



Lawrence County
WORKPLACE SAFETY COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2026 | **Time:** 5:00-5:58 p.m.

PRESENT: County Executive David Morgan. **Commissioners** Chris Sutherland, Rick Skillington, Shane Eaton, Phillip Heatherly, Steve Hagan, Delano Benefield, Barry Luffman, **Sheriff** John Myers, **County Attorney** Ryan Durham, **Chief Deputy** George Barturen, **Maintenance & Safety Director** Mark Brewer, **Workers Comp** Angie Jacobs, and **EMS Director** Michelle Ayers.

ROLL CALL: *Chairman* Rick Skillington, Chris Sutherland, Steve Hagan, Delano Benefield.

ABSENT: *Vice-chair* Tammy Wisdom.

- **Commissioner Skillington** called the meeting to order and thanked Mark Brewer for installing AEDs in county buildings.
- **Ayers** reported that monitoring plan for AEDs has been set up. EMS Assistant Director Kane Watkins will conduct a class on AED use for County employees, Skillington asked to be notified when it is offered. Certification class includes CPR.
- Sample sign-up sheet for training, Watkins' training certification, and emergency response procedure included in folder.
- **Jacobs** presented Workman's Comp reports for 2025 and January, 2026. Stated that fewest accidents ever occurred in 2025. Reports included in folder.

Approve Workman's Comp Reports.

Motion: Hagan. **Second:** Benefield.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 4/0.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION:

- Pets being brought to work by employees
- **Durham** presented options and considerations to Commissioners (included in folder). Advised that it should be framed as workplace safety, liability, and management issues.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS:

- Service animals trained and certified can be approved to assist with a specific disability.
- You can ask about the pet certification, but only HR can have that conversation with the employee. We are not required to allow emotional support animals.
- Service animals can also act as emotional support animals.
- Case-by-case basis would determine if an emotional support animal is a reasonable adaptation for an employee.
- Will our insurance cover harm caused by a non-service animal?
- Overall perception of professionalism. Consistency, morale, animal-free zones? Health code issues.
- Options include: 1. No Pets (most common), 2. Limited pet policy, 3. Hybrid, 4. No action.
- **Commissioner Sutherland:** based on past experience, we should allow no pets.
- **Commissioner Hagan:** emotional support determination is very subjective and easy to get.
- **Commissioner Heatherly:** Commission needs to address everything in a policy handbook with updates distributed to employees.
- **Myers:** include provision about removing animal that's disruptive.
- **Commissioner Eaton:** Department heads need to be held accountable for following the policy.
- Discussion of cat(s) at Senior Citizens. Senior Citizens employees are not county employees – but the senior building is a county building.
- **Commissioner Skillington:** Suggests committee establish parameters, then ask Durham to write a policy. After Durham discusses policy with H.R., Workplace Safety and Human Resources Committees will hold a joint meeting to approve.

Motion to Pursue Strictest Policy.

Motion: Hagan. **Second:** Sutherland.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously, 4/0.

Meeting Recessed.

Minutes Submitted By: Nancy Brewer

Formatted By: Christian Tyree