



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
[www.cityofmadison.com](http://www.cityofmadison.com)

## Agenda - Approved ETHICS BOARD

*Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened?  
Who does not have a voice at the table?  
How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?*

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Wednesday, October 22, 2025

5:00 PM

Virtual

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The City of Madison is holding the Madison Ethics Board meeting in virtual format.

**Written Comments:** You can send comments on agenda items to [ethicsboard@cityofmadison.com](mailto:ethicsboard@cityofmadison.com)

**Register for Public Comment:**

- Register to speak at the meeting
- Register to answer questions
- Register in support or opposition of an agenda item (without speaking)

If you want to speak at this meeting you must register. You can register at <https://www.cityofmadison.com/MeetingRegistration>. When you register to speak, you will be sent an email with the information you will need to join the virtual meeting.

**Watch the Meeting:** If you would like to join the meeting as an observer, please visit <https://www.cityofmadison.com/watchmeetings>.

**Listen by Phone:** (877) 853-5257 (Toll Free) Webinar ID: 874 9628 5061

If you need an interpreter, translator, materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this service, activity or program, please call the phone number below at least three business days prior to the meeting.

Si necesita un intérprete, un traductor, materiales en formatos alternativos u otros arreglos para acceder a este servicio, actividad o programa, comuníquese al número de teléfono que figura a continuación tres días hábiles como mínimo antes de la reunión.

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 hnuv ua hauj lwm ua ntej yuav tuaj sib tham.

For accommodations, contact: Ethics Board Support, (608) 266-4511, [ethicsboard@cityofmadison.com](mailto:ethicsboard@cityofmadison.com)

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

**Approval of Minutes**

January 30, 2025 : <http://madison.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

### Public Comment

1. [90433](#) Public comment

### Disclosures and Recusals

Members of the body should make any required disclosures or recusals under the City's Ethics Code.

### New Business

2. Elections for Chair and Vice Chair until June 30, 2026
3. [90212](#) Amending Section 3.35(12)(a) of the Madison General Ordinances related to Ethics Complaints to clarify who may submit a complaint to the Ethics Board.
4. [90443](#) Review and direct City Attorney's Office regarding Ethics Board Procedures  
**Attachments:** [Draft Edits Ethics Board Policy Manual 10.15.25.pdf](#)
5. [90444](#) Annual reminder of the current "elected and official code of conduct" and summary of potential updates.  
**Attachments:** [City of Madison's Elected and Appointed Official Code of Ethical Conduct](#)
6. [90445](#) City Attorney training on Ethics Code MGO 3.35

### Adjournment



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## Master

**File Number: 90433**

**File ID:** 90433

**File Type:** Miscellaneous

**Status:** Public Comment

**Version:** 1

**Reference:**

**Controlling Body:** ETHICS BOARD

**File Created Date :** 10/15/2025

**File Name:** Public Comment 10/22/2025 Ethics Board Meeting

**Final Action:**

**Title:** Public comment

### Notes:

**Sponsors:**

**Effective Date:**

**Attachments:**

**Enactment Number:**

**Author:**

**Hearing Date:**

**Entered by:** rbraselton@cityofmadison.com

**Published Date:**

### History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	ETHICS BOARD	10/22/2025	Discuss and continue				
<b>Action Text:</b>		Public Comment					

### Text of Legislative File 90433

Title  
Public comment



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## Master

**File Number: 90212**

**File ID:** 90212

**File Type:** Ordinance

**Status:** Items Referred

**Version:** 1

**Reference:**

**Controlling Body:** ETHICS BOARD

**File Created Date :** 09/30/2025

**File Name:** Ethics Board Complaints

**Final Action:**

**Title:** Amending Section 3.35(12)(a) of the Madison General Ordinances related to Ethics Complaints to clarify who may submit a complaint to the Ethics Board.

**Notes:** 6994CodeEthicsComplaints

**Sponsors:** Michael E. Verveer

**Effective Date:**

**Attachments:**

**Enactment Number:**

**Author:** Amber McReynolds

**Hearing Date:**

**Entered by:** mglaeser@cityofmadison.com

**Published Date:**

### History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Attorney's Office	09/30/2025	Referred for Introduction				
	<b>Action Text:</b>	This Ordinance was Referred for Introduction					
	<b>Notes:</b>	Ethics Board (10/22/25), Common Council (10/2825)					
1	COMMON COUNCIL	10/07/2025	Refer	ETHICS BOARD			Pass
	<b>Action Text:</b>	A motion was made by Vidaver, seconded by Govindarajan, to Refer to the ETHICS BOARD. The motion passed by voice vote/other.					

