



CITY OF MADISON



POLICE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

MADISON'S POLICE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT BOARD

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) was established under Madison General Ordinance ([MGO 5.20](#)) to provide independent, community centered oversight of the Madison Police Department (MPD). The Board is authorized to hire and supervise the Independent Police Monitor (Monitor) and is charged with working collaboratively with the Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) and the community to review and make recommendations regarding police discipline, use of force, and other policies and practices.

This Annual Report to the Madison community, the Mayor, and Common Council fulfills the Board's ordinance responsibility and reflects the commitment to community centered police oversight. This report provides an assessment of the OIM's work, a summary of the Board's activities, community concerns, and next steps for the Board.

During the 2025 reporting year, the OIM faced many challenges, including processing the backlog in complaint investigations, concerns regarding responsiveness to public records requests, and other structural and resource constraints. Despite these challenges, the Board made significant progress in strengthening its internal operations and structure, advancing its oversight role. Notable accomplishments included maintaining strong member engagement with approximately 90% attendance across meetings, restructuring committee functions following a two-day governance retreat, and advancing updates to Board policies and procedures to improve clarity, efficiency, and community accessibility. The Board also successfully navigated a major leadership transition within the OIM, recruiting and appointing an Interim Independent Police Monitor to ensure continuity of operations, including complaint review, public communication, and policy development.

Community engagement remains the foundation of the Board's work. The Board and OIM hosted multiple community listening sessions and public events throughout the year, prioritizing outreach to communities most affected by policing. Feedback gathered by the board revealed several consistent themes: a desire for greater transparency in complaint investigations, concern about delays in investigative processes, limited public awareness of oversight functions, and a need for stronger engagement with youth and unhoused populations.

The Board also initiated its assessment of MPD's investigative and disciplinary processes, identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. While progress has been made, community concerns persist regarding the accessibility, timeliness, and clarity of complaint investigations. These findings underscore the need for continued improvements in transparency, communication, and accountability mechanisms.

Looking ahead, the Board remains committed to strengthening the effectiveness and independence of civilian oversight in Madison. Key priorities include hiring a permanent Independent Police Monitor through a robust, community-engaged process; enhancing OIM capacity to manage complaints and data analysis; increasing transparency and accessibility of oversight work; and deepening engagement with communities most impacted by policing.

At the core of the Police Civilian Oversight Board's work is ensuring that Madisonians, especially those who are most impacted by policing, have a voice in shaping public safety. The progress made in 2025, although incremental, solidifies the continued commitment to building a more transparent, accountable, and community centered system of policing.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

“The purpose of the board is to provide a body that is independent from the Madison Police Department, authorized to hire and supervise the Independent Police Monitor and required to work collaboratively with the Office of the Independent Police Monitor and the community to review and make recommendations regarding police discipline, use of force, and other policies and activities, including related to rules, hiring, training, community relations, and complaint processes. ([MGO 5.20](#))”

Historical Civilian Police Oversight Background

Civilian oversight of policing has evolved gradually in the United States. Early examples of civilian police oversight, in the form of police commissions, were implemented by Progressive Era reformers in the 1880s-1920s. The Police and Fire Commissions in Wisconsin municipalities are examples of this. Most early commissions failed to provide meaningful oversight, in part because commission members were political appointees, and because the appointees tended to be highly deferential to police executives. The first more modern oversight entity, the Citizens Review Board in the District of Columbia, was created in 1948. This and other such oversight entities, which emerged soon thereafter, were created in response to racial tensions and riots. They were generally under-resourced review boards, focusing on individual police misconduct complaints. All of these early review boards were eventually abolished, due to resistance from police unions and local politicians. Another wave of oversight entities, with roots in the Civil Rights Movement, came into existence starting in the late 1960s, and this wave continued through the 1980s. These police oversight entities were frequently structured as investigative agencies. Again, the focus was predominantly on individual cases. These oversight entities generally had greater organizational authority and resources than those in the preceding wave, and many survive to this day.

Time brought increasing focus on the need to implement changes in police policy and training to address matters such as civil rights violations, racial profiling, and misuse of force. In the 1990s, the auditor/monitor model arose, motivated by a desire to promote systemic change in police departments through analysis of policies and trends. Civilian police oversight continued to gain in popularity, and the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) was founded in 1995. Increasingly, cities adopted multifaceted hybrid models of civilian oversight, combining functional and structural elements of different models in a single agency. In 2015, recognition of the importance of independence led Newark, New Jersey to implement the first oversight board for which most members were nominated by community organizations. At that point, many large U.S. cities had implemented some form of civilian police oversight.

Madison’s Police Civilian Oversight Board & Office of the Independent Monitor

A series of fatal MPD officer-involved shootings, notably including the death of Tony Robinson Jr. in March of 2015, led to massive protests and the creation of the Madison Police Department Policy & Procedure Review Ad Hoc Committee in late 2015. The Ad Hoc Committee worked to retain a professional firm to conduct a top-to-bottom review of MPD’s policies, procedures, training, and culture, and in 2016, OIR Group was retained to conduct the review. Meanwhile, alders set up the President’s Workgroup on Police and Community Relations to generate recommendations for changes in MPD policies and training that could be implemented in the shorter term, while waiting for the Ad Hoc Committee to complete its work. The President’s Workgroup issued its report in May of 2017, and the report was adopted by Madison’s Common Council. This included several orders, from Madison’s Common Council to MPD, mandating specific changes in policy.

In December of 2017, OIR Group issued its report, which included 146 recommendations for reform, including the recommendation that “Madison should enhance its civilian oversight by establishing an independent police auditor’s office reporting to a civilian police review body.” OIR believed that the creation of such a civilian oversight agency was needed for multiple reasons, including to ensure that the recommendations of the review process were implemented and sustained. In October of 2019, the Ad Hoc Committee issued its final report, which included 177 recommendations for reform. The final set of recommendations included both recommendations from OIR Group and recommendations contributed by community members and organizations. Madison’s Common Council then adopted the report, committing the city to implementation of its recommendations.

In June of 2020, the Mayor’s Office put forward a proposal to create a police auditor’s office. However, the proposal deviated sharply from the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations and was subsequently withdrawn in the face of the George Floyd Protests. The timing of those protests was fortuitous in enabling the creation of a highly empowered and structurally independent police oversight agency. A three-member alder workgroup was set up to craft ordinances hewing closely to the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations. The oversight design followed a hybrid model both structurally (i.e., including both a board and an independent monitor) and functionally (it predominantly followed a monitor model, but included authority to conduct independent investigations, etc.). The ordinances also included provisions under which most Board members would be nominated by designated community organizations, to ensure independence. These ordinances were passed by the Council in September 2020. The Police Civilian Oversight Board had its first meeting at the end of November 2020 and hired an Independent Monitor in December 2022.

