



City of Madison
Meeting Minutes - Approved
Common Council Organizational Committee
Subcommittee on Committee Creation and
Committee Rules

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

Thursday, March 13, 2008

3:30 p.m.

Room 417, City-County Building
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. A quorum was noted, and the meeting was properly noticed.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: 3 – Ald. Satya Rhodes-Conway (chair), Ald. Brenda Konkel, Ald. Michael Schumacher.

Absent: 1 – Ald. Joe Clausius (notified).

Others: 3 – City Attorney Michael May, George Twigg (assistant to the Mayor), Debbie Fields (staff to the subcommittee).

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Konkel moved approval of the February 28, 2008, minutes, seconded by Schumacher. The minutes were approved unanimously.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Future meeting dates.

The members discussed their availability and decided on the following dates:

- Thursday, May 1, 2008
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
City-County Building, Room 417
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
- Thursday, May 15, 2008
8:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.
City-County Building, Room 417
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

b. Review work plan progress.

The members reviewed the work plan and defined their progress as follows:

Items completed

1(a) through (d), 2(a) through (d), 4(a), 4(d).

Items not completed/not taken up yet

1(e) through (g), 2(e), 3(a) through (d), 4(b) and (c), 5, 6(a) through (c), 7

c. Identify and list outstanding issues.

In addition to the items on the list, the members added the following other outstanding issues:

- Come up with a template/set of questions to be used when creating a sub-unit.
- Subcommittees that aren't on Legistar.

- Staff committees/other anomalies.
- Add the following issues under work plan item 1(e):
 - Record of work (i.e., minutes and Legistar).
 - Alders' role/responsibilities on committees.
 - Staffing of sub-units.
 - Describe how sub-units pass their own extra operating procedures.

Related to the issues of staff committees, Konkel asked that Legislative File ID #08992 (Creating Section 33.27 of the Madison General Ordinances to codify the existence of the Minority Affairs Committee and the Women's Issues Committee) be placed on the subcommittee's March 27, 2008, agenda as a potential discussion item. There was no objection.

- d. Continue with work plan, beginning with item #1(e): Operation of each body.
The members began by discussing the issue of nights when the Council does not meet. Rhodes-Conway pointed out that currently, there's a restriction on sub-units meeting on Board of Estimates (BOE) budget nights. Schumacher said he thinks it would be a good idea to extend that restriction to include Council budget nights. He explained that while most committees don't schedule meetings for those nights, it would be more clear with less chance for hard feelings if the practice were formalize in the MGOs. Rhodes-Conway agreed.

Rhodes-Conway summarized what rules the subcommittee has decided it wants every sub-unit to follow:

- Election of officers.
- Period of public comment.
- Use of Robert's Rules of Order as a baseline.

She asked the members if there were any other items they would like to add to the list above or anything else they wanted to say about rules. Nothing was mentioned.

Rhodes-Conway asked the members if they wanted to make it explicit that rules need to be in writing and need to be on file somewhere. Schumacher advocated for a central depository, and the members agreed, deciding that the Clerk's Office is the most logical place for the rules to be kept, and adding that the rules should also be linked to the City's website so citizens could readily access them.

The subcommittee discussed three topics for potential inclusion in the ordinance:

- Alders' responsibilities on and to committees.

Konkel brought up two issues:

- What happens when a committee wants to do something and the alder on the committee won't sponsor it?

May said this is a real issue. Without a sponsor, his office is reluctant to draft something a committee requests. Rhodes-Conway asked if there is any recourse for the committee in such a situation. No solutions were offered, so she suggested adding this issue to the committee staff training list.

- There's an assumption that the alder on a committee serves as liaison to the Council (i.e., the alder reports to the Council).

Schumacher said he wouldn't want to be responsible for reporting to the Common Council, noting the potential for others to say some matter had been deliberately left out. Schumacher and Rhodes-Conway felt this is not the kind of thing that can be legislated. Rhodes-Conway said the subcommittee is not going to make any strong recommendations on alders' responsibilities but said they are going to try to make sure everyone knows the options via the staff and chair training sessions.

- Making sure committees get staffed.

Konkel noted that staffing provisions should be part of the template for creating a sub-unit. Rhodes-Conway asked if City staff gets training on how to staff a committee (aside from Legistar). May said there are trainings on Open Meetings and Robert's Rules that any City staff can attend, but attendance is not required. Rhodes-Conway asked if, in addition to Legistar, open meetings/open records and Robert's Rules, there were other things the subcommittee would want committee staff to know. Konkel mentioned there should be training in how to take minutes (e.g., what belongs in minutes). Rhodes-Conway suggested including these training items in the subcommittee's final report.

- Inconsistency among committees regarding amending the agenda prior to the meeting.

Schumacher pointed out that the deadline seems to vary according to the preference of the staffperson. Rhodes-Conway said some committees may need a greater lead time if, for example, members get their materials in hard copy through the mail instead of electronically.

The members moved on to the topic of limited term bodies. Schumacher said he thinks they need an expiration date, and Konkel said that should be added to the template/checklist. Twigg suggested "termination of its mission" as an alternative to an expiration date. Konkel said she likes the idea of a date but wants extension to be a simple process. Rhodes-Conway said she thinks the issue is best handled by including it in the template.

The members discussed periodically reviewing standing committees to determine if their missions need to be updated and/or if they still need to exist. Rhodes-Conway thought it would be worthwhile to pursue a not-so-often review. May suggested having the Common Council Organizational Committee (CCOC) form a subcommittee every five years to review standing committees. Rhodes-Conway suggested asking committees to review their mission every two years during their operating rules review. Twigg pointed out they would be asking committees to justify their existence when they only exist in the first place because the Council refers business to them. May mentioned that the Mayor can dissolve committees that haven't met for a year. Rhodes-Conway said she couldn't imagine that there are a lot of actively meeting committees that shouldn't be meeting. Konkel clarified that the two ways to formally dissolve a body are by resolution or by deleting the ordinance.

Rhodes-Conway asked May to draft a template/list of questions to guide the creation of a sub-unit, including:

- Mission/purpose.
- Number of members.
- Number of alternates.
- Special positions.
- Term of appointment.
- Who will staff the sub-unit?
- Expiration date.
- Special needs.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Legislative File ID #08992: Creating Section 33.27 of the Madison General Ordinances to codify the existence of the Minority Affairs Committee and the Women's Issues Committee.
- How ad hocs get made into standing committees.
- Subcommittees.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Schumacher moved, seconded by Konkel, to adjourn. The motion passed by acclamation, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.