### Text of Legislative File 90212

#### Fiscal Note

No City appropriation required.

#### Title

Amending Section 3.35(12)(a) of the Madison General Ordinances related to Ethics Complaints to clarify who may submit a complaint to the Ethics Board.

#### Body

**DRAFTER'S ANALYSIS:** Elected officials of the City, all employees of the City, and all members of City boards, committees, commissions, subcommittees and ad hoc committees are "covered" by the Ethics Code which means they must follow the Ethics Code in Madison General Ordinance 3.35. Currently, the Ethics Code allows "any resident of the City" to complain to the Ethics Board about the activity of anyone covered by the Ethics Code. This amendment would allow anyone to submit a Complaint to the Ethics Board. For example, under the current code, an employee may not file an Ethics Code complaint unless they are also a

resident of the City. With this amendment, even if an employee lives in a different City they could still submit an Ethics Code complaint about the activity of anyone covered by the Ethics Code.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Common Council of the City of Madison do hereby ordain as follows:

1. Subdivision(a) of Subsection (12) entitled "Complaints" of Section 3.35 entitled "Code of Ethics" of the Madison General Ordinances is amended as follows:

"(a) Any ~~resident of the City~~ person may complain to the Ethics Board about the activity of any person or entity covered by this section pursuant to rules and procedures of the Ethics Board as approved by the Common Council. If a complaint is brought under this section against any member of the Ethics Board, other than the Common Council President or designee, the Common Council Executive Committee shall hear the complaint, acting as the Ethics Board and following the same rules, procedures and precedents of the Ethics Board. If a complaint is brought under this section against the Common Council President or designee, a panel of 3 persons shall hear the complaint in the manner provided in this subdivision. The Mayor shall select one panel member, the Common Council shall select one panel member and those selected persons shall select the third panel member. Panel members shall serve without compensation. The persons so selected shall not be subject to Common Council confirmation notwithstanding any other ordinance to the contrary."



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## Master

**File Number: 90443**

**File ID:** 90443

**File Type:** Miscellaneous

**Status:** New Business

**Version:** 1

**Reference:**

**Controlling Body:** ETHICS BOARD

**File Created Date :** 10/15/2025

**File Name:** Amended Ethics Board procedures for review and approval

**Final Action:**

**Title:** Review and direct City Attorney's Office regarding Ethics Board Procedures

### Notes:

### Sponsors:

**Effective Date:**

**Attachments:** Draft Edits Ethics Board Policy Manual 10.15.25.pdf

**Enactment Number:**

**Author:**

**Hearing Date:**

**Entered by:** rbraselton@cityofmadison.com

**Published Date:**

### History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	ETHICS BOARD	10/22/2025	Discuss and continue				
<b>Action Text:</b> This item will be discussed at the October 22, 2025 Ethics Board Meeting.							

### Text of Legislative File 90443

Title

Review and direct City Attorney's Office regarding Ethics Board Procedures

**MADISON ETHICS BOARD**  
**RULES OF PROCEDURE**  
**AND POLICY MANUAL**

I. Purpose and Responsibilities of the Ethics Board

The purpose of the Ethics Board is to see that ~~the purpose of the~~ Code of Ethics as outlined in Section 3.35 of the Madison General Ordinances (MGOs) is uniformly applied to all City of Madison Officials and Employees.

The areas of responsibility include but are not limited to:

- A. Fair and Equal Treatment
- B. Conflict of Interest
- C. Incompatible Employment
- D. Disclosure of Confidential Information
- E. Gifts and Favors
- F. Political Activity
- G. Campaign Contributions
- H. Disclosure of Interests
- I. Real Estate Disclosure

The Ethics Board will ~~stands ready to~~ hear and advise on all questions within its scope of authority brought to it by anyone covered by the Ethics Code including a City Official, Employee, member of a City Board, Committee, Commission (BCC) or a ~~Resident of the City.~~ Citizen.