BOARD COMPOSITION & MEMBERSHIP

The Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) is composed of eleven voting members and two alternates, representing a diverse set of lived experience, identities, professions and community perspectives as mandated by City of Madison’s Ordinance [5.20](#). Members are primarily nominated by community based organizations who have budgets under \$1 million, that have expertise in civil rights, racial equity, mental health, immigrant rights, and social justice. In 2025, the Board maintained broad demographic and experiential diversity, including individuals with personal and professional experience related to homelessness, substance use, mental health, and youth advocacy.

On November 11, 2025, the Common Council codified the board’s requested ordinance amendment (5.20(3)(a)3) of the oversight of the community-based organizations nomination process from The Mayor and Common Council, in collaboration with the Department of Civil Rights, to The Office of the Independent Monitor, in conjunction with the Board seeking to align with current Board procedures.

Noteworthy, this amendment to the Board’s foundational ordinance, was not initiated by the Board, however was initiated by Madison Alders and Common Council. The amendment was referred to the Board repeatedly with substantial input from Alders, community members, and the Board’s External Policy and Procedure (EPP) Subcommittee. The EPP Subcommittee worked to meet the concerns the ordinance changes were meant to address, while maintaining the unique community-based independence that is the hallmark of Madison’s civilian police oversight legislation.

Nominating Community Organizations

The nominating community organization list is updated at least every two years. Each community based organization can submit two nominations to the Mayor and Common Council or can renominate a member whose term is expiring. The current community list is as follows:

Access Community Health	NAACP of Dane County
African-American Council of Churches	Nehemiah
Community Response Team	NAMI of Dane County
Community Response Team	100 Black Men
Foundation for Black Women's Wellness	OUTREACH
Freedom Inc.	Progress Center For Black Women
Impact Demand	Sankofa Behavioral Services
Journey Mental Health	Transformational Action Network
JustDane	Urban League of Greater Madison
Justified Anger	YWCA
Latino Consortium for Action	Urban Triage
League of Women Voters of Dane County	UNIDOS

Police Civilian Oversight Board Membership

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Nominating Organization</u>	<u>Term Start Date</u>	<u>Term End Date</u>
Brandice Hatcher	Nehemiah	1/14/2025	1/14/2029
Carlotta Calmese	Mayoral Appointee (1st Alt)	11/22/2022	9/30/2026
Devon Snyder	Urban Triage	11/26/2024	11/26/2028
Helyn Luisi-Mills	JustDane	11/26/2024	11/26/2028
Hope Vang	Freedom, Inc.	1/14/2025	1/14/2029
Katey Nelson	YWCA	11/26/2024	11/26/2028
Maia Pearson	Mayoral Appointee	11/26/2024	11/26/2028
Michelle Miller	Common Council Appointee (2nd Alt)	11/22/2022	9/30/2026
Rodney Saunders	Common Council Appointee	11/22/2022	9/30/2026
Stephanie Rearick	Community Response Team	11/26/2024	11/26/2028
Stephanie Salgado	UNIDOS	11/26/2024	11/26/2028
Vanessa Statam	National Alliance on Mental Illness	1/14/2025	1/14/2029

Police Civilian Oversight Board Biographies

Brandice Hatcher, nominated by **Nehemiah**, is a Chicago native and an active resident of Madison since 2008. She is known by her community as a strong advocate and resource guru. Brandice is the Community Intake and Outreach Specialist at the Foundation for Black Women’s Wellness and is a certified Peer Support Specialist and Crisis Manager. She is passionate about mentoring and empowering young people in Madison, while working to uplift the importance of health in our community. Brandice is an author, founder of Righteous Voice Mentoring and Big Thingz Popping LLC, a plus sized women’s boutique, and has been a committed volunteer of many organizations within Dane County. Brandice’s term began January 14, 2025 and will end January 14, 2029.

Carlotta Calmese, appointed by the Mayor as the first PCOB alternate, is a retired higher education administrator serving in several institutions across the country and ending her 42 year career at Madison College in 2018. She is a mother of two talented adult daughters and two wonderful grandchildren, and has expressed her joy in serving the community wherever she can. In addition to being a member of the PCOB, she serves on a Big Brother Big Sister sub-committee, is an active member at Fountain of Life Covenant and occasionally mentors new student service college professionals. Carlotta’s appointment began November 22, 2022 and will end September 30, 2026.

Devon Snyder, nominated by **Urban Triage**, is the current Community Engagement subcommittee chair of the PCOB. He received his Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and Spanish from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He states that his is humbled to serve in this capacity because he is able to continue the fight for racial and social equity within the City of Madison. Devon’s term began November 26, 2024 and will end November 26, 2028.

Helyn Luisi-Mills, nominated by **JustDane**, is a bilingual nonprofit and public-service leader with over 15 years of experience in community development, social services, and organizational leadership in Madison and internationally. She currently serves in senior leadership roles focused on supportive housing and community-based care and brings extensive experience working alongside individuals and families impacted by poverty, trauma, behavioral health challenges, and systems involvement. A Venezuelan immigrant and former Peace Corps volunteer, Helyn approaches public oversight work with a strong commitment to equity, accountability, transparency, and community trust. She is known for her collaborative leadership style, systems-level thinking, and dedication to ensuring that public institutions serve all residents with dignity and fairness. Helyn’s term began November 26, 2024 and will end November 26, 2028.

Hope Vang, nominated by **Freedom Inc.**, is a proud daughter of Hmong refugees, born and raised in Wisconsin. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Hope serves as the Gender Justice Manager at Freedom, Inc., a Black and Southeast Asian feminist organization committed to ending all forms of violence against Black and Southeast Asian women, girls, and gender-expansive people. In this role, she leads direct services and programs for adults and older adults. Her work is deeply connected to the Police Civilian Oversight Board, where she centers the lived experiences of victims and survivors navigating the criminal legal system and its intersections with policing. Hope’s term began January 14, 2025 and will end January 14, 2029.

Katey Nelson, nominated by **YWCA**, a natural leader with a critical social justice lens. She is passionate about housing justice and focuses on planting seeds of empowerment and advocacy within communities. She currently is the Director of Operations at Madison's YWCA, where she developed a tenant education program with restorative justice roots and supports families in obtaining sustainable housing. In her role as a member of the PCOB and executive committee member, she hopes to continue to strengthen the community by bringing a lens of restorative justice, and how policing impacts those experiencing housing insecurities. Katey's term began November 26, 2024 and will end November 26, 2028.

Maia Pearson, appointed by Madison's Mayor, was an inaugural member of the PCOB in 2020 and is the current chair of the PCOB and its executive committee. Maia currently serves as the Vice President of Madison Metropolitan School District's (MMSD) Board of Education, elected in 2021. Born and raised in South Madison, she is dedicated to public service and is a longtime community organizer with a track record in fighting for all Wisconsinites. Alongside diverse communities, Maia has fought for continued voter rights and fair electoral maps, K-12 and post secondary educational access, greater community investment and collaboration. She believes that the safest communities are those that invest in and that safety is collective. She is committed to the charge of the PCOB. Her term began November 26, 2024 and will end November 26, 2028.

