



# City of Madison

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

## Meeting Minutes - Approved TASK FORCE ON STRUCTURE OF CITY GOVERNMENT

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Friday, October 26, 2018

6:00 PM

Urban League of Greater Madison  
2222 S. Park Street, Room Evjue A (101)

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### **NOTE: POSSIBLE QUORUM OF THE COMMON COUNCIL EXISTS AT THIS MEETING**

[50732](#)

Documents related to the Task Force on the Structure of City Government.

### **THE TASK FORCE MAY SUSPEND THE RULES TO STAND INFORMALLY AND ALLOW FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND ENGAGEMENT OF ANY AGENDA ITEM**

#### **1 CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Present:** 7 - Paul E. Skidmore; David Ahrens; Ronald M. Trachtenberg; John E. Rothschild; Maggie Northrop; Eric S. Upchurch and Eileen Harrington

**Absent:** 3 - Sheri Carter; Rebecca Kemble and Justice M. Castañeda

Kemble arrived at 6:02 p.m.; Carter arrived at 6:09 p.m.

Also present: City Attorney Michael May and Assistant City Attorney John Strange

#### **2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Rothschild, second by Ahrens to approve the minutes of October 12, 2018. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

#### **3 APPROVE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 11, 2018 AND DISBAND THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SUBCOMMITTEE**

This item was referred to the next agenda because staff did not provide the Task Force with the minutes from the last government officials subcommittee meeting.

#### **4 PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment at this meeting.

#### **5 DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS**

There were no Disclosures or Recusals at this meeting.

**6 CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE MADE TO THE  
COMMON COUNCIL**

a. The Task Force first discussed whether it should recommend that the City retain the mayoral form of executive or switch to the city manager or commission form of government. Member Trachtenberg stated his support for retaining the mayoral form of executive power because, among other things, it is appropriate for the executive of the city to be elected at large by the people. Member Northrop stated that she has seen nothing in the information received from the Task Force thus far indicating a need to change the current structure of executive power. Member Skidmore agreed that he saw no reason to change and noted that vesting executive power in an elected mayor helps to ensure an appropriate balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of local government. Member Skidmore made a motion, seconded by Rothschild, to recommend retaining the current form of mayoral executive power. The chair took a roll call vote, which resulted in the unanimous approval of the motion.

b. The Task Force next discussed what, if any, recommendations it should make regarding whether the mayor or the president of the Common Council should chair meetings of the Common Council. Member Kemble noted that the mayor recently sponsored an ordinance that, if enacted, would allow the mayor to delegate the responsibility of chairing Common Council meetings to the president of the Common Council. The Task Force discussed at length how such a delegation would impact the relative powers of the mayor and president, including who would vote in the event of a tie and who could participate in discussion. Member Upchurch suggested that any recommendation the Task Force make on this topic be accompanied by an explanation of how power might shift depending on who is chairing the meeting, including how this might affect the Mayor's ability to vote in the event of a tie. A motion was made by Member Kemble, seconded by Rothschild, for the Task Force to make no recommendation on this topic but to include in its report to the Common Council the concerns expressed about how power shifts if the mayor delegates the duty of presiding over the common council to the council president. The Chair took a roll call vote, which resulted in the unanimous approval of the motion.

c. Third, the Task Force discussed what, if any, recommendations it should make to the Common Council regarding whether the mayor's veto power should be expanded, restricted, or remain the same. Member Trachtenberg stated his opinion that the mayor's veto power should not be expanded or restricted. Member Rothschild and Carter agreed. Member Skidmore noted that the Task Force had thus far received no indication from former government officials or the public that the mayor's veto power should be changed. A motion was made by Upchurch, seconded by Carter, for the Task Force to recommend to the Common Council that the mayor's current form of veto power be retained. The Chair took a roll call vote, which resulted in the unanimous approval of the motion.

d. Finally, the Task Force discussed what, if any recommendations the Task Force should make to the Common Council regarding whether Madison should pursue becoming a first-class city. Members Trachtenberg and Skidmore agreed that, given the challenges of becoming a first-class city as outlined by

the information received by the Task Force, Madison should not pursue first-class city status. However, Member Kemble and others noted that while they agree Madison should not pursue first-class status as currently defined in the state statutes, there are some characteristics of first-class cities that would be helpful to the city of Madison. Member Kemble suggested that the Task Force Report should note those characteristics of first-class cities that would be beneficial to the city. Thus, a motion was made by Member Trachtenberg, seconded by Member Upchurch, to recommend that Madison not pursue first-class city status but that the Task Force Report should reflect the characteristics of first-class cities that could be helpful to Madison. The Chair took a roll call vote, which resulted in the unanimous approval of the motion.

**7 UPDATE ON STATUS OF EXECUTIVE SUBCOMMITTEE, COMMUNICATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE, AND BOARD, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES  
SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Task Force received an update on the work of each subcommittee.

**8 UPDATE ON TASK FORCE FUTURE MEETINGS, SCHEDULES, AND MEETING  
LOCATIONS**

Staff noted that the November 19, 2018 Task Force meeting will be held in Room 260 of the Madison Municipal Building.

**9 OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

No discussion.

**10 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

No discussion.

**11 ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Rothschild, seconded by Carter, to adjourn. Passed on voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.