



City of Madison
Meeting Minutes - Final
COMMON COUNCIL
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE

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

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

4:30 PM

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room 201 (City-County Building)

You must register before your item is considered by CCOC.
Please hand your registration form to the presiding chair of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Others in attendance: Frank Alfano, Enis Ragland, Chief Debra Amesqua, City Attorney Michael May, Jo Oyama Miller, and Jean MacCubbin.

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m.

Present: Ald. Paul J. Van Rooy, Ald. Santiago Rosas, Ald. Austin W. King, Ald. Paul E. Skidmore and Ald. Brenda K. Konkel

Absent: Ald. Isadore Knox, Jr. and Ald. Larry Palm

Excused: Ald. Zachariah Brandon

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve March 7, 2006 meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Ald. Skidmore, seconded by Ald. Rosas, to Approve the Minutes. The motion passed by acclamation.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Ald. Isadore Knox, Jr. and Ald. Larry Palm arrived at 4:36 p.m.

Present: Ald. Paul J. Van Rooy, Ald. Santiago Rosas, Ald. Austin W. King, Ald. Paul E. Skidmore, Ald. Isadore Knox, Jr., Ald. Larry Palm and Ald. Brenda K. Konkel

Excused: Ald. Zachariah Brandon

2. Discussion of Madison Fire Department and Council Communications.

Madison Fire Department (FD) Chief Debra Amesqua explained that over the last several years, when an emergency or an instance of interest to the media has occurred, she has taken it upon herself to contact the alder for the area. She said she has been mostly successful, but there have been times when she's been unable to reach the alder. This has happened for a variety of reasons, such as she's misread the list, there are new alders and her information wasn't updated, she didn't have a number where the alder could be reached 24/7, or the alder's phone won't accept/blocks the call from her city-issued cell phone. Also, house numbers don't run in sequence on all the streets in Madison so if she looks at a map and doesn't know the exact house number, she may misread which district she's in.

Chief Amesqua said that the FD does not currently have any way to specifically connect the address of an emergency/incident with an aldermanic district. However, they have contracted with a vendor to create maps for them, and they have been working with Information Services and GIS files to overlay the addresses. One of the tools they are using is plat descriptions which include the aldermanic district in which the address is located. They are using this new software now, working the bugs out of it, and Chief Amesqua stated that she thinks it will be ready for widespread use within about 6 months.

Chief Amesqua identified the draft notification document as her attempt at an understanding about the calls the FD would make during an emergency situation. FD personnel call the mayor and the Fire Chief, and Chief Amesqua would take it upon herself to call the alder in a timely fashion. She added that there are federal regulations that apply to the FD that do not apply in other services, such as the Police Department; thus, there is some information she cannot share with the alder. However, she said she thinks it makes all the sense in the world to notify the alder that an incident is occurring in his or her district.

Chief Amesqua said that if there are thoughts, questions or concerns for her to address, the notification document she brought to the CCOC is in draft form for this discussion. She added that she's committed to implementing the notification procedure as soon as the software is up and running and has been tested and proven to be useful.

Ald. Skidmore asked what is meant by a second alarm fire. Chief Amesqua responded that it means the incident required more than a first alarm. She went on to say that it happens fairly often and that alders may not want to be called that often, and that it's up to the alders to let her know when they want to be called. She added that she needs to treat all of the alders the same, so she doesn't have to go through and try to figure out who wants to be called for a first, second or third alarm.

Ald. Skidmore asked who is in charge/who takes precedence in the event of a big fire. Chief Amesqua replied that in a major incident, her command officers would not be responsible for calling alders; she would do that herself (or her designee if she is out of town).

Ald. Skidmore asked about using the reverse 9-1-1 system for notification. Chief Amesqua answered that the reverse 9-1-1 system is a tool that is available to the FD but that in her opinion, such a robust system is not needed to call a single alder. If there were a major incident within the city with a multitude of people or agencies coming in and with a strong likelihood that the FD would be making calls to several alders, they might employ the reverse 9-1-1 system.

