

# Memo

To: Alder Mark Clear, Council President  
From: Mayor Dave Cieslewicz  
Date: January 25, 2011  
Re: Alder Committee Appointment Process

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## Background

The City of Madison has 87 committees made up of 840 citizen appointments and 107 alder appointments. In addition, the mayor makes 12 alder appointments and 44 citizen appointments to 19 non-city committees. In 2009, the mayor appointed and the Council confirmed 499 appointments, including alders and citizens, for both appointments and reappointments.

## Process

Alder appointments are made every two years after City Council elections or when there are unexpected vacancies or new committees created. The first step is asking Alders which committees they are most interested in serving on. I send an email to all Alders asking for their preferences, ranked in priority order. In addition, there are several factors taken into consideration.

For citizen appointments, I consider existing candidate lists, qualifications, recommendations from alders, diversity, ideological balance, geographical balance and years of service. Several of the same considerations also come into play for Alder appointments.

- **Alder preferences:** Alders are asked which committees they have the most interest in serving on. Needless to say, with a limited number of seats, not all requests can be fulfilled, but all are taken into consideration. Requests are ranked and every attempt is made to give alders their top priorities.
- **Experience/Qualifications:** Professional skills and expertise that may be useful to the committee are considered. For example, Alder Cnare was appointed to the Water Board because her public relations skills were useful to help in the public outreach process the board was creating.
- **Ideological balance:** The general makeup of a committee is considered in an effort to achieve a balance of perspectives and expertise on each body. I generally try to appoint Alders with different perspectives when there are multiple Alder seats on a committee. For example, on the Board of Estimates, I try to balance fiscally conservative Alders with more liberal Alders.

- **Geographical balance:** The geographical makeup of a body is also considered in an effort to balance the committee with representation from various geographical areas of the city. Again, I try to balance viewpoints from different parts of the city when there are multiple Alder seats on a committee. For example, we make an extra effort to make sure there is geographical balance in reviewing developments in different parts of the city on Plan Commission.

In addition to these considerations, many seats require specific districts to be represented or are designated for the Council President. Other committees require the Council President to make appointments. These requirements are obviously followed in the mayor's appointments. Even when not required, we try to match Alders with issues that affect their district. For example, the Alder from the 13<sup>th</sup> district usually sits on the Zoo Commission and the Harambee Board. The Alder from the fourth has traditionally served on the Overture Board.

In addition, with multiple meeting commitments for Alders, conflicts between other committee or neighborhood meetings must also be considered. It is helpful for Alders to prioritize their interest in committees when requesting appointments.

Since generally, the first factor the mayor considers is Alders' interest in serving on various committees, communication with my office is the most helpful in determining Alder appointments. We'll continue to reach out each spring that appointments are made and when seats become available.