CITY OF **MADISON**

Statement from Common Council President Sabrina Madison on amendments to the Office of the Independent Monitor and the Police Civilian Oversight Board ordinances

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The shooting of Corey Ruiz by the Madison Police Department has caused immense pain throughout our community. My thoughts remain with Mr. Ruiz's family and loved ones.

The work of oversight is challenging, especially during times of grief, heightened emotion, and public scrutiny. At a time when our community is looking for accountability, transparency, and healing, I believe we all share a responsibility to work together in ways that strengthen our oversight system and reinforce public confidence in the process. That work is best accomplished through collaboration, open communication, and a willingness to come to the table in good faith.

On Sunday, July 26, I met with Police Civilian Oversight Board Chair Maia Pearson as a follow-up to a conversation we began on Thursday. During that earlier discussion, I shared my interest in pursuing one of the recommendations offered by the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE): engaging a skilled mediator to help us to engage in a restorative justice process.

When NACOLE recently presented to the Common Council, I asked what they would recommend given the operational conflicts we have experienced. Their response was both candid and timely:

"The reality is with the work of oversight, there has to be some level of trust or willingness to come to the table and set aside personal grievances,

whatever the issues are, otherwise, this work can just be stalled and can drastically affect the legitimacy of oversight in the City…. As difficult as it is, it's gotta be addressed."

That recommendation guided Sunday's conversation.

In our conversation, Chair Pearson shared three important priorities with me.

First, the Police Civilian Oversight Board wants to ensure there is an agenda item that allows members of the public to provide comments specifically regarding the Office of the Independent Monitor. I support that request and will ensure there is an opportunity on the agenda for the public to share their perspectives.

Second, Chair Pearson shared that the Board would like the current amendment process to come to an end so we can move toward a more restorative and collaborative path forward.

Third, Chair Pearson emphasized that the Board wants to have a conversation about the best way to strengthen and clarify the City's police oversight ordinances. She shared that the Board does not want this work to be reactionary and that members felt we were not all working together to address areas needing clarification. Instead, they felt that "things were being done to them versus with them." I appreciate her willingness to share that perspective directly.

At a moment when our community is grieving and looking to its leaders to strengthen trust in our systems of accountability, I believe it is important that we create space for collaboration rather than continue a process that many believe has become increasingly divisive.

With that in mind, Alder Yannette Figueroa Cole, Alder Derek Field, Alder Will Ochowicz, and I have agreed to withdraw our names from the amendments that were scheduled to return to the Common Council on August 4. That decision effectively ends those proposed amendments.

In addition, Vice President Carmella Glenn has withdrawn her name from the alternate amendment to the main item that she sponsored but had not introduced, and Alder Julia Matthews, who co-sponsored the alternate, has indicated she would do the same.

Additionally, Alder Davy Mayer shared in his recent update that:

"I will not be moving my amendment to include an alder on the PCOB. However, it will remain in Legistar as documentation of this process."

Looking ahead, the Common Council Chief of Staff will reach out to the restorative justice facilitators recommended by NACOLE to arrange an initial consultation for Chair Pearson and me. Our hope is that this conversation will begin a meaningful process of rebuilding trust, improving communication and collaboration, and creating a stronger foundation for the important work of police oversight.

I want to sincerely thank Chair Pearson for coming to the table and meeting with me and appreciate her willingness to engage in this process.

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