



Office of the Mayor

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Date: July 16, 2021
To: Board, Commission, and Committee Members
From: Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway
Subject: Gender-Inclusive Language in Public Meetings

First, I want to take a moment to thank you all for your continued service on city boards, commissions and committees over this past year. The pivot to virtual meetings has had benefits, drawbacks, and adjustment challenges and I truly appreciate your flexibility and patience throughout the year.

I want to call your attention to [Administrative Procedure Memorandum 2-52](#), titled “Inclusive Workplace, Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, and Non-Binary Employees” adopted by the City last year. City staff are working on multiple fronts to ensure gender-inclusive language in the workplace as well as equity for all. I would like to encourage all of you to consider simple ways you can extend gender inclusivity throughout the proceedings of public meetings. Here are two ways to help create a more gender-inclusive space, whether in virtual or in-person settings:

1. First and most importantly, when verbally addressing registrants or other individuals that appear before your body, please refrain from using honorariums (Mr., Ms., etc.), and instead simply refer to registrant by the name they have provided. This avoids the need to make assumptions about gender and reduces the likelihood of mistakes that may be hurtful or offensive.
2. Second, during questions and deliberation, consider ways to reduce the use of gendered pronouns and honorariums. When referring to one another or to staff, please feel free to instead simply use first names or, if you wish to be more formal, use people’s titles – for example “Chair [last name]” or “Director [last name]” or “Committee member [last name]”.

For more resources on this issue, please see the recently produced [Gender-Inclusive Language Style Guide](#).

You and the other members of your Board, Commission, or Committee may have additional ideas on how to further gender-inclusivity and I encourage you to share that with each other and your committee staff.

Thank you for your consideration. I know, together, we can make Madison a welcoming place for all.