



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF DANE COUNTY, INC.

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Statement to Common Council, August 6, 2019

Good Day. Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Mary Anglim. I am a member of the Board of the League of Women Voters of Dane County. I will be reading from a letter approved by the Executive Committee of the Dane County League and emailed to the Mayor Rhodes-Conway and all Alders on July 29, 2019.

The League of Women Voters of Dane County has been observing the meetings of the Police Policy and Procedure Review Ad Hoc Committee for more than three years, and we very much appreciate the support the Council has given to the work of this committee.

The League supports law enforcement policy that is locally developed by cooperative efforts of citizens and law enforcement and believes that government should ensure citizen participation in decision-making. The particular structure of governance of Wisconsin police agencies makes achieving these goals somewhat challenging.

In order to prevent turnover of police and fire department staffing due to patronage changes whenever a new mayor was elected, in the late 19th century the Wisconsin legislature directed cities to establish Police and Fire Commissions. The PFC has the sole authority to hire and fire the chiefs, supervises the hiring process, and imposes any discipline. However the PFC does not have supervision of the operation or policies of the police department.

A number of incidents have raised questions about MPD policies and procedures:

- The shooting death of Paul Heenan in 2012, which resulted in a \$2.3 million settlement
- The shooting death of Ashley DiPiazza in 2014, which resulted in a \$4.25 million settlement
- The shooting death of Tony Robinson in 2015, which resulted in a \$3.35 million settlement
- The shooting death of Michael Schumacher, whose mental illness was known to the department, in 2016
- The violent arrest of Genele Laird at East Towne Mall in 2016
- The 2019 punching of a student who was detained due to a mental health crisis

To deal with the concerns raised by incidents like these, the Council established the Ad Hoc Committee, which has been meeting for more than 3 years, and funded a consultant study costing nearly \$400,000. Also, the Council appointed alders to the President's Work Group on Police and Community Relations in the fall of 2016, which met through the spring of 2017.

As a result of the intensive, well-staffed, and thoughtful deliberations of the President's Work Group, the Council did issue lawful orders to the Police Department requiring certain policy changes. Some issues from the Work Group were referred to the Ad Hoc Committee for further consideration.

The League applauds the city for its willingness to establish these very important temporary committees, but it is clear that an ongoing structure is needed to ensure that our police policies and procedures are consistent with our community's values. Such a structure should have the responsibility and the resources to review, investigate, and make recommendations regarding critical incidents, MPD policies and their application, and resident complaints.

OIR, the consultant on this project, with extensive national experience, has recommended an Independent Monitor together with a Civilian Oversight Board. The Ad Hoc Committee discussed this recommendation at length, and has concurred, with specific recommendations concerning implementation.

The League understands that the Mayor and Council may wish to make adjustments to some details, but we strongly encourage the Council and Mayor to adopt the substance of the recommendations. We understand that there are costs involved, but there are costs involved with continuing as we have in the past.

Madison's insurance company will no doubt consider our settlement history in determining our premiums. Our underrepresented communities and advocacy groups will be looking to see whether Madison is serious about living up to our commitment to policing that appropriately deals with people of color and those experiencing mental health and drug crises. And all our residents need to have confidence that when they call the police for help, our police will respond in the professional, restrained, and helpful manner that the police and our community both want.

We also encourage the Council and Mayor to approve the application for the Quattrone Center to work with the city to develop a root-cause analysis process. This is a time-sensitive recommendation, and accepting this technical assistance will further our goals.

To summarize, the League of Women Voters supports the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to establish an ongoing structure to ensure that our police policies and procedures are consistent with our community's values by funding an Independent Monitor and a Civilian Oversight Board and to work on root-cause analysis with the Quattrone Center.