This includes ~~the~~ reviewing ~~of~~ actions which have occurred in the past (Complaints), and as well as giving opinions on activities contemplated in the future (Advisory Opinions). Board decisions and opinions shall be based solely on the applicable provisions of MGO Section 3.35 of the Madison General Ordinances ("MGO").

~~(For further reference to purpose and responsibilities — See Section 3.35(11), MGO.)~~

II. Members and Officers of the Board

- A. The membership of the Ethics Board shall consist of four (4) resident citizen members; ~~and~~ one (1) representative of the Mayor; the Common Council President or an alder they designate or her/his designee who shall be an alderperson; and one (1) representative of organized labor Labor. The Office of the City Attorney shall provide necessary staff assistance to the Board, shall serve as its Secretary, but ~~s/he~~ shall not vote. The City Attorney shall give ~~furnish~~ the Board the ~~whatever~~ legal assistance necessary to ~~in the~~ carrying out ~~of~~ its functions.

- B. The Ethics Board shall elect its own Chair~~man~~ and Vice Chair~~man~~ and shall develop written rules of procedure which shall be submitted to the Mayor and Common Council for approval.

III. Meeting Agenda and Notices for the Board

NOTICES:

The following notices are prepared, mailed, and posted as necessary.

- A. Notices of the date of the meeting and the agenda are sent to all of the members of the Ethics Board.
- B. Notice of all meetings are submitted to the City Clerk pursuant to the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.
- C. Notice of the Public Hearings are distributed in the manner prescribed by law.

AGENDA:

The agenda is a statement of the City Ethics Board Chair~~man~~, on its items of interest to the Board and contain a preliminary listing of the items of business to be discussed at the meeting. The following list shows the order and type of business items to be discussed that appear on the Agenda:

- A. Approval of minutes of previous meeting.
- B. Public Hearings.
- C. Communications not requiring personal appearances.
- D. Special staff reports requested by the Board at previous meetings or related to important new business.
- E. Reports concerning items of general interest to the Board such as changes in state or federal laws which affect operations.
- F. Referrals from Council for action.

IV. Procedures for Hearing Complaints and Rendering Opinions

- A. Rules of Procedure (Complaints).
  - 1. All complaints shall be made in writing, indicating the provision of the Ethics Code believed to have been violated, and shall be notarized prior to



filing. No action may be taken on any complaint which is filed later than twelve months after a violation of the Ethics Code is alleged to have been violated.

2. All written complaints shall be submitted to the Office of the City Attorney and shall be public documents.
3. The complaint shall contain the following:
  - (a) The name and address of ~~complaint~~complainant.
  - (b) The name, address, and position of the individual who is the subject named in the complaint.
  - (c) The facts constituting the alleged breach of ethics set forth in detail and with clarity and certainty.
4. The complaint may be made upon information and belief.
5. The person named in the complaint shall be notified in writing that a complaint has been filed and the parties shall be supplied with a copy of the complaint, of the Policy Manual and of the Ethics Code, and shall be notified of the date of the jurisdictional hearing.
6. The Board Chair~~man~~ or Vice-Chair~~man~~ shall present the complaint to the Board for further action.
7. The Board shall convene as expeditiously as possible to determine if it has jurisdiction over the subject matter of the complaint. The complainant shall be present. If the complainant does not personally appear, the Board may dismiss the complaint without prejudice.
8. The Board may issue subpoenas and administer oaths. Fees associated with the issuance of subpoenas shall be paid by the person requesting the subpoenas.
9. If the Board finds it has jurisdiction over the subject matter, both the complaining party and the party or parties who are the subject matter of the complaint shall be given at least 10 days notice to appear before the Board for a hearing on the matter, unless both parties waive this time limit.
10. All hearings shall be conducted under oath or affirmation, with a record being made ~~thereof~~.

11. The parties may make a brief opening statement to acquaint the Board with the nature of the complaint.
12. The parties shall be allowed to question each other and present pertinent witnesses on their behalf, consistent with the subject matter before the Board.
13. The voting members of the Board may direct questions to any party or witness.
14. The Board may deliberate in closed sessions.
15. Upon completion of the Board's inquiry into the subject matter, a written report consisting of the Board's findings and its recommendation shall be submitted to the Common Council, such report to be made a public document.
16. A minority opinion may be provided to the Common Council on all recommendations submitted.