Ald. Rosas asked who would call in an emergency. Chief Amesqua responded that the Fire and Police Departments work independently in an emergency, adding that an alder would likely be called by both agencies in the event of an incident.

Chair Van Rooy asked the committee if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Chief Amesqua for the report. She concluded by saying the FD will employ this procedure May 1, explaining that

she'd like to give alders until the end of April to comment on the notification proposal.

Present: Ald. Paul J. Van Rooy, Ald. Santiago Rosas, Ald. Austin W. King, Ald. Paul E. Skidmore, Ald. Isadore Knox, Jr., Ald. Larry Palm and Ald. Brenda K. Konkel

Excused: Ald. Zachariah Brandon

ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

3. Report of CCOC Sister Cities Grant Subcommittee - 2006 Final Report & Recommendations for 2006 Sister City Grant Program.
- A motion was made by Ald. Rosas, seconded by Ald. King, to Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the BOARD OF ESTIMATES**

Registrations:

Jo Oyama Miller - Support - Spoke

Frank Alfano - Support - Available to answer questions

Jean MacCubbin - Support - Available to answer questions

Ms. Oyama Miller identified herself as a member of the board of directors of the Madison Obihiro Sister Cities, Inc. program and as co-chair of the Mental Health Committee. She stated they would be entertaining a third visit from the city of Obihiro this October, specifically related to mental health. She explained that the mental health system in Japan is similar to the Wisconsin system (and Madison in particular) in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Obihiro group is interested in finding out about the current Madison mental health system model, which is based on community services rather than institutionalization and criminalization. This third visit in October will probably be a week-long work study looking at the laws and what's happening in Wisconsin and Dane County. She also said that on April 16, three members of the Madison-Obihiro Mental Health Committee will be sent to attend a workshop among ten cities, talking about what the mental health issues are in the state of Wisconsin and what is specific to Dane County and Madison.

Ms. Oyama Miller said the Madison model is well-thought of and revered in our country, and is a role model in foreign countries because it is a more humane way of treating the mentally ill, incorporating them into the community. She added that Madison is becoming known throughout Japan as a direct outcome of our relationship with Obihiro. She encouraged the CCOC to not only give the base funding but to understand that we are the model for these community services. Ms. Oyama Miller mentioned that she'd been asked about an error in their budget - something didn't match up - and she submitted a revised budget.

Ald. Konkel thanked everyone who worked so hard on the sister cities projects, adding that she knows it takes a lot of volunteer work to make Madison look so good around the world. Ald. Van Rooy agreed.

Ald. Rosas also thank Ms. Oyama Miller and related what a wonderful experience it had been to travel to another of Madison's sister cities, Camaguey, Cuba.

The motion passed by acclamation.

4. Creating a non-partisan Madison Election Advisory Committee.

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER

A motion was made by Ald. Konkel, seconded by Ald. King, to Approve: No action taken.

Ald. Konkel explained that last year at this time, a similar resolution was placed on file. One of the reasons they wanted the mayor to create a work group was because of concerns that, when Sharon Christensen retired, a wealth of knowledge might be lost if steps weren't taken to capture it. Now a year has gone by, and the work group still hasn't been created. She pointed out that today is election day, and she described some of the problems she saw/heard of in her district:

1. At on polling place, persons with disabilities couldn't get in the door.
2. No voter parking.
3. Poll workers complained of inadequate training.

Ald. Konkel stated that these issues continue to happen, and she sees nothing being done to address them. She said what's important to her is to have a process or forum for people to bring their concerns forward, not who's on the committee or how it's made up, and she hopes the CCOC can reconsider and pass this resolution. Ald. Konkel mentioned that she had pulled out her notes from a year ago, and she summarized the comments of some of the speakers from that time:

Janet Piraino suggested the working group should work on:

1. Projecting the appropriate number and distribution of ballots.
2. Better processing and estimating of the absentee ballots.
3. Better identifying and standardizing of the distribution of supplies to polling places.

