



Legal & Legislative Committee

Monday, August 10, 2026, 7:10 PM
City Council Chamber, 1st Floor
562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Manjula Karamcheti	Vice Chair
Cal Finocchiaro	
Maya Jamaledine	
Kimberly Vandiver	
William Bradley Freeman	President, Ex Officio Member
Elizabeth Kowal	Chair

Meeting was called to order by Chair Kowal at 7:10 PM

Non-voting councilors Jason Chen and Christopher Park were in attendance

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Manjula Karamcheti	Vice Chair	Present	
Cal Finocchiaro	Ward 6	Absent	
Maya Jamaledine	At-Large	Present	
Kimberly Vandiver	Ward 5	Present	
William Bradley Freeman	President, Ex Officio Member	Present	
Elizabeth Kowal	Chair	Present	

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

A. Legal & Legislative Committee Meeting March 23, 2026 7:00 PM

Motion to Approve the minutes by unanimous consent without reading made by Chair Kowal

All were in favor and minutes were approved

RESULTS:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Maya Jamaledine, Manjula Karamcheti, Bradley Freeman, Elizabeth Kowal, Kim Vandiver
NAYS:	None

ABSENT:	Cal Finocchiaro
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III. PUBLIC COMMENT

When: Aug 10, 2026 07:10 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Legal & Legislative Committee Meeting

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:

<https://cityofmelrose->

[org.zoom.us/j/91494962042?pwd=2r6Th3Jt3R4JbQABmpCTIW84jTFmrk.1](https://cityofmelrose-org.zoom.us/j/91494962042?pwd=2r6Th3Jt3R4JbQABmpCTIW84jTFmrk.1)

Passcode:947646

Webinar ID: 914 9496 2042

Passcode: 947646

Motion to Open public comment made by Chair Kowal at 7:11 PM

Comments on the floor:

Chris Giles, of a business at 162 Tremont Street, expressed concern over the proposed vaccine requirements for the dog kennel licensing order. She has no problem with requiring rabies and distemper vaccines, but requests that the Bordatella vaccine requirement be removed. She prefers to let the dog owners decide if they want to administer the vaccine. A small percentage of the dogs in her kennel ever get kennel cough and many of those that develop it had already been vaccinated for it.

There were no comments via Zoom

Motion to Close public comment made by Chair Kowal at 7:15 PM

IV. ORDERS

- A. **(ID # 2026-1530):** Amending Article II, Section 93 of the Melrose Code of Ordinances to allow for a licensing and inspection process for kennel licensing in Melrose.

Anthony Chui, Director of Health and Human Services, proposed amendments based on Ollie's Law, which was first enacted in September 2024. This highlighted statewide oversight in terms of kennel safety and kennel inspections requirements. They are looking to adopt regulations statewide to have the same standards and enforcement for all kennels and different types.

The councilors discussed whether Bordetella vaccine (kennel cough) should be required for dogs in kennels, and it was explained that while the vaccine is not harmful to dogs and is commonly required by many kennels, there is no evidence it prevents the disease entirely. More discussion occurred on gathering data about vaccination rates and infection outcomes. It was clarified that while kennels could choose to require the vaccine themselves, removing it from minimum requirements would give businesses more flexibility while maintaining the option for individual kennels to implement stricter policies. There are no known side effects from the Bordatella vaccine and Stoneham and Wakefield have not updated their kennel license ordinance yet, and Bordatella is not dangerous to humans like rabies is. President Freeman then made a motion to remove the Bordatella vaccine requirement

from the ordinance.

Motion to Amend Section B, (3), i, by striking “all dogs within the commercial kennel shall have current vaccinations for rabies, distemper, and Bordetella”, and replace it with “all dogs within any commercial kennel shall have current vaccinations for rabies and distemper” made by President Freeman

Seconded by Councilor Karamcheti

Motion passed 4-1, with Councilor Vandiver voting No

RESULTS:	ACCEPTED (4-1)
TO:	Amend
AYES:	Maya Jamaledine, Manjula Karamcheti, Bradley Freeman, Elizabeth Kowal
NAYS:	Kim Vandiver
ABSENT:	Cal Finocchiaro

More discussion occurred about increasing the permission threshold from three to four dogs and transferring fourth-dog permissions from City Council to the City Clerk. The discussion covered different types of kennels, with agreement that veterinary and commercial breeder kennels would not be permitted at this time. The group also addressed inconsistencies in age requirements between sections of the ordinance, and it was clarified that dogs must be registered at 6 months and can be boarded at 13 weeks.