Michelle Miller, appointed by the Common Council as the second PCOB alternate, has lived in Madison for over fourteen years around various neighborhoods. She was raised in Chicago and Rockford, Illinois, as well as several cities in the Fox Valley area of Wisconsin. She grew up in a low income and housing insecure family with various physical and mental health disabilities. Professionally, Michelle is a mental health social worker in a community support program for community members living with a severe and persistent mental illness. Through the disparities she has witnessed in both her personal and professional lives, she sustains her commitment and passion for police civilian oversight as a means to decrease disparities related to policing and increase safety, trust, and belonging for all community members. Michelle's appointment began November 22, 2022 and will end September 30, 2026.

Rodney Saunders, Jr., appointed by the Common Council, is an experienced program manager at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Recognized by In Business magazine as a member of Forty Under 40's class of 2023, Rodney's strong community and social services skills, coupled with his creative problem solving skills is an asset to the PCOB. Rodney's appointment began November 22, 2022 and will end September 30, 2026.

Stephanie Rearick, nominated by the **Community Response Team**, is the External Policy and Procedure subcommittee chair of the PCOB. She is founder and Director of the Madison Mutual Aid Network (MAN) Cooperative and Humans United in Mutual Aid Networks (HUMANs), and co-owner of Mother Fool's Coffeehouse. She also works as a musician. Stephanie was a founder of Dane County TimeBank's Restorative Justice programs which helped lead to a city-wide youth diversion policy. She lives and works in the Willy Street neighborhood, where too many lives have been lost to police-involved shootings and other forms of violence. She is committed to community-led public safety and looks forward to institutionalizing policing practices that foster healthy communities over surveillance, criminalization, and incarceration. Stephanie's term began November 26, 2024 and will end November 26, 2028.

Stephanie Salgado, nominated by **UNIDOS**, was born and raised in Tegucigalpa, Honduras and has been an active Wisconsinite fighting for environmental justice. Receiving her degrees in political science and environmental studies, as well as certificates in Public Policy and Leadership from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Stephanie hopes to chart a sustainable and equitable future through community empowerment. Stephanie's term began November 26, 2024, however she resigned in April 2025.

Vanessa Statam, nominated by the **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) who earned her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She is trained in several evidence-based and trauma-informed modalities and currently serves as the Service Director of the Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) program at Anesis Marriage and Family Therapy. Deeply committed to health equity and social justice, Vanessa believes that unresolved mental health challenges significantly impact overall physical health and overall well-being. Originally from the South Side of Chicago, Vanessa relocated to Wisconsin in 2003 as a single parent of two. Shaped by both her family history and lived experiences, through Vanessa’s passion in social work, she is a strong advocate for ensuring that diverse populations receive culturally and linguistically appropriate services from highly trained providers who understand the complexities of their lived experiences. Vanessa is a member of the PCOB Executive Committee. Her term began January 14, 2025 and will end January 14, 2029.

BOARD OPERATIONS & MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) duties under the City of Madison’s Ordinance 5.19 and 5.20 are to recruit, appoint and supervise the Independent Police Monitor (IPM), evaluate effectiveness of the Monitor’s office, conduct an annual review of the Police Chief, conduct community outreach, make policy recommendations, create and release an annual public report, and has the ability to issue subpoenas.

In compliance with the ordinances, the PCOB met at least quarterly, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Agenda items included internal policy reviews, OIM updates, community engagement, oversight planning, and OIM personnel reviews. The PCOB’s Executive Subcommittee consisting of the Chair, Vice Chair, and four elected members, met monthly to provide timely feedback to the IPM and support PCOB continuity between full board meetings.

In 2025, 90% of PCOB members attended full board meetings. This is a significant accomplishment for the PCOB as in the past years the PCOB had seen a decline in attendance to meetings, including having to reschedule meetings due to being unable to make quorum. The PCOB’s subcommittees had a similar attendance rate.

2025 FULL BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE RATE

Meeting Date	1/29	2/19	4/16	6/18	8/20	10/01	10/15	11/12	12/17
Present Attendance Rate	90%	90%	80%	90%	100%	80%	100%	90%	90%

In May, the PCOB attended a two day retreat led by Mosaic Inc, where it learned more about being in public leadership, decision making as a very visible community committee, established a shared framework, and an exploration of PCOB work and possibilities. The retreat resulted in stronger collaboration amongst members, stronger connection and flow of the work, and a restructure of our committees and their charge.

Executive Committee [Meets every first Wednesday of the month]

- Overall PCOB coordination & agenda setting
- PCOB procedure & governance
- Conduct Chief performance review
- Supervision of IM
- PCOB Annual Report (each committee submits its summary report to contribute to this)

Community Engagement

- Listening to Broader Public
- Visibility of the PCOB
- Supporting Connection Back to Community Partners (could include reporting, outreach/education toolkit for partner orgs, future recruitment)
- Presenting PCOB reports for community feedback

External Policy & Procedures

- Develop MPD Policy & Procedure recommendations
- Data Analysis
- Public Reporting
- Develop chief performance review process

In 2025, External Policies and Procedures (EPP) Subcommittee took an active role in advancing the PCOB's efforts to update its policy and procedure manual. Building on the PCOB's commitment to clarify roles, responsibilities, and internal processes, the subcommittee has been working to ensure that the manual reflects current practices, strengthens governance, and supports more consistent and transparent operations.

This work has focused on identifying gaps in the existing manual, refining procedural language, and aligning policies with the PCOB's evolving oversight responsibilities. Particular attention has been given to ensuring that the manual promotes clear expectations for PCOB members, supports effective decision-making, and creates pathways for more robust and meaningful community dialogue. The intent is not only to improve internal functioning, but also to enhance the PCOB's accessibility and responsiveness to the community it serves. Further review and updating of the manual will continue in 2026 as the subcommittee is incorporating feedback, making necessary revisions, and working toward a version that can be formally considered and adopted by the full PCOB. This iterative process reflects the PCOB's commitment to thoughtful governance and continuous improvement, recognizing that strong policies and procedures are foundational to effective civilian oversight.

Training and Development

PCOB welcomed 9 new members at the end of 2024 and beginning of 2025. The PCOB completed their introductory training that included Robert's Rules of Order and City ethics. Due to budget constraints, PCOB members were not able to complete the full series of National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) training. To supplement opportunities of learning despite budget constraints, PCOB members had access to readings on oversight and research, and further had the opportunity to attend NACOLE online webinars and forums. NACOLE hosted their annual conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota on October 26 through the 30, with a focus on "Reckoning and Resilience in the Post-George Floyd Era." Due to budget constraints, only the PCOB chair and the IPM were able to attend the conference.

Additionally, PCOB members have participated in and continue to participate in ride-alongs with MPD officers. These experiences provide firsthand exposure to day to day policing practices and offer valuable context to complement formal training.

