



City of Madison
Minutes - Approved
Task Force on Structure of City Government
Common Council Subcommittee

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Friday, December 7, 2018

2:00 p.m.

City-County Building, Room GR-27
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

NOTE: POSSIBLE QUORUM OF THE TASK FORCE ON STRUCTURE OF CITY GOVERNMENT OR THE COMMON COUNCIL EXISTS AT THIS MEETING.

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Yog hais tias koj xav tau ib tug neeg txhais lus, ib tug neeg txhais ntawv, cov ntawv ua lwm hom ntawv los sis lwm cov kev pab kom siv tau cov kev pab, cov kev ua ub no (activity) los sis qhov kev pab cuam, thov hu rau tus xov tooj hauv qab yam tsawg peb hnub ua hauj lwm ua ntej yuav tuaj sib tham.

Office of the City Attorney (608) 266-4511

[Legislative File No. 50732](#) - DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE TASK FORCE

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Meeting Called to Order at 2:03 p.m.

Present: John Rothschild, Alder David Ahrens, Ron Trachtenberg, Maggie Northrop

Absent: Eric Upchurch and Justice Castañeda (arrived at 2:06 p.m.)

Also Present: Lisa Veldran, Karl Van Lith, Alder Rebecca Kemble, Alder Paul Skidmore

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Trachtenberg, second by Northrop to approve minutes of the November 30, 2018 meeting. Passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this meeting.

4. DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals from the members present.

NOTE: The subcommittee later voted to suspended Robert's Rules to stand informally and allow for public discussion and engagement, at which point a member of the public, Brenda Konkel, provided feedback to the subcommittee on a number of issues.

5. DISCUSSION OF TOPIC AREA 3 IDENTIFIED IN THE CC SUBCOMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The subcommittee discussed Topic Area 3 of its work plan, spending the majority of the time on the issue of whether to increase or retain the current aldermanic salary.

The subcommittee identified a core policy question related to this issue: should the salary be considered a stipend for service or compensation for a job? The subcommittee held the discussion with in the context of assuming no other changes to the current structure of the Common Council (i.e., alders would remain “part time”, the number of alders on the council would remain the same, and staffing levels in the Council office would remain the same). Finally, it noted that the number of hours worked by alders tends to range anywhere from 10-20 hours per week to 30-50 hours per week, depending largely on the individual alder.

The subcommittee noted a number of factors to be considered when deciding whether to raise aldermanic compensation, including whether doing so would 1) properly compensate alders for the amount of time and effort actually spent on city business, 2) attract more qualified candidates to run for alder, or 3) make it more feasible for low-income individuals to serve on the Common Council. It noted, for example, that if alders were paid \$25 per hour for a 20 hour week their compensation would be approximately \$26,000 per year (compared to the roughly \$13,000 per year alders currently receive). On the other hand, Brenda Konkel noted that if the pay is too high (but not high enough), low-income individuals could be deterred from running because they would risk losing certain benefits. Others then noted that raising the compensation too high might result in individuals serving for money rather than for passion. Finally, subcommittee member Castañeda stated that alders should not be paid more than the current city living wage (which is approximately \$13.01 per hour) unless and until the Council raises the living wage.

In addition, the subcommittee discussed the need to address other issues besides compensation that could make the job of alder less demanding, including the possibility of alders with free childcare, transportation, or other programmatic support.

The subcommittee next discussed whether to increase the term of Council members from two to four years and whether to increase the term of the President and Vice President of the Council from one to two years. Related to the terms of council members, the subcommittee noted that most Council members would likely appreciate not having to run for reelection every two years and that this may allow them to focus more on the work of their district. However, Brenda Konkel noted that increasing the terms might dissuade individuals who rent their housing because they tend not to be sure if they will be living in the same district for the next four years. Related to the terms of Council President and Vice President, the subcommittee noted that increasing the term from one to two years could be beneficial because it takes most individuals almost a year to get acclimated to the position.

The subcommittee chose to delay discussion of staffing levels, training, and alders serving on Boards, Commissions, and Committees until the Boards, Commissions, and Committees subcommittee was able to address and discuss these same issues.

6. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The subcommittee will meet again on Friday, December 14, 2018 from 2:00-4:00 pm in Room GR-27 of the CCB, and again on Friday January 11, at a place to be determined. The major focus of that meeting will be how to adequately engage the public or get public participation, but will also look at questions of Mayoral staff and the relationship between the Mayor’s office and the rest of the Council.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Trachtenberg, seconded by Northrop. Passed by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.