Councilor Karamcheti commented that Ollie's Law does not specify much about the square footage of kennels and number of dogs that can be boarded in that space. Anthony explained that the town is working with local kennels to establish appropriate staff-to-dog ratios, currently considering ranges of 1:10 to 1:20, while awaiting potential stricter guidelines from MDAR. Councilor Karamcheti asked about dog walking businesses and the instances where one person is walking multiple dogs, and Anthony clarified that these would not fall under the current kennel ordinance but noted this might be addressed in the future.

Motion to Recess to open the Appropriations & Oversight Committee meeting made by President Freeman at 7:43 PM

All were in favor and meeting was recessed

Meeting was reopened by Chair Kowal at 7:48 PM

Motion to Amend Section B, (2), iv to specify “other kennels, including veterinary kennels and breeding kennels are not currently permitted, or not permitted in Melrose”, and to Amend Section B, (3), iv from “private kennel” to “personal kennel” made by Councilor Vandiver

Seconded by Councilor Karamcheti

Councilor Vandiver withdrew the motion and no vote was taken

Motion to Amend Section B (3) iv from “private kennel” to “personal kennel” made by Councilor Vandiver

Seconded by Councilor Karamcheti

All were in favor and motion passed

RESULTS:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
TO:	Amend
AYES:	Maya Jamaledine, Manjula Karamcheti, Bradley Freeman, Elizabeth Kowal, Kim Vandiver
NAYS:	None
ABSENT:	Cal Finocchiaro

Motion to Amend/add verbiage to Section B, (2), iv to specify “other kennels, including veterinary kennels and breeding kennels are not currently permitted, or not permitted in Melrose” made by Councilor Vandiver

Seconded by Councilor Jamaledine

Motion passed 3-2, with Councilor Karamcheti and President Freeman voting No

RESULTS:	ACCEPTED [3-2]
TO:	Amend
AYES:	Maya Jamaledine, Kim Vandiver, Elizabeth Kowal
NAYS:	Manjula Karamcheti, Brad Freeman
ABSENT:	Cal Finocchiaro

Motion to Recommend as Amended made by President Freeman

Seconded by Councilor Jamaledine

All were in favor and motion passed

RESULTS:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
TO:	City Council as Amended
AYES:	Maya Jamaledine, Manjula Karamcheti, Kin Vandiver, Bradley Freeman, Elizabeth Kowal
NAYS:	None
ABSENT:	Cal Finocchiaro

V. ADJOURNMENT

The City of Melrose does not discriminate based on disability and is committed to hosting accessible meetings and events. Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the City of Melrose or to attend meetings, should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Polina Latta platta@cityofmelrose.org.

Motion to Adjourn made by Chair Kowal at 7:56 PM

Seconded by Councilor Vandiver

All were in favor and meeting was adjourned

Amending the Code of the City of Melrose, by deleting Section 93-5, renumbering, and amending Section 93-9 as follows:

A. DOG LICENSING

- (1) Any and all persons who are owners or keepers of dogs residing within the City of Melrose shall register each dog which is six months old or older with the City Clerk and shall cause said dog to be licensed, numbered and described. The licensing period shall be on an annual basis commencing on January 1 of each year and ending on December 31 of each year.
- (2) The City Clerk shall not issue a license to any dog unless the owner or keeper thereof provides the City Clerk with a veterinarian's certification that said dog has been vaccinated in accordance with MGL c. 140, § 145B, or has been certified exempt from this provision due to a finding of the Board of Health that, due to infirmity or physical condition of said dog, inoculation is deemed inadvisable, or has a notarized letter from a veterinarian that a certification was issued or a metal rabies tag bearing an expiration indicating that said certification is still in effect.
- (3) The City Clerk shall charge the following fees for the issuance of dog licenses. Said fees shall not be reduced or prorated in the event that the license is issued for less than one calendar year. Spayed or neutered dog: \$20 per year; an intact dog: \$23 per year. A late fee of \$15 is to be imposed if not licensed by March 15 annually. No fee shall be charged for a license issued for a service animal as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act or regulations promulgated thereunder. [Amended 12-17-2012 by Ord. No. 2013-69; 8-21-2017 by Ord. No. 2018-4]
- (4) The owners or keepers of the dog shall cause the dog to wear a collar or harness, of leather or some other suitable material, to which shall be attached a tag issued by the City Clerk at the time of licensing. Said tag shall contain the name of the City of Melrose, the license number and the year of issue of said license.