Training for the Future

Continued professional development ensures that PCOB members are equipped to address complex oversight issues, including disparities in policing outcomes and procedural fairness. Therefore the PCOB will continue professional development efforts in some, but not limited to the following areas:

- Community engagement strategies, with an emphasis on how to facilitate inclusive, respectful, and productive dialogue with diverse stakeholders. This has been particularly important in ensuring that Board processes remain accessible and responsive to community concerns.
- Cultural competency to assist PCOB members in deepening their understanding of how race, identity, and lived experience shape interactions with law enforcement.

The PCOB plans to engage in a series of future trainings in partnership with MPD to deepen its understanding of policing practices, accountability structures, and community response systems. These trainings are intended to build Board capacity for informed and effective oversight.

PLANNED MPD TRAINING TOPICS INCLUDE			
MPD Orientation	Use of Force	Professional Standards & Internal Affairs	Mental Health Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPD structure and organization • Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures • Patrol and investigative services structure • Public reports and releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-deadly and deadly force • Less-lethal options and de-escalation • MPD SOPs and State of Wisconsin DAAT system • Role of the Use of Force Coordinator • Data collection and critical incident investigations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigative processes and disciplinary matrix • Audit processes and role of the Police and Fire Commission • Chapter 62 (WI Statutes) and MPD Accountability Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPD Mental Health Unit and Journey workers • Crisis intervention and communication • Chapter 51 (WI Statutes)**

Limitations about MPD Community Academy

There was a proposal to model PCOB training after the MPD Community Academy which offers a structured and accessible approach, but it carries important limitations—particularly when compared to the depth and rigor of training received by sworn officers. The Community Academy is intentionally designed as a condensed, public-facing overview, meaning it provides only a partial understanding of policing practices.

A key limitation is the disparity in time and immersion. Police recruits complete hundreds of hours of training, including scenario-based exercises and repeated skill development under pressure. In contrast, a series of 10–12 sessions lasting a few hours each cannot replicate that depth. Complex topics such as use of force, de-escalation, and legal standards may be introduced, but not fully explored or practiced in ways that reflect real-world conditions.

There is also a concern regarding perspective and objectivity. Community Academy-style training is typically designed and delivered by the department itself, which may frame content in ways that highlight strengths

while minimizing challenges. This can unintentionally shape how PCOB members understand policing, limiting their ability to engage in independent and critical oversight.

Finally, the format, especially if delivered largely via Zoom, reduces opportunities for hands-on learning and deeper engagement. While in-person demonstrations are suggested, they are limited. Overall, while this model is useful as an introduction, it is insufficient on its own. Effective civilian oversight requires more comprehensive, critical, and independent training beyond what the Community Academy format can provide.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

In 2022, the Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) partnered with [Local Voices Network](#) (LVN), an organization committed to "engaging and amplifying under heard voices to inform public understanding, policy development and decision-making." Through this partnership, the PCOB was trained to use LVN's conversation model to gather complex and nuanced stories of Madisonians who have been historically underrepresented in policy making and who have been most affected by policing. Conversation guides were co-designed to encourage people to share their experiences and stories within a small group setting. Utilizing [Cortico](#) technology, who works closely with [MIT Center for Constructive Communication](#), the conversations that the Board had with the Madison community were analyzed, key themes were distilled, and a [report](#) was created.

During 2022, the PCOB conducted 10 community conversations. Of those conversations five categories were found and of those categories, three significant themes were found for the possible creation of recommendations to MPD:

Significant Categories	Significant themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police community interactions• Feelings of personal safety in public spaces• Experiences with decisions made for the community• Accountability of police engagement in community• Hopes for differences in the community within 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social identities frame every situation• Policing practice - the failure to protect and serve• Beyond police - serving the whole community

Some of the highlights that the PCOB and report found significant:

- Participants were asked to share stories of police encounters in their community (positive, negative, or neutral). Most revealed experience of being pulled over in their cars, calling on police assistance, or witnessing officers interact with others. The most common scenario that was given was experiences of being approached, questioned, and ultimately released, but not after a period of confusing tension.
- Participants expressed the experience of feeling unsafe, not situated in any particular place, because of the "aggressiveness of the police response". Some participants point out that in addition to the threat of violence that can happen at any point, in any given interaction with police, those who are young, homeless, or have children with special needs are made even more vulnerable to poor outcomes.
- In some of the most crucial points of community conversations, participants link the stories they have shared with discussions on what accountability and oversight of the police in their communities may be enacted.

The findings that came from this report are consistent with the October 2020 [report](#) findings of Police and Fire Commission (PFC) and LVN’s conversations, as well as the themes the PCOB found based on 2025 listening sessions mentioned earlier in this report. Based on the findings, the PCOB would like to highlight the following:

- One of the most powerful points that conversation participants voice for public officials and police officers is that those who are given the privilege to carry out public initiatives and laws should recognize existing bias against racial and social identities.
- Participants note that police have lost sight of serving and protecting their communities, relying on surveillance as their primary practice and resorting to aggressive and lethal tactics to maintain order.
- And, it is not solely the experience of Blackness that drives the probability for poor interactions with police, but any degree of social difference as noted earlier such as being homeless, or a parent of a special needs child, or even being young.

In 2025, the PCOB conducted significant community outreach throughout the year, making ongoing efforts to hear concerns from Madisonians. Public listening sessions, target outreach to underserved communities, and partnerships with community organizations, formed the foundation of this engagement. Key themes raised by the community this year included concerns about use of force, transparency around complaint investigations, interactions with youth response to mental health crises, and trust building between Madison Police Department (MPD) and marginalized communities and diverse neighborhoods.



The Board continues to prioritize engagement with communities experiencing disproportionate police contact, ensuring their voices shape policy recommendations.

Community Listening Sessions Held

Date	Event / Organization Cohost	Time
March 21, 2025	Just Dane	5:00–6:30 pm
April 18, 2025	OIM	5:00–7:00 pm
May 16, 2025	OIM	5:00–7:00 pm
June 20, 2025	OIM	6:00–8:00 pm
October 22, 2025	Community Response Team	6:00–8:00 pm

Special Events Held		
Date	Organization (Cohost)	Time
October 23, 2025	Community Response Team with Joey Lipari	6:00–8:00 pm

NOTE: Joey Lipari, a recognized expert in civilian oversight, led this session to educate the public on police oversight functions. The event also served as a public briefing for the PCOB ahead of hiring an interim OIM.

Outputs & Learnings From Listening Sessions

- There was a concern about the limited progress on open investigations.
- Expressed that they felt that they were not included in the selection process for the interim IPM
- Noted a lack of transparency regarding the work being conducted by the PCOB and OIM.
- Community members noted a lack of avenues for engagement or outreach for youth and the unhoused within the PCOB.

