

From: [LWVDC](#)
To: [Police Civilian Oversight Board](#)
Subject: PCOB's rules on public comment
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 8:44:46 AM
Attachments: [1-5-22 City of Madison PCOB public comment.pdf](#)

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January 5, 2022

On January 14, 2021, the PCOB established Special rules for Board and Board Meetings. From the minutes, this was the rule established for public comment:

The Board voted to establish the following special rules:

1. A motion was made by Keith Findley and seconded by Isadore Knox Jr, to do the following:

With regard to public participation at COB meetings, the Board shall:

- 1. Require registration by members of the public prior to being permitted to speak at a meeting;*
- 2. Permit an opportunity for members of the public to speak at the beginning of the meeting and again at the beginning of each agenda item;*
- 3. Limit each person's time for speaking to 3 minutes;*

All with the understanding that the Board is free to suspend these rules as it sees fit on a case-by-case or item-by-item basis. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

The League of Women Voters of Dane County understood these rules to be consistent with past practice of the Alder Workgroup (which proposed the details of the PCOB and Independent Monitor (IM) ordinances), and consistent with past practice of the Ad Hoc Committee (which recommended establishment of the PCOB and IM). During meetings of those bodies, so long as a member of the public registered for public comment at that meeting, on any item, they could seek to be recognized to speak on any item, whether or not they had registered on that specific item.

While this is not the consistent practice of City of Madison committees, it was adopted by both the Ad Hoc Committee and the Alder Workgroup in recognition of the high importance of community input concerning police policy and procedures. The ordinance that established the PCOB notes that the PCOB “. . .is required to work collaboratively with the Office of the Independent Monitor (“OIM”) and the community. . .”

The League was therefore surprised that a member of the community was not recognized when raising their hand during the meeting, despite the fact that the community member had in fact registered to speak at the meeting, although not on the specific item under discussion at that point.

Registration gives committee members important information, such as whether the registrant lives in the City of Madison and whether the registrant is representing themselves or an organization, and whether the registrant is being paid for their representation. Registering multiple times on multiple items does not give the committee any further insight into the registrant.

At every meeting of the PCOB in 2021, a representative of the League of Women Voters has registered on one item, in almost all cases not wishing to speak. We believed that gave our representative the opportunity to comment on an agenda item if the representative thought participation was critical.

The League understands that the Chair is not required to recognize a member of the public who has not registered on the specific item, but we hope that failure to recognize a registered community member would be a departure from the norm.

The League requests that clarification of the Special Rules on public comment be placed on the PCOB agenda at the next PCOB meeting.

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