B. KENNEL LICENSING

- (1) In accordance with G.L. c. 140 Section 137A of the General Laws, any and all persons maintaining a kennel in the City of Melrose shall obtain a kennel license from the Licensing Authority, who is the City Clerk. A Kennel is defined as a pack or collection of 5 or more dogs on a single premises. The licensing period for all kennel licenses shall be on an annual basis commencing on January 1 of each year and ending on December 31 of each year.
- (2) There are three types of kennels that may be licensed in Melrose:
 - i. **Personal Kennel (5-6 dogs):** Anyone wishing to keep more than four dogs, three months (13 weeks) or older, kept under single ownership for private personal purposes, shall apply for a personal kennel license. The maximum number of dogs allowed to be kept under a personnel kennel license is six. The City Clerk shall charge the following fees for issuance of Personal Kennel Licenses: Fee: 5-6 dogs - \$75.00. Copy of a Rabies Certificate for each dog over 6 months must be provided with any license application or renewal.

- ii. **Commercial Boarding or Training Kennel:** An establishment used for boarding, holding, day care, overnight stays or training of animals that are not the property of the owner of the establishment, in exchange for consideration and in the absence of the owner of any such animal. These facilities do not include animal shelters or pet shops licensed by the state Director of Animal Health. It also does not apply to a facility operated solely for the purpose of grooming animals. The City Clerk shall charge the following fees for issuance of Commercial Kennel Licenses: up to 5 dogs - \$75.00; 6 to 10 dogs - \$100.00; 11 to 20 dogs - \$125.00; 21-25: \$150.00; 26+- \$300.00.
- iii. **Domestic Charitable Corporation:** Any facility operated, owned or maintained by a domestic charitable corporation registered with the Department of Agricultural resources, an animal welfare society, or other nonprofit organization incorporated for the purpose of providing for and promoting the welfare, protection and humane treatment of animals. No fee shall be charged for domestic charitable licenses per MGL c. 140, s. 137A(c).

(3) General License Requirements

- i. Any application for a kennel license shall be submitted to the City Clerk's office on a form provided by the City Clerk. Before a kennel license can be issued or renewed, the kennel must be inspected by an Animal Control Officer to ensure that it is being maintained in a sanitary, safe and humane manner in accordance with standards and requirements set by the Animal Control Officer, and that all records are up to date and on file as required by law. All dogs within a personal kennel shall be vaccinated for rabies and certificates must be produced for inspection when requested. All dogs within any commercial kennel shall have current vaccinations for rabies, distemper and Bordetella. If, in the opinion of the Melrose Animal Control Officer or the Director of Public Health, additional vaccinations are necessary due to animal or public health concerns, additional vaccinations may be required. If additional vaccinations are required, license holders will be notified in writing by the Animal Control Officer or Director of Public Health.
- ii. No new kennel license will be issued unless the Melrose Animal Control Officer, Melrose Building Department, and City Clerk review and approve the application.
- iii. The City Clerk, as the licensing authority, shall specify on every kennel license the maximum number of animals that may be maintained by a licensee following an initial inspection, and each annual inspection thereafter. Such number shall be determined by the City Clerk and Animal Control Officer following the required inspection. For commercial boarding or training kennels, the number of animals shall be determined following the required inspection and in accordance with regulations promulgated pursuant to section MGL c. 140, § 174G of the General Laws to ensure the

property can support the number of animals while ensuring their health and safety.

- iv. A kennel license may not be used in lieu of individual dog licenses. All dogs in a private kennel must have individual dog licenses and tags.
- v. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, all kennels shall comply with all other provisions of Chapter 140, Sections 136A through 174G of the General Laws.
- vi. The City Clerk shall deny a kennel license until a kennel has passed inspection by the Animal Control Officer. If the City Clerk denies a Kennel License application or renewal, the Applicant may request a reinspection of the Kennel after reasonably demonstrating to the Animal Control Officer that the proposed Kennel has been brought into compliance with the requirements of this section and applicable state statutes. The Animal Control Officer shall then make a report to the City Clerk, who shall, within a reasonable time, review the application and make a determination.

(4) Inspection Authority.

- i. The Animal Control Officer may at any time inspect any kennel located in the City of Melrose. If, in the judgment of the Animal Control Officer the kennel is not being maintained in a sanitary or humane manner, or if records are not being properly kept as required by law, the Animal Control Officer may by order, revoke or suspend the license for the kennel.
- ii. Depending on the severity of the offense, a license may be suspended or revoked on a first violation of applicable laws or this Ordinance.
- iii. If a licensee or applicant refuses to allow the Animal Control Officer to enter and inspect a kennel, the refusal shall also be grounds for denial, suspension, or revocation of a license.

(5) Resident Complaints.

- i. Twenty-five residents of the City may file a petition with the Mayor, to the attention of the Melrose Board of Health, stating that they are aggrieved, or annoyed to an unreasonable extent, by one or more dogs at a kennel maintained in the City, because of excessive barking or vicious disposition of said dogs or other conditions connected with such kennel constituting a public nuisance.
- ii. Within seven days after the filing of such petition, the Board of Health shall give notice to all parties in interest of a public hearing to be held within 14 days after the date of such notice before the Board of Health.
- iii. Within seven days after such public hearing, said Board shall make an order either revoking or suspending such kennel license or otherwise regulating said kennel, or dismissing said petition.