Lauren Azar

1. Polling place set-up.
2. Recruitment of poll workers.
3. Adequate staffing of the Clerk's office.
4. Pollworker training.

Paul Malischke

1. Emergency plan in the event of a power outage.
2. Pollworker training.
3. Compliance with federal government accessibility requirements.
4. Voter fraud and other issues around the polling places.

Ald. Konkel explained that in an age where we have low voter turnout and much cynicism about the voting process, she thinks it's important that we have a process by which to address these issues.

Ald. King said that one of the polling places in his district ran out of ballots during the February 21 primary, and it took 20 minutes to get more ballots there, causing people to leave the line rather than wait. He also discovered that two people who don't live in his ward voted there in the February 21 primary. He emphasized that with some contested races and the constitutional ban on gay marriage coming up, voter turnout is going to be high in November, adding that the problems experienced during the primary and during today's election will only be bigger in the fall. He stated that creating this committee would be a small but important step toward fixing the problems.

Ald. Palm asked if we have a report of how the Clerk's office operates and/or a succession plan for when Ms. Christensen retires. He also wanted to know what answers the Clerk's office may have previously provided. Ald. Konkel replied that Ms. Christensen did come and speak at CCOC the last time this came up, but she was too busy to provide a written report. She was able to answer CCOC's questions, but not able to make a formal report.

Ald. Palm asked how adding another layer of complexity - a City committee - would help. Ald. Konkel responded that with Ms. Christensen retiring and with the Clerk's office being restructured, it is a perfect time to reexamine how things are done, reiterating that this is important for our community and should be a priority.

Ald. Palm wondered if this had to be a standing committee or if it could be active only around election times. Ald. Konkel answered that it could be an ad hoc committee that works for a while to standardize, for example, what an ideal polling place might be and to establish criteria for that.

Enis Ragland identified himself as representing Mayor Cieslewicz, and reported that the mayor is not supportive of this proposal. He stated that while the problems described are disturbing, they won't be addressed by a committee, they will be addressed by the new structure in the Clerk's office and by better training and higher expectations. He acknowledged that some expertise is being lost with Ms. Christensen's retirement, but pointed out that she has agreed to come back and consult if needed.

Ald. Knox asked how we can gauge the magnitude of the problems that have occurred. He also wanted to know if the problems were documented, what actions have been taken to correct them, and if the problems are sporadic or systemic. He said he thinks they need more information from the Clerk's office before they can decide if the City needs another committee.

Ald. Rosas reported that he has volunteered at the polls on numerous occasions, and it's chaotic and there are problems. He asked Mr. Ragland how, specifically, the problems will be addressed. Mr. Ragland answered that the problems will be solved by leadership, higher expectations and better training. Ald. Rosas asked if the CCOC would receive any kind of report back. Mr. Ragland said that, at this point, he wasn't sure who would write such a report, but said he could ask Ms. Christensen or Ms. Piraino to put something together.

Ald. King observed that there appears to be a fundamental philosophical difference: citizen oversight vs. staff oversight. Assuming the hang-up is simply about creating another committee, he asked what the mayor's position would be on expanding the role of the Board of Canvassers to take a more active approach in proactively addressing election problems. Mr. Ragland responded that he couldn't honestly speak to that, this being a relatively new issue for him in the mayor's office. He said he does know that the mayor would like the new Clerk/Treasurer to have an opportunity to address the issues, if there are any, in the Clerk's office and maybe put together a plan to address some of the issues that Ald. King and Ald. Konkel raised. He added that only cities of the first class can establish election commissions; any committee Madison would create could only be advisory and would have no authority to change the direction of the Clerk's office.