Next Steps

- The public will be involved in the selection process for the permanent IPM. At the April Community Listening Session, attendees will have the opportunity to meet the interim IPM, ask questions, raise concerns, and receive an overview of the work completed to date.
- The interim OIM has resolved the backlog of open investigations and is now providing regular updates on pending and ongoing investigations during board meetings.
- At each full PCOB meeting and Executive Subcommittee meeting, the OIM, the PCOB Chair, and subcommittee chairs share updates on their ongoing work. Additional updates are also provided at Community Listening Sessions.
- The Community Engagement Subcommittee will prioritize outreach to unhoused community members during May and June this year, followed by enhanced engagement efforts focused on youth.

COLLABORATION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITOR

The Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) is responsible for recruiting, appointing, and supervising the Independent Police Monitor (IPM), in which the Monitor reports directly to the PCOB and its Executive Subcommittee. The Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) is supervised by the IPM and ensures that the PCOB has the resources it needs to fulfill its duties. The IPM serves as Executive Secretary to the PCOB, tracking and managing action items between board meetings, following up with members to ensure quorum for full PCOB and subcommittee meetings, and preparing agendas in a timely fashion, per City ordinance. The IPM is responsible for hiring, supervising and managing sufficient professional and support staff to effectively perform the duties of the OIM. Currently the OIM has three staff members: the IPM, an office manager, and a data analyst. The Board, per ordinance, is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the IPM's office.

The year 2025 was a transitional year for the OIM. Longtime IPM Robin Copley, resigned in October, prompting the PCOB to recruit and select an interim IPM to guide the office and oversee operations while a full recruitment process unfolds. In November, the PCOB announced the appointment of Aeiramique “Meeka” Glass as Interim IPM, tasked with developing a strong public engagement process in collaboration with the board, and overseeing OIM’s work through the recruitment of a permanent Monitor. Ms. Glass brings extensive oversight experience from other jurisdictions and the PCOB has been pleased with the progress made within the office in such a short time.

Supervision and Support of the Independent Police Monitor

In 2025, the Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) strengthened its supervision of the Independent Police Monitor (IPM) through a combination of structured oversight, regular communication, and formal performance evaluation. The PCOB provided ongoing supervision through monthly Executive Subcommittee meetings and weekly check-ins between the PCOB Chair and the Monitor. These weekly meetings followed a structured agenda to align on priorities, review progress on key initiatives, address challenges in real time, and support continuous improvement through mutual feedback and reflection. The intent was to create a consistent accountability system and strengthen collaboration while maintaining the IPM’s independence.

To further strengthen IPM accountability, the PCOB with assistance from the City’s Human Resources Department, implemented a formal Performance Evaluation Framework, gathering feedback from PCOB members across key areas of responsibility.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

One of the Police Civilian Oversight Board’s (PCOB) primary responsibilities is conducting the annual performance review of the Chief of Police, with input from the Independent Police Monitor (IPM). The review per ordinance is to assess the Chief’s performance in office, including recommendations as to whether the Chief has satisfactorily performed their duties or whether the Chief has failed to perform satisfactorily, thereby constituting grounds for referral to the Police Fire Commission (PFC) with a recommendation for dismissal.

On February 1, 2025, Former Police Chief Shon Barnes, announced his resignation after four years of service and is currently Seattle Washington’s Chief of Police. Madison’s current Police Chief, John Patterson, sworn in on October 22, 2025, has been an ally of the PCOB and OIM since his tenure as the assistant chief, frequently attending the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) annual conferences alongside PCOB members.

Due to the former Chief’s early resignation, and the current Chief’s late appointment, the PCOB unanimously agreed that due to the circumstances, the body was unable to conduct a 2025 evaluation. However, the PCOB did give input on what they felt were important for the Police and Fire Commission (PFC) to consider when hiring the next Chief. PCOB members noted:

- Values transparency.
- Should possess the willingness to collaborate with the PCOB and OIM to further accountability.
- The importance of being involved in the community and value of the community’s voice.
- Has ideas and plans on how they want to improve policing, especially when it comes to use of force and real mental health support.

- Possess a critical and clear analysis of the complex nature of policing and police culture, and its relationship to history and community. Understanding that this is necessary to make as much change as possible.
- Willingness to hold themselves, their peers, and subordinates accountable
- Have the courage to take a strong stance in public positions, especially when it comes to critical community issues.
- Stands up for what is morally right and ensuring change comes to fruition

Despite being unable to conduct a 2025 Annual Review of the Police Chief, the PCOB is looking forward to the 2026 performance review, conditionally focusing on the areas of leadership, accountability, responsiveness to community needs, progress on policy reforms, and implementation of various recommendations.

Process of Review

The PCOB began working on an evaluation process and tool. The PCOB has considered starting with the Chief conducting a self-assessment across established performance areas of evaluation. In this step, the Chief would rate their own performance and provide a narrative description of significant achievements and contributions within each category.

Following this, the OIM would review the Chief's responses to assess their accuracy, completeness, and relevance. The OIM does not assign scores, but instead provides additional context, clarification, and perspective alongside the Chief's statements, helping to ensure a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of the information presented.

To ensure community voice is reflected in the process, the PCOB would gather input through possible public meetings, community forums, and opportunities for written feedback. This input would help inform the PCOB's understanding of community experiences, priorities, and concerns, and would be considered as part of the overall evaluation.

The PCOB would then review both the Chief's self-assessment, the OIM's comments, and relevant community feedback. To further explore key issues, the PCOB would meet with the Chief in closed session, allowing for deeper discussion and clarification of specific topics. After this discussion, each Board member would independently evaluate the Chief's performance by assigning scores across the evaluation areas. Members may also include written comments to support or explain their assessments. These individual scores are then averaged to produce a final score for each category.

The final report would be compiled and presented possibly including the Chief's self-scores alongside the Board's averaged scores, as well as the Chief's narrative responses, the OIM's contextual input, and anonymized Board comments. This comprehensive report may be shared with the Common Council, the Mayor, the PFC and the public to ensure transparency and accountability.

Tools and Rubric for Review

In late 2024 and early 2025, the PCOB's then Policy and Procedure Subcommittee began the creation of the evaluation rubric, utilizing examples from places like Oakland, California. The example from Oakland, focused on different aspects of effective leadership, rather than city wide crime data. Therefore the Subcommittee at the time felt that it was a good example of an evaluation tool that would be able to evaluate the Chief rather

than the Police Department. The Subcommittee discussed the administering of the evaluation, what the rating scale would be, potential performance focus areas, and key indicators. Please see the example focus areas and indicators that were discussed below (note that these are EXAMPLES ONLY and have not been adopted by the Board).

Limitations of Police Chief Review Process

The proposed evaluation process for the Chief of Police reflects a strong commitment to values based, community centered leadership. However, it also presents several important limitations and challenges that complicate both its implementation and its effectiveness. At the heart of these challenges is a fundamental tension: whether the evaluation is intended to assess the leadership of the Chief as an individual or the performance of the police department as a whole.

