

Board, Committee and Commission Administrative Services Proposal

This is a pared down proposal from the Office of Resident Engagement and Neighborhood Services (ORENS) which sought to integrate administrative support for BCCs into a centralized office that would have functioned to develop the capacity of people in neighborhoods that aren't well represented in BCCs to have a stronger voice in City policy making structures. As the result of feedback from City staff and after several Subcommittee discussions of the ORENS proposal, we decided that focusing on shoring up BCC support is a necessary first step toward successful recruitment of more diverse membership on BCCs.

A recurring theme arising from the work of the Task Force on the Structure of City Government has been the need for better representation on Common Council and on City of Madison boards, commissions and committees from people of color and those living with low incomes. TFOGS has identified many barriers to participation, including:

- Times and places of city meetings [L][SEP]
- Requirements for in-person participation [L][SEP]
- Lack of child care and adequate transportation [L][SEP]
- Uneven quality of training and support for members [L][SEP]
- Uneven level of staff support and resources amongst boards, commissions [L][SEP] and committees [L][SEP]
- Unclear purpose of some boards, commissions and committees [L][SEP]
- Unclear expectations of board, commission and committee members [L][SEP]
- Difficulty in understanding and using Legistar [L][SEP]
- General lack of civic education/knowledge about city government [L][SEP]
- Heavy workload of Alders [L][SEP]
- Historical housing patterns and current landlord practices that result in high [L][SEP] mobility of people earning low incomes, many of whom are people of color and women raising their children without a partner [L][SEP]

Additionally, in considering the current work-load of Alders, TFOGS subcommittees have noted that the time and work commitments for membership on boards, commissions and committees are significant, leading to questions about compensation levels and whether or not the position should be considered a full time job. TFOGS subcommittees also heard that city staff members are overburdened with the work of supporting boards, commissions and committees and public engagement, pulling them away from other work commitments.

Since many of the barriers to participation on BCCs have to do with the internal functioning of BCCs themselves, the TFOGS BCC Subcommittee recommends that immediate efforts be made to standardize and support BCC operations in order to increase BCC accountability and streamline administrative processes. We believe that the success of these efforts will make it easier to recruit a demographically and geographically broad range of participants to serve on BCCs.

To this end, we recommend the creation of a BCC Administrative Services Team consisting of staff from the offices of the Common Council, Mayor and City Clerk (possibly also HR Org Development and IT?) who are already involved with BCC support, with the addition of a new staff member to be hired and housed in the (Clerk's or Council) Office. The new staff member's responsibilities would include coordinating the work of the BCC Administrative Services Team, as well as developing and administering a process for the annual review of all BCCs.

BCC Administrative Services Team functions would include:

- Administrative support for boards, commissions and committees
- Developing standardized trainings for staff, Alders, and board, commission and committee members in [L]egistar, [L]meeting facilitation, Roberts Rules of Order and the formatting and posting of agendas and minutes
- Organizing orientation and training of board, commission and committee chairs and members
- Engaging and advocating for new ways for residents to participate in decision [L]making and ensure that prompt and direct feedback is given on issues about which people have expressed interest
- Liaising with DCR to organize for language access services, when required for BCC meetings
- Organizing childcare and transportation, when required for BCC meetings
- Providing technical support for remote participation in BCC meetings
- Recruiting and communicating with potential board, commission and committee members [L] [SEP]