Ald. King said he believes a lot of department heads would say they get great advice from the citizen boards that advise them. He asked if there is any citizen oversight of or a cross mechanism for the Clerk's office. Mr. Ragland replied that, at this time, there is not.

Ald. Palm said he thinks that before requesting a report, we first need to establish what the protocol and structure are. He suggested trying an ad hoc committee for the fall. It would be advisory to the City and the alders but would have an end date.

Ald. Konkel wondered what the mayor's office would think of that, reiterating that there needs to be some kind of process. She said she likes the idea of a citizen committee because it is able to have people come and speak before it, and because a public process is more transparent. She suggested that the CCOC could refer the item if Mr. Ragland wanted to talk to the mayor about it some more. Mr. Ragland responded that he would like to take it back to the mayor, adding that he believes the mayor will say he wants to get the new Clerk/Treasurer on board, have him or her meet with alders and others who have concerns, and allow the new Clerk/Treasurer time to put together a plan to address the concerns. If, after that, an ad hoc or advisory committee is warranted, Mr. Ragland thought the new Clerk/Treasurer would not hesitate to establish one.

Ald. Konkel said she is concerned about how public concerns will be addressed via an internal process. Mr. Ragland replied that there are several ways to gather public input, such as a public hearing or focus group. He went on to say that the general public doesn't appear to be interested in election issues outside of election time. Ald. Konkel stated that she is disappointed in that response because she thinks people do care. She said she thinks the issues should get resolved when it's not election season, when candidates are not involved, and when there is not a big issue on the ballot. The problems should get resolved before all that happens, therefore a committee should start moving on these issues sooner rather than later.

Ald. Knox suggested getting Ms. Christensen to write a summary of past problems for the new Clerk/Treasurer and making it a high priority for him or her to review the summary and report back to the CCOC. Then the CCOC would have some data about the types of problems that have occurred and what the new Clerk/Treasurer's plans are and would be in a better position to make a decision about establishing a committee.

A motion was made by Ald. King, seconded by Ald. Konkel, to Rerefer to the COMMON COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE, due back on May 16, 2006

As part of the motion, Ald. King requested that the Mayor's office provide a written analysis of what they hope to accomplish with the new City Clerk/Treasurer and whether there are any other options they would like to explore along these lines. He said he's especially interested in learning if the Mayor would be receptive to beefening up the Board of Canvassers so it has a more expanded scope.

The motion passed by acclamation.

5. Amending Section 3.69(22) of the Madison General Ordinances to modify the

requirement that three (3) members of the Section 8 Advisory Committee be tenants or tenant service providers.

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER

A motion was made by Ald. Rosas, seconded by Ald. Skidmore, to Approve: No action taken.

Ald. King asked if this committee is doing anything and how long it has been since it met. He said he thought the committee was supposed to aggressively market the Section 8 program to landlords who discriminate against Section 8 tenants by refusing them housing.

Ald. Konkel said the committee doesn't do anything: the members don't show up and there is no agenda. No one can get recruited to be on it because the committee doesn't meet. She added that the committee is no longer needed since Section 8 is now widely accepted by landlords because they have a lot of vacancies. Ald. Konkel said she has no problem with the amendment, she just doesn't know who wants to even serve on the committee. She went on to say that if the Mayor is concerned about committees, perhaps this one should be eliminated.

Ald. Knox asked for clarification, wondering if this is the Housing Committee or a subcommittee of CDA. Ald. Konkel replied that it is not.

SUBSTITUTE - Repealing Section 3.69(22) and amending Sections 32.12(15) and (16) of the Madison General Ordinances to eliminate the Section 8 Advisory Committee.

Substitute

A motion was made by Ald. King, seconded by Ald. Konkel, to **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER**

City Attorney May pointed out that the substitute motion would strike this out of the ordinances. Ald. King said the intent of the motion was to eliminate all of section 22, thereby killing the committee.

The motion passed by acclamation.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ald. Skidmore, seconded by Ald. King, to Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The motion passed by acclamation.