Although the rubric was intentionally designed to focus on leadership qualities rather than citywide crime data, many of the proposed indicators such as community trust, staff morale, and public safety outcomes are inherently tied to broader organizational performance. These outcomes are shaped by complex systems involving officers, policies, social conditions, and external factors beyond the Chief's direct control. As a result, it becomes difficult to disentangle what can reasonably be attributed to the Chief's leadership versus what reflects the functioning of the department or wider societal dynamics. This ambiguity risks either over-attributing successes and failures to the Chief or, conversely, diluting accountability by focusing too narrowly on abstract leadership traits.

A related challenge lies in the difficulty of measuring many of the leadership qualities emphasized in the rubric. Categories such as integrity, relational leadership, transparency, and culture transformation are critical, but they are also inherently subjective and resistant to quantification. Without clearly defined metrics or benchmarks, evaluations may rely heavily on perception, anecdotal evidence, or evaluator interpretation. This creates the potential for inconsistency and bias, particularly if different stakeholders hold varying expectations or experiences of leadership.

Data collection further complicates the process. Many of the indicators suggested including rebuilding community trust, advancing procedural justice, or improving internal culture require robust, multi-source data that may not currently exist or be easily accessible. Measuring community trust, for example, would require ongoing surveys, focus groups, and longitudinal analysis across diverse populations. Similarly, assessing staff morale or organizational culture would necessitate confidential and reliable internal feedback mechanisms. Even when data can be gathered, there is often a time lag between policy implementation and measurable outcomes, making it difficult to evaluate progress within a given review cycle.

External factors also play a significant role in shaping outcomes that might be used in evaluation. Crime rates, recruitment and retention challenges, and public perceptions of policing are influenced by economic conditions, housing instability, national policing trends, and other variables outside the Chief's control. This complicates efforts to fairly assess leadership performance, as improvements or setbacks may not directly reflect the Chief's decisions or strategies.

Additionally, the rubric itself remains in a developmental stage and has not been formally adopted, meaning there are no established baselines or performance thresholds against which to measure progress. Leadership transitions such as the resignation of the previous Chief and the late appointment of the current one further disrupt continuity, limiting the ability to assess long-term initiatives or sustained impact.

Finally, while the process emphasizes community input, ensuring that feedback is representative, inclusive, and meaningfully integrated into evaluation criteria presents its own challenges. Without careful design, the process risks privileging certain voices over others or failing to capture the lived experiences of those most impacted by policing.

Taken together, these limitations highlight that while the evaluation framework is aspirational and grounded in important values, it faces significant challenges in measurement, attribution, and implementation. Addressing these issues will be critical to ensuring that the process is both fair and effective in assessing leadership and advancing accountability.

Policy Recommendations & Issue Review

As part of ongoing oversight, the Board's External Policy and Procedure subcommittee continued reviewing MPD's practices, standard operating procedures, and the five-year strategic plan created by former Chief Barnes in 2023. MPD's strategic plan had 61 action items, which was less than the ad hoc committee report of 177 recommendations. The strategic plan and the ad hoc committee report reference some of the same recommendations from the OIR report. With the leadership of PCOB member Michelle Miller and the former Policy and Procedure subcommittee (now called the External Policy and Procedure) generated a list of questions for MPD about the action items, areas where further data analysis could be pursued, and identified actions the OIM & PCOB can take to influence the actions and outcomes of MPD's 5 Year Strategic Plan.

The following identifies: proposed action items OIM & PCOB can take to influence the existing MPD 5 Year Strategic Plan; questions related to MPD's Strategic Plan; areas of which to ask for more data; and policy recommendations to MPD to expand upon their Strategic Plan. SEE APPENDIX

PCOB Recommended Additions to MPD's 5 Year Strategic Plan

- Add a set of action items under a new priority: Community Safety & Wellness
 - Action items can include community engagement around gathering feedback about actual and perceived safety and wellness generally and specifically related to community interactions with the police
- Ad hoc committee recommendations
 - About 24 out of 177 recommendations from the ad hoc committee report and OIR report were cited in the 5 Year Strategic Plan. Consider implementing more of the recommendations from the reports into the Strategic Plan. See below for questions related to how the identified recommendations align with the Strategic Plan action items.
- Ensure the 5 Year Strategic Plan addresses use-of-force training, how training affects use of force outcomes, and how the public is communicated to after a use-of-force situation occurs.

PCOB Questions for MPD on 5 Year Strategic Plan

Goal 1 Priority 1 Action 1.04

Through in-person, online seminars, and regular social media updates, increase public education and awareness of police policies, procedures, and budgetary components of policing. This should include topics such as recruiting, training, use of force policy, internal discipline processes, and topical issues raised by the community. (OIR 10 & 112)

PCOB Questions:

- How does this action item directly address the OIR recommendations it cites? For example, how does increasing public education on policing connect to the recommendation to strive for diverse recruitment and hiring?
- How does increasing public education on policing align with the implementation of a 21st Century Policing Task Force (OIR 10 & 112)
- How long will these public education groups go on?

Goal 1 Priority 1 Action 1.6

Assess restructuring the Community Policing Teams model to help build and instill Community Police principles within MPD and the community.

PCOB Questions:

- How does adhering to Community Police principles relate to dialoguing with the Rapid Response Team, per ad hoc committee recommendation 35?

Goal 1 Priority 1 Action 3.1

Develop and begin delivering training on evidence-based policing to all members of MPD.

PCOB Question:

- How will MPD collaborate with a statistician about assessing racial bias in MPD policing? Ad hoc committee recommendation 19 is to train MPD about EBP AND collaborate with a statistician about assessing racial bias in MPD policing.

Goal 1 Priority 2 Action 2.1 Action 2.2

Work with the Madison Professional Police Officers Association to explore evidenced-based staffing practices that allow for greater proactive policing, crime reduction, and community engagement.

Assign a team to explore proactive steps MPD can take to improve recruitment and retention of police employees such as wage, shift schedules, EAP program enhancements and associated workplace benefits.

PCOB Question:

- What else is MPD doing to address barriers to participate in community-initiated events per ad hoc recommendation 22? This action appears to suggest that staffing issues are a barrier to following the recommendation cited.

**Goal 1
Priority 3
Actions 3.4**

Develop and deliver education and refresher courses on Procedural Justice Principles to all MPD employees. Begin a systematic review of MPD policies to ensure they adhere to Procedural Justice Principles.

PCOB Question:

- How does education on and adherence to Procedural Justice Principles ensure restorative justice programs are available for every applicable incident regardless of how highly the media covers the incident?
 - This action item references following ad hoc committee recommendation 21: As part of its ongoing and constructive support of an innovative program, MPD should dialogue with its criminal justice partners to consider whether restorative justice programs available for controversial high media profile incidents can be made available for similar incidents that do not rise to the same level of media attention.

**Goal 3
Priority 5
Actions 5.1**

MPD will undertake the following actions:

- Develop educational material related to managing protests.
- Hold seminars/webinars and make materials accessible on MPD's website.
- When warranted, use the sentinel event review model to analyze MPD's response to impactful events in our community, giving particular attention to communities or groups disproportionately impacted by the event.
- Work with communities to identify key leaders who will help improve communications between MPD and the communities during protests.

