



City Council Study Session Minutes

February 24, 2025 6:00 PM

Council Chambers - 111 E. Maple Ave.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Animal Cruelty Task Force (*Sponsored by Councilmember Wiley*)

This item was presented by Councilmember Wiley. This is a proposal to form an Animal Cruelty Task Force.

Cody Atkinson, Humane World for Animals - formerly known as the Humane Society of the United States was present.

MISSION: To unite animal control, law enforcement, and community partners to ensure that the animals of Independence are being treated humanely and living in environments free from cruelty and neglect. A multi-disciplinary collaboration will work towards achieving this goal not only through successful investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty, but also by educating the community we serve.

The Goals of the Task Force:

- Create a well-trained response team to respond to any large scale cases (hoarding, etc)
- Foster a working relationship and provide training
- Create uniform “Standards of Care” for animals in the city via ordinance
- Create uniform operating protocols and procedures including reporting incidents/cases from Independence Police to ACOs and vice versa
- Educate residents and partners about standards of care for animals in the city, and resources available
- Collect statistics/metrics regarding animal cruelty and neglect cases, and links to DV

and child abuse cases

2025 Legislation

CROSS-REPORTING: SB 65 (SENATOR MCCREERY) SB 65 would create a list of human service professionals who are mandated to report suspected animal abuse and neglect.

It creates training requirements for certain professionals to become proficient in identifying and reporting animal abuse/neglect.

It also would add animal control officers and humane investigators to the list of professionals who must report child and elder abuse/neglect.

Link between Animal Abuse and Family Violence

- Survey of pet-owning families with substantiated child abuse and neglect found that animals were abused in 88% of cases
- 75% of abused women who have companion animals report a history of their companion animal being threatened or intentionally harmed by their abuser, with children being present and witnessing the violence over 90% of the time
- Animal cruelty is a better predictor of human sexual abuse compared to a history of homicide, arson, or weapon convictions.
- Acts of cruelty against animals are now counted alongside felony crimes like arson, burglary, assault, and homicide in the FBI's expansive criminal database (NIBRS).

CANA (Child & Animal Neglect/Abuse) Coalition

Animal Control/IPD representative from Independence - Monthly meeting

- Training
- Case consultation
- Legislation

Participating Members/Agencies

- Independence Police Department
- Independence Animal Control
- Jackson County Prosecutor
- Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
- Missouri Alliance for Animals
- Hope House
- Wayside Waifs – Humane Educators

Training Options for IPD - No Cost

HSUS training is free and available NOW. Courses include:

- Animal Cruelty and Animal Fighting Investigations (+ Advanced course)
- Police/Dog Encounters
- Family Violence and Animal Cruelty: How Prosecuting Animal Abuse Can Save Lives
- Veterinary Forensics in Animal Investigations
- Large Scale Neglect Investigations
- Commercial Breeding Facility Investigations
- Pet Store Investigations
- Testifying About Animal Crimes
- Community Policing and Animal Protection
- Equine Investigations
- Farm Animal Investigations

Training Options for Animal Control Officers

- Safer Together – Virtual training by Missouri Alliance for Animals
- Under One Roof – Half day Training by Missouri Alliance for Animals
- Mandating Reporter Training – Online class

Community Education

Wayside Waifs offers educational programs for adults and children on animal care. These courses could be available at our shelter.

Goal would be to do Humane Education for Independence School District

Independence would be the only city in Missouri to have its own Animal Cruelty Task Force.

2. IRIS Update

Tom Scannell, Director of Community Development and Terry O'Toole with WHC which operates IRIS gave this presentation. This is an update on the IRIS system.

Launch Date: January 2, 2025

- Service Hours: Monday-Saturday; 6:00am – 6:00pm
- Fleet: 5 vehicles (1 Wheelchair Accessible, 4 Ambulatory)
- Booking Methods: Riders can book via the IRIS App, Web Portal or Live Call
- Fare: \$5.00 per trip • Payment Methods: Cash, Credit/Debit & Mobile App

Date range is January 6th - February 5th

Trips completed: 2,004 Total Trips with 221 unique riders.

Passengers per vehicle (per) hour (PVH)

Current average is 2.22 PVH; Industry Average is 1/5 - 2.5 PVH

On-time pickup is averaging at 93%

Top locations for pick-up/drop-off:
Independence Transit Center located at Noland and Truman Roads
Centerpoint Hospital located at 39th and Jackson
Blue Ridge transfer point located at 43rd street

Average ride rating at this time is 4.8 out of 5.0

Benefits of IRIS:

Free Hubs - 51.9% are free trips
Number of stops - IRIS had over 750 non-route stops
IRIS is available all over the City not just at stops
The service is flexible to the customer's schedule

Comments received

Number of comments from disabled

- IRIS is an option, but RideKC Freedom would a better option
- ADA Paratransit • Covers the entire city
- Fare = \$3 per trip; fare is free if within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed route
- ADA still gets riders into KCMO

Going forward they will continue to monitor and gather data on travel patterns and will continue to make adjustments as needed.

The current contract expires on June 30, 2025

Will do another update in May

3. GO Bond Question 1 Overview: Justice Center

Deputy Chief Michelle Sumstad gave this presentation.

This presentation has been given several times before to Council. Deputy Chief Sumstad reviewed the information previously given regarding the deterioration of the police headquarters building and the need for new space.

The police headquarters was built around 1972-74 and built to accommodate 100 employees.

There are currently over 300 employees.

There are several police buildings around the city that would be combined to one location if this bond passes and a new Justice Center is built.

Doing this will save overhead costs for the upkeep of multiple buildings that are older and will save time and travel for officers and command staff by being in one location.

The evidence and property room is extremely overcrowded. Some evidence is being kept on top of the cabinets as there is nowhere else to put it. The ceiling leaks which, at some point, could cause evidence to become damaged.

Vehicle equipment is maintained by in-house personnel who operate out of a garage at the main building. Limited storage here requires them to store other items throughout headquarters and overhead storage above the jail.

There are continued leaking issues going into the men's locker room, the workout room, and the

Sally Port area. There is water damage near electrical fixtures.

There is water damage, structural issues and areas where the wall has become separated from the floor in the detention facility. There are also issues with rats, mice, snakes and roaches in the detention area.

There have been two separate leaks in three months on the 2nd floor men's restroom.

There are parking challenges as well. They currently have overflow parking for personnel at headquarters, in the City Hall parking lot and a nearby church. This takes parking away from others that have business at City Hall or at the church.

The new building would also include additional firing ranges necessary for officer training as well as use of force training simulators for firearms/de-escalation training. They currently rely on outside sources for that training.

STAFF REPORTS

INFORMATION ONLY

1. Boards and Commissions Report
2. ***Please Note:*** *In accordance with RSMo. 610.021, the City Council may convene in an Executive Session during or after the meeting, in the Council Chambers and move to Conference Room D for the closed meeting, on matters of litigation, legal action, and/or attorney client communications, as permitted by Sec. 610.021(1), on matters of personnel, as permitted by Sec. 610.021(3) and personnel records, as permitted by 610.021(13), on matters of contracts, as permitted by 610.021(12), on matters of real estate, as permitted by 610.021(2) and/or matters of labor negotiations, as permitted by 610.021(9).*