B. Rules of Procedure (Requests for Opinions).

1. a. When an incumbent or a candidate for City elected office has doubt as to the applicability of a provision of this code to a particular situation in which ~~they are she or he is~~ or may become involved or definitions of terms used in the code, ~~they she or he~~ should apply to the Ethics Board for an advisory opinion and be guided by that opinion when given. The applicant shall have the opportunity to present ~~their her or his~~ interpretation of the facts at issue and the applicable provision(s) of the code before such advisory decision is made. It is prima facie evidence of intent to comply with the section when a person refers a matter of the Ethics Board and abides by the advisory opinion, if the material facts are stated in the opinion request.
- b. When a request for an advisory opinion is made, the name of the requester and the nature of the request may, at the requester's choice, be kept confidential. When confidentiality is requested, the Board shall hear and determine the request in closed session. The agenda for the meeting shall identify the session as a closed session to hear a request for a confidential opinion pursuant to Sec. 3.35(11)(f) of the Madison General Ordinances and Sec. 19.59, Wis. Stats. When confidentiality is requested, the report of the Board shall also be kept confidential, but the Board shall prepare a redacted summary of the report as a public document; however, if

the requester requests in writing that the full report be made public, it shall become a part of the public record. If the requester makes public any portion of the opinion or report, all confidentiality is waived by the requester and the Board shall release the un-redacted report.

2. All requests shall be made in writing.
3. All requests shall be submitted to the Office of the City Attorney.
4. The requests for opinions shall state:
  - (a) The name, address, and occupation or position of person submitting request.
  - (b) A particular, factual situation upon which the request is being predicated.
  - (c) Particular questions arising out of the factual situation submitted, upon which opinions are requested.
5. Upon receipt of the request for an opinion, the Board shall meet as expeditiously as possible and determine if it has jurisdiction over the subject matter of the request. If the Board finds it has jurisdiction, it may hear the merits of the request at the same meeting.
6. The person requesting an opinion may be present at the meeting at ~~their~~ his ~~or her~~ option.
7. Upon completion of its considerations, the Board shall make a written determination of the matter and its opinion thereon as provided in Sec. IV, B., 1., above.
8. One or more members of the Board may issue a minority opinion which shall be appended to the majority opinion, subject to the requirements of Sec. IV, B., 1., above.

V. Code of Ethics

(See copy attached of entire Section 3.35 of Ordinance; or Ethics Code Simplified)



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**File Number: 90444**

**File ID:** 90444

**File Type:** Miscellaneous

**Status:** New Business

**Version:** 1

**Reference:**

**Controlling Body:** ETHICS BOARD

**File Created Date :** 10/15/2025

**File Name:** Annual reminder of the current "elected and official code of conduct" and summary of potential updates

**Final Action:**

**Title:** Annual reminder of the current "elected and official code of conduct" and summary of potential updates.

**Notes:**

**Sponsors:**

**Effective Date:**

**Attachments:** City of Madison's Elected and Appointed Official Code of Ethical Conduct

**Enactment Number:**

**Author:**

**Hearing Date:**

**Entered by:** rbraselton@cityofmadison.com

**Published Date:**

### History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	ETHICS BOARD	10/22/2025	Discuss and continue				
<b>Action Text:</b> This item will be discussed at the October 22, 2025 Ethics Board Meeting							

### Text of Legislative File 90444

**Title**

Annual reminder of the current "elected and official code of conduct" and summary of potential updates.



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## Master

**File Number: 90445**

**File ID:** 90445

**File Type:** Miscellaneous

**Status:** New Business

**Version:** 1

**Reference:**

**Controlling Body:** ETHICS BOARD

**File Created Date :** 10/15/2025

**File Name:** City Attorney training on Ethics Code MGO 3.35

**Final Action:**

**Title:** City Attorney training on Ethics Code MGO 3.35

### Notes:

**Sponsors:**

**Effective Date:**

**Attachments:**

**Enactment Number:**

**Author:**

**Hearing Date:**

**Entered by:** rbraselton@cityofmadison.com

**Published Date:**

### History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
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### Text of Legislative File 90445

Title

City Attorney training on Ethics Code MGO 3.35