PCOB Questions:

- How does this action item directly address the recommendation it cites (see below)? This action appears to address only protests.
 - Recommendation: MPD should conduct town hall and listening sessions after all critical incidents, including officer-involved shootings as follows: In the first few days subsequent to an incident, MPD should be empathetic to any resulting death or serious injury, explain the investigative and review process, and listen to any expressions of upset or concern. After the conclusion of the investigation, MPD should provide a public debriefing of the incident highlighting any performance issues that were identified for improvement and reform.
- What is the sentinel event review model and how will it be used for all critical incidents?

Grouping of Action Items on Pages 5-7 of MPD Strategic Plan Recommendations Alignment with Previous Reports

- **1.9 Action:** Begin an environmental scan to develop an Agency Consortium of police departments to learn and share best practices on community engagement, policies, and 21st Century Policing principles.
- **3.1 Action:** Develop and begin delivering training on evidence-based policing to all members of MPD.
- **3.2 Action:** Create a Research Advisory Committee to enhance MPD's research capabilities through strategic partnerships with academia and ensure MPD's policies and practices are evidenced-based.
- **4.1 Action:** The Madison Police Department, Mental Health Unit, will continue to provide a coordinated, professional and compassionate police response to individuals affected by mental illness and their families. Our goal is to improve safety for community members and police while reducing calls for police service related to mental illness issues. We will work collaboratively with partner agencies to achieve improved outcomes for individuals affected by mental illnesses or suffering a crisis by connecting them to needed services and diverting them away from the criminal justice system whenever possible.
- **4.2 Action:** MPD believes in helping community members find holistic, restorative paths away from crime. We know we achieve better individual and community outcomes by working with the community in healthy restorative justice practices. MPD will continue to work proactively with the Dane County Community Restorative Court to find community-driven solutions to crime that reduces the burden on courts, reduce discriminatory barriers and future recidivism, and reduce crime and the impacts of the criminal justice system on marginalized communities.

PCOB Questions:

- How do the above actions specifically evaluate MPD's use-of-force training?
- Which action item above will address recommendations cited regarding collaborating with a statistician about racial bias in MPD policing?
- How will MPD utilize ICAT in the action items above? Can PCOB receive more information about ICAT?
- Which action item above addresses approaching the NYPD to learn about their "firearms control" schema?
- Which action item above will allow an officer to travel to Finland to learn Finnish police methods?

General PCOB Questions for MPD on 5 Year Strategic Plan

- What can MPD offer besides CARES to address mental health concerns that may lead to police interaction, especially given CARES limited hours/availability?
- What training and SOP does MPD have currently to address gaps in CARES availability?
- Can MPD provide transportation to mental health hospitals? What does MPD currently do to divert mental health cases to hospitals vs. the jail?

PCOB Data Analysis Considerations

- Data related to the Strategic Plan to review potential recommendations to MPD to further their goals.
- Data around the fidelity of MPD's evidenced-based policing practices.
- Data about racial bias in policing.
- Data about use-of-force incidents & training.
- Data related to CARES calls and how that affects policing.
- Data around the implementation of body-worn cameras.
- Data related to protest management.

Transition to a New Strategic Plan

The EPP Subcommittee has engaged in meaningful work reviewing prior MPD strategic plans, particularly under the leadership of former chair Michelle Miller. During that period, the subcommittee sought to better understand the department's long-term vision, priorities, and areas of focus, recognizing that strategic planning is a key mechanism for accountability and alignment with community expectations. As part of this effort, MPD provided a presentation outlining the previous strategic plan, including its stated goals, implementation strategies, and areas of progress. This presentation offered helpful context and allowed subcommittee members to begin assessing how departmental priorities were articulated and operationalized over time.

However, the current moment presents a transition point. With the appointment of a new Chief and the rollout of a new strategic plan, much of the prior work now sits within a shifting landscape. While the previous review remains valuable as a foundation, it does not fully reflect the direction, leadership style, or priorities of the current administration. Strategic plans are not static documents; they are shaped by leadership, community conditions, and evolving expectations of policing.

As a result, the subcommittee will need to re-engage with this work in a more forward-looking way. This includes seeking clarity on the new Chief's vision, understanding how the updated strategic plan differs from or builds upon the previous one, and identifying measurable indicators of progress. The transition also presents an opportunity to strengthen alignment between the Board's oversight role and the department's stated goals, ensuring that accountability mechanisms remain relevant under new leadership.

MPD INVESTIGATIVE & DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES

The Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) did not review Madison Police Department (MPD) investigative and disciplinary processes in 2025. Despite not being able to review these processes during the reporting period, the PCOB plans to work with MPD to be trained in the investigative structures and Professional Standards and Internal Affairs subjects, including MPD's disciplinary matrix. The PCOB believes that it is important that members are trained and understand MPD processes in order to connect community concerns with recommendations. In addition, the PCOB in 2026, will work in collaboration with the Office of the Independent Monitor in discussing trends in MPD complaints, timeliness of investigations, and communication procedures with those complaints, as these are areas of concern expressed by the community. The Board further plans to address these concerns in the near future.

SUBPOENA ACTIVITY

There were no subpoenas issued by the Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) in 2025's reporting period. The PCOB maintain readiness to utilize subpoena authority as permitted by city ordinance (MGO 5.20-9(g))

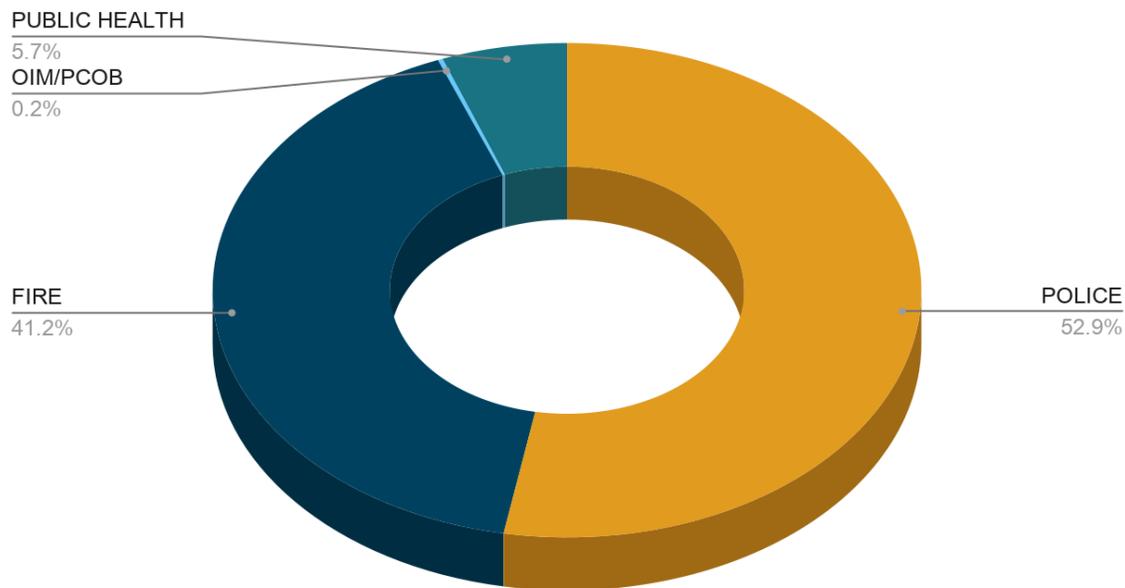
BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS & CONSTRAINTS

In the 2025 budget cycle, the Madison Common Council reaffirmed its commitment to civilian oversight by rejecting a proposal to eliminate funding for the Office of the Independent Police Monitor (OIM) and the Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB). As a result, the OIM and PCOB will continue into 2026 with an operating status quo annual budget of \$405,299.

