



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF DANE COUNTY

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The League of Women Voters of Dane County urges the Equal Opportunities Commission to support creation and funding of the Office of the Independent Police Monitor and the Police Civilian Oversight Board, addressed in items 5, 6, 7 & 8 on your agenda for Thursday, August 13, 2020.

A number of incidents in recent years 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, made up of a diverse group of community members. To advise the Ad Hoc Committee, which studied Madison's police policies and procedures for four years, the city funded a consultant study costing nearly \$400,000. OIR, the consultant on this project, with extensive national experience, recommended an Independent Monitor together with a Civilian Oversight Board. The central recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee were establishment of the Civilian Oversight Board and the Independent Monitor.

It is clear that an ongoing structure is needed to ensure that our police policies and procedures are consistent with our community's values. We understand that there are costs involved, but there are costs involved with continuing as we have in the past.

Madison's insurance company considers our settlement history in determining our premiums and deductibles. Our underrepresented communities and advocacy groups are questioning whether Madison is serious about 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.

On June 16, 2020, the City Council approved formation of an Alder Workgroup to finalize proposed ordinances governing the Independent Police Monitor and the Civilian Oversight Board, based on the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee. League members observed the meetings of the Alder Workgroup from late June through August 4. With the able assistance of city staff from multiple departments, the group finalized

- proposed ordinances (item # 15 on your agenda),
- developed a proposed budget for the Monitor and Board (item # 7)
- wrote a position description for the Independent Monitor (items # 7 & 16), and
- developed a method for selecting members of the Civilian Oversight Board (item # 10).

Their meetings were open for public comment and well documented to allow public review throughout the process. The League thanks the Alder Workgroup for its excellent and timely work.

To summarize, the League of Women Voters supports the Ad Hoc Committee's and Alder Workgroup's recommendation 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.