
DATE: Monday, September 14, 2026
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

The City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, September 14, 2026, at 7:28 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: DeShawn Williams, Mayor; Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk; CM Maryalice Wu*, CM Christopher Evans, CM Shirese Hursey, CM Verdell Jones III, CM Stephanie Cockrell, CM James Quisenberry

***CM PRESENT REMOTELY**

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Bourema Ouedraogo, Darius White, Matthew Roeschley, Olivia Jovine, Chris Kalter

OTHERS PRESENT:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum present, Mayor Williams called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7:28 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. 08-24-2026 City Council Meeting Minutes

b. 09-08-2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by CM Hursey, seconded by CM Jones.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

4. Presentations and Public Input

Megan Tfala spoke in support of the City utilizing City right of ways to plant edible plants like fruit trees.

Written Public Input regarding animal ownership regulations from the following individual was received and read by CM Quisenberry: Sarah Nixon.

5. Council Input and Communications

CM Evans spoke in support of the Urbana Bazar music and arts festival and thanked all the involved partners and businesses for a successful event.

6. Reports of Standing Committees

None.

7. Committee of the Whole *(Council Member Christopher Evans, Ward 2)*

1. Consent Agenda

- a. **Resolution No. 2026-09-048R:** A Resolution Authorizing the Execution of an Urbana HOME Consortium Subrecipient Agreement Designating Courage Connection as a Subrecipient of HOME Program Funds for Tenant Based Rental Assistance FY2027 – CD

The Resolution approves and authorizes a HOME Investment Partnerships Program subrecipient agreement with Courage Connection to provide Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) using \$14,858 in HOME funds.

- b. **Resolution No. 2026-09-049R:** A Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement for Animal Control Services – Exec

The Resolution authorizes the Mayor to enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Champaign County for Animal Control and Impoundment Services.

Motion to approve by CM Hursey, seconded by CM Jones.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

2. Regular Agenda

- a. **Resolution No. 2026-09-047R:** A Resolution Authorizing the Execution of an Intergovernmental Agreement for Rental Assistance Between the City of Urbana and Cunningham Township Supervisor's Office FY2027 – CD

The Resolution approves and authorizes a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Intergovernmental Agreement with the Cunningham Township Supervisor's Office (CTSO) to provide emergency rental assistance using \$55,000 in CDBG public service funds.

Motion to approve by CM Hursey, seconded by CM Quisenberry.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

8. Reports of Special Committees

None.

9. Reports of Officers

None.

10. Adjournment

With no further business before the Urbana City Council, Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

This meeting was video recorded and is viewable [on-demand HERE](#).

Minutes approved: 9/21/26

PUBLIC INPUT - September 14, 2026 - Request to Read Into the Public Record - Animal Control Code Reform

From [REDACTED]
Date Mon 9/14/2026 6:31 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanalL.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanalL.gov>; DeShawn Williams <DeShawn.Williams@UrbanalL.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Mayor Williams, Urbana City Council Members, and City Staff,

My name is Sarah Nixon, and I am an Urbana taxpayer, and the operator of a local miniature therapy horse program. I explicitly request that this statement be read aloud into the official public record during the Public Input portion of tonight's City Council meeting.

Just days ago, a horrific predatory incident occurred in the historic West Urbana neighborhood. Three Huskies and / or Husky mixes - large, high-prey-drive animals - were being walked directly opposite Leal Elementary School. According to reliable eyewitness statements, the elderly handler had these three dogs tethered to her person. Because she completely lacked the physical counterweight to control their collective mass, the pack lunged, pulled her entirely off her feet, and dragged her across the ground for five to six feet.

The handler tried to stop them, but she was entirely overpowered. The dogs invaded a private front yard and brutally killed a beloved neighborhood pet cat.

This terrifying event was witnessed firsthand by an elementary school teacher from her classroom window as her young students were preparing for class. While the quick-thinking teacher shielded her students from seeing the direct violence, the children heard the commotion and heard her calling out the window to check if the dragged handler was severely injured.

I am not writing to demonize an older resident who was clearly out of her depth and potentially injured. I am writing because this was a catastrophic mechanical failure of physical restraint occurring directly on the doorstep of a primary school.

Our current municipal ordinances allow individuals to bring powerful predator packs into high-traffic public spaces without possessing the physical capability to restrain them if their hunting instinct triggers. As an independent researcher, I know the science here. While a solitary loose dog might roam out of curiosity, the moment predator breeds form a pack, their instinctual kill drive triggers and clicks on. They operate as a coordinated hunting unit.

My own years-long research reveals a sobering fact: canine attacks are the number one cause of unnatural death for miniature horses nationwide. When my program operated on an urban farm within the city limits of Urbana, we recurringly faced terrifying incidents of loose, powerful predator breeds - specifically, pitbull and husky breeds - roaming the property unrestrained. The margin of safety was razor-thin.

When an irresponsible handler allows an animal pack to drag them into private yards, the victims are left with virtually no immediate systemic support. Code enforcement behaves reactively rather than proactively.

Our frontline Animal Control wardens are wonderful, deeply dedicated public servants, but our legal framework leaves them underfunded and structurally limited. We cannot wait for a child outside one of our schools to be severely injured or killed before we treat handler physical incapacity as a severe public safety threat.

I am formally asking this Council to initiate three actions:

- Direct the Urbana Police Department and Animal Control to aggressively pursue this investigation, review local security footage to identify the handler and the true owners, hold them accountable under Urbana Code Section 4-28, and pursue formal "dangerous" or "vicious" animal classifications.
- Evaluate and Update Our Municipal Code to explicitly address handler physical restraint capabilities and owner responsibility. The city should amend its ordinances to hold owners to a much higher standard of accountability and legal liability when they choose to harbor high-prey-drive or powerful predator breeds but fail to maintain constant, absolute physical control over them in public spaces, including the dangerous practice of tethering multiple large animals to a person's waist.
- Establish an Automated Local Registry so that animal attack data is better documented and compiled.

Thank you for your leadership and your immediate attention to this critical community safety matter.

Sincerely,

Sarah Nixon

FAMILY COURT REFORM ADVOCATE