The Board believes it is noteworthy to mention the following:

- The OIM and PCOB budget is 0.0009% of the City's adopted \$452,723,152 operating budget
- The Police budget is \$98,490,651, which is 22% of the City's adopted operating budget
- The OIM and PCOB budget is 0.2% of the City's Public Safety and Health's adopted \$186,307,712 operating budget compared to the Police's budget being 52.9%

Madison's 2026 Adopted Public Safety & Health Budget



**Graph is based on City of Madison's Public Budgeting Documents*

The proposed budget amendment to eliminate the OIM and PCOB would have redirected these funds to support the expansion of police body-worn camera staffing, specifically funding five civilian positions. While this proposal was ultimately not adopted, the discussion reflects ongoing tensions in resource allocation between oversight functions and other public safety investments.

The PCOB recognizes that this level of funding presents both opportunities and constraints. On one hand, maintaining dedicated funding for civilian oversight reinforces the City's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community trust. On the other hand, the current budget limits the OIM's capacity to fully meet increasing demands, including timely complaint investigations, expanded community engagement, data analysis, and policy development.

These constraints were particularly evident in 2025, as the OIM managed 14 ongoing investigations alongside a leadership transition following the resignation of the former Independent Police Monitor (IPM). Resource limitations contributed to challenges in maintaining timeliness, responsiveness, and public accessibility, which were issues also reflected in community feedback.

In 2024, the OIM became fully staffed and was able to have its first full year of operations since its creation in 2020. In earlier years, limited staff capacity added to the functioning of the new agency and the execution of its activities. Despite challenges, its overall budget incrementally increased and the budget was reallocated to better reflect anticipated expenditures. However, the OIM ended the year of spending less than half of its

approved 2024 budget. This is due to focusing on addressing the structural and operational challenges faced, therefore budgeted items such as the allotted funds for legal services and board training were not used. This contributed to the decrease in the OIM and PCOB overall budget in 2025. However in 2025, the OIM spent the majority of its budget. There are long term impacts and implications of decreasing the OIM’s budget; as the OIM and the PCOB continue to grow its capacity and strengthen its foundation, it will become more difficult to work with limited resources. In 2026, even with the status quo operational budget, the PCOB will feel these constraints further.

OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT MONITOR OPERATIONAL BUDGETS							
YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
BUDGET	\$ 200,000	\$ 450,769	\$ 468,373	\$ 473,168	\$ 509,420	\$ 405,964	\$ 405,299

Despite budget constraints, community advocates, policymakers, and other supporters of civilian oversight, have emphasized that the OIM’s relatively modest budget represents a preventative investment. Effective civilian oversight can reduce the risk of costly litigation and misconduct settlements, which can reach into the millions of dollars. In this context, sustained and potentially expanded investment in oversight infrastructure is viewed as both a fiscal and community centered strategy.

Moving forward, the PCOB will continue to work with the Mayor and Common Council to ensure that the OIM is adequately resourced to fulfill its ordinance responsibilities. This includes supporting sufficient staffing, strengthening operational infrastructure and training, and expanding the OIM and PCOB’s capacity to respond to community needs in a timely, transparent, and equitable manner.

CHALLENGES & BARRIERS

The Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) continues to navigate a range of operational, structural, and resource challenges that impact its ability to carry out effective civilian oversight. One key structural challenge is the role of the Common Council in writing and amending ordinances that affect the functioning of the PCOB, at times in ways that can feel unnecessary or misaligned with the board’s intended purpose. These changes can create confusion, require frequent adjustments to processes, and limit the PCOB’s ability to operate with clarity and consistency.

Leadership transitions have also presented challenges. The resignation of the former Independent Police Monitor (IPM) required the selection of an interim, creating a period of adjustment and potential gaps in continuity. Given the IPM’s central role in conducting investigations, providing analysis, and informing the PCOB’s work, such transitions can affect both momentum and institutional knowledge. This was apparent for example, addressing the backlog of complaint investigations and ensuring timely transparency of reports and public records requests in 2025.

Operationally, the PCOB functions as a volunteer led body, which introduces additional constraints. Members balance their service with professional and personal responsibilities, limiting the time and capacity available for complex oversight work. This may affect the speed of progress, depth of analysis, and ability to sustain long term initiatives.

Resource limitations further compound challenges for the OIM and PCOB. Budget constraints impact the PCOB’s ability to access independent expertise, conduct robust community engagement, and provide

necessary support to members, such as childcare or stipends. These limitations also affect training opportunities and the development of data systems needed for informed decision making.

Together, these factors highlight the need for continued investment, structural clarity, and operational support to ensure the PCOB can fulfill its mandate effectively and sustainably. The PCOB will continue to answer the call from the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR

The Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) is committed to strengthening its role as an informed, responsive, and community centered oversight body through continued growth. Building on foundational training and ongoing professional development, the PCOB will deepen its understanding of policing practices, accountability systems, and community needs to ensure its work is both informed and impactful. The PCOB, in collaboration with Mosaic, Inc will build a three year work plan; in partnership with the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) continue the investment in the continued learning of board members.

A central focus for 2026 will be the development of clear, data informed, and community responsive policy recommendations to the Madison Police Department (MPD). The PCOB will prioritize policy recommendations related to use of force policies, discipline and investigative procedures, hiring and training practices, community relations, and improvements to the complaint process. In addition, the PCOB will explore recommendations to extend restorative justice (RJ) approaches to individuals up to age 21, aligning with Wisconsin's educational systems and developmental research on young adults.

The PCOB will also review the status and implementation of prior year recommendations to assess progress, identify gaps, and ensure accountability over time. This reflective approach will allow the PCOB to build continuity in its work while adapting to evolving community priorities.

Through this work, the PCOB aims to move beyond observation toward meaningful influence ensuring that oversight translates into tangible improvements in policy, practice, and community trust.

The Board is further looking to:



Hire a permanent Independent Police Monitor through a robust community engagement Process



Enhancing the OIM's capacity to respond to complaints and conduct data driven investigations



Increasing transparency and ease of access to oversight reports and Board action summaries



Strengthening community outreach efforts in underserved neighborhoods.

2025

CITY OF MADISON



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