(6) Penalties; violations; appeal rights.

- i. Any person or entity who violates this section shall be assessed a fine by the City Clerk of \$500 for a first offense and a fine of not more than \$1,000 for a

second or subsequent offense, or otherwise be subject to an order revoking or suspending their license.

- ii. Any person or entity maintaining a kennel after the license to maintain a kennel has been revoked or suspended shall be assessed a fine by the City Clerk of \$250 for a first offense, \$500 for a second offense and by a fine of \$1,500 for a third or subsequent offense, pursuant to allowable fines under Chapter 140, Section 137C of the General Laws.
- iii. Within ten (10) days after issuance of any Order revoking or suspending the license, further regulating the kennel or dismissing the petition, licensee may file a petition in district court seeking review of the Order, as outlined in MGL c. 140, § 137C. The decision of the court shall be final and conclusive upon the parties.
- iv. This ordinance may also be enforced through appropriate criminal or civil process under Massachusetts General Laws.



CITY OF MELROSE

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Board of Health

Frank Brincheiro, MD

Lillian Kelly R.N.

Dawn Jacobs R.N., MPH

Health Director

Anthony Chui, MPH

City Hall, 562 Main Street

Melrose, Massachusetts 02176

Telephone - (781)979-4130

health@cityofmelrose.org

To: Melrose City Council
From: Anthony Chui, Health Director
Date: July 15, 2026
Subject: Updating Melrose Code to Comply with Ollie's Law

Ollie's Law¹, first enacted in September 2024, was created in response to serious safety failures in dog boarding and daycare facilities, including the fatal incident involving "Ollie," a dog killed in a dog fight at a doggie daycare, whose death highlighted gaps in statewide kennel oversight. For the first time in Massachusetts, this law has established state oversight of commercial kennels, including daycare and boarding facilities by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources ("MDAR"). The law also required MDAR to adopt regulations related to standards and enforcement, which are expected sometime in 2026.

The Melrose code of ordinances currently has no process for the licensing of Kennels (currently only a "Special License" exists to allow for licensing of more than three dogs- and no one currently has a "special license" allowing for 5 or more dogs which would now be a private kennel under state law). Ollie's Law now requires that cities and towns develop local processes for licensing and inspecting of any operating kennels within their municipality. There are generally five types of kennels now acknowledged by this new law: 1) Personal Kennel, more than 4 dogs on a single premises for personal use; 2) Commercial Boarding or Training Kennel; 3) Commercial Breeder Kennels; 4) Domestic Charitable Corporation Kennel; and 5) Veterinary Kennel, a vet hospital or clinic that provides boarding for reasons other than medical treatment or care.

After review by our new Animal Control Officer ("ACO") and my department, we do have existing businesses in Melrose that now meet the new definition of "commercial kennel" under these new state regulations and we need a local process for our ACO to inspect and the City Clerk to license them. As mentioned above, this law expanded the definition of "kennel" under state law, and now includes doggie daycare and training facilities which currently exist in Melrose. The City needs to ensure these facilities are following the regulations and inspections required under state law which is why this ordinance is coming before you now for your review and approval.

As with dog licensing, under state law, the City Clerk is the licensing authority. All kennels- including dog training, daycare, boarding facilities- must now be inspected prior to any license being issued or renewed, and are subject to inspection at any time by the ACO to ensure they are being maintained in a sanitary and humane manner and that records are being kept as required by state law. They also must be reported to the state on an annual basis, once licensed, by the City Clerk.

¹ Signed into law as "An Act to Increase Kennel Safety" – Chapter 213 of the Acts of 2024.

The attached ordinance was developed by myself and our new Animal Control Officer, with assistance from the City Solicitor. The City Solicitor has reviewed and confirmed this amended Ordinance meets the requirements of the state law for kennel licensing and the City's responsibilities.

Passing this Ordinance will ensure compliance, improve local safety measures, and position us to adopt the forthcoming state standards of MDAR related to Kennel safety- expected sometime this year- without delay. Our ACO already has a draft application she has worked on to send to the City Clerk for review and approval, and has begun to develop an inspection checklist and requirements for these types of Kennels moving forward in the Melrose community.

For these reasons, I respectfully request Council approve the amended section of Melrose Code of Ordinances, Chapter 93 Animals, Article II Dogs, as set forth in the text provided.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Chui', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anthony Chui
Regional Health and Human Services Director
achui@cityofmelrose.org
(781) 979-4130