeded the limit, including ensuring the animal was sterilized, up to date on vaccinations, licensed with the City, and have

permission with the property owner of their residence, if renting. This would allow flexibility where appropriate, while maintaining neighborhood standards and animal welfare. It would also add an annual permit fee of \$50 per additional animal over 4 pets. Rebecca noted that this would still be complaint driven. Kevin noted that some households may have five dogs and are able to give proper care to all five. He added that, absent this change, it would be challenging for households such as that to determine which dog would be rehomed. Council member Vera Elwood asked if community members could proactively go through the permit process if they knew they would be taking in a parent's or child's pets. Rebecca said that it would be appropriate for that, though she thought it would more often be reactive. She added that the neighborhood standards would need to be maintained. She also emphasized that staff relies heavily on the expertise of animal control staff and their recommendations. Council member Don Waterman asked how often animal control finds a home with a household exceeding the pet limit. Rebecca noted that if animal control gets involved then it's typically a situation where the animals aren't well taken care of.

The proposed changes to feral cat colonies would lower barriers for participation. Kevin noted that the current requirements could be cost prohibitive. It would remove the annual testing requirements, but it would require at least one rabies shot. This would remove the microchip requirement as well. Kevin provided some information on what feral cat colonies look like and why it is important to spay/neuter the cats. Kevin noted that there is only one official feral cat colony, but that there were likely more due to the number of calls about people feeding cats.

Council member Betsy Peters asked when it may come to Council for consideration. Rebecca asked if there was anything Council needed more information on - the Mayor asked about the makeup of the commission. Council member Valerie Carroll asked about the public engagement process. Rebecca noted that they broke up the sections of the ordinance by subject matter, as well as shared information on BeHeard. Rebecca said they would use similar platforms, such as social media and BeHeard, to engage with the public. Dr. Tom Rose, Board of Health, shared some information on the comment periods during their meetings. Waterman asked about a general education plan, as he did know how well known the pet limit or feral cat colonies were. Rebecca noted that, if changed, staff would work on communication strategies, such as sharing information with new residents when they open utility accounts. Kevin noted that they start with education on everything before enforcement. Rebecca noted that the shelters are full, so it is not the goal to put more animals in the shelters.

The Mayor noted that an updated ordinance would come to Council, and requested information in the memo on engagement and education. She expressed appreciation for the thoroughness of the review.

II. ANY OTHER ITEMS COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

The Mayor shared the three items that were planned to be pulled from Consent on the Council's agenda.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:58 p.m.