

CITY OF MADISON, WISCONSIN

AN ORDINANCE _____

PRESENTED
REFERRED

September 20, 2016
Ethics Board

Amending Section 3.35(4) and creating Section 3.35(12)(d) of the Madison General Ordinances to restrict complaints before the Ethics Board to allegations of violation of the Ethics Code, and to require that any complaint filed against a managerial employee be forwarded to the Mayor.

Drafted by: Michael May

Date: September 13, 2016

SPONSOR: Mayor Soglin

DRAFTER'S ANALYSIS: Several times within the last five years, persons have filed complaints with the Ethics Board alleging violations of Sec. 3.35(4), MGO, of the Ethics Code. This is a general section reminding persons covered by the Code to follow the law. In these instances, there was no allegation of a conflict, or misuse of property, or personal gain or any other part of the Ethics Code, simply that the official "exceeded their authority" or engaged in a "breach of law." In one case, a claim was brought against Ethics Board members for a "breach of law" by allegedly ruling incorrectly on an Ethics complaint.

Until recently, the Ethics Board (and the CCOC in the case of the complaint against the Ethics Board) ruled such allegations were outside their jurisdiction, on the grounds that it would make any legal error (say, a parking ticket) the basis for an Ethics Board complaint. Recently, the Ethics Board failed to reject jurisdiction in a case that was in a similar setting; one member of the Ethics Board suggested this section be clarified. This ordinance change codifies the prior Ethics Board ruling that there must an allegation of a violation of some section other than Sec. 3.35(4) to give the Ethics Board jurisdiction.

Second, at the request of the Mayor, the Code is amended to be certain the Mayor is notified by receipt of a copy of any ethics complaint filed against a city managerial employee. This allows the Mayor to determine if discipline is appropriate, outside of the Ethics Code process.

The Common Council of the City of Madison do hereby ordain as follows:

1. Subsection (4) entitled "Responsibility of Public Office" of Section 3.35 entitled "Code of Ethics" of the Madison General Ordinances is amended to read as follows:

"(4) Responsibility of Public Office. Incumbents are agents of public purpose and hold office for the benefit of the public. They are bound to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this State and to carry out impartially the laws of the nation, state, and municipality. They are bound to discharge faithfully the duties of their office regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that the public interest must be their primary concern. Incumbents shall adhere to the rules of work and performance established as the standard for their positions by the appropriate authority. They shall not exceed their authority or breach the law or ask others to do so, and shall work in full cooperation with others unless prohibited from so doing by law or by officially recognized confidentiality of their work. Any complaint alleging a violation of this sub. (4) without also alleging a violation of some other

Approved as to form:

provision of the Ethics Code is not within the jurisdiction of the Ethics Board. Upon receipt of such a complaint, the City Attorney will forward it (a) to the Mayor, in the case of City managerial employees or members of boards, commissions or committees, or (b) to the supervisor of the City employee, in the case of other City employees.

2. Subdivision (d) of Subsection (12) entitled "Complaints" of Section 3.35 entitled "Code of Ethics" of the Madison General Ordinances is created to read as follows:

"(d) If a complaint is filed against a managerial employee (Comp Group 21), a copy of the complaint shall also be forwarded to the Mayor."