



Date: Dec. 14, 2020\_\_\_\_\_

# CITY OF MADISON

## Registration Statement - Police and Fire Commission COMMITTEE

Please Print

Agenda No. 14 and 15\_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE PRINT NAME CLEARLY

Name Steven Verburg  
Address 1614 Wendy  
Madison Wi

**Please check one:**

**AND**

**Please check one:**

- Support
- Oppose
- Neither Support Nor Oppose

- Wish to Speak
- Do not wish to speak
- Available to Answer Questions

At this meeting are you representing an organization or a person other than yourself:  Yes  No  
(If you answered "no," **STOP**; you need not complete the rest of this form. If you answered "yes," provide the name of who you represent and go on to the next question.)

Name, address and telephone number of each person or organization you are representing:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you being paid for your representation?  Yes  No

Are you appearing as part of your other paid duties for this person or organization?  Yes  No  
(If you answered "no," **STOP**; you need not complete the rest of this form. If you answered "yes," go on to the next question.)

Speaking Limits: Public Hearing (Common Council) ..... 5 minutes  
Information Hearing..... 3 minutes  
Other Items..... 3 minutes

**(SEE BACK)**

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Are you an elected official or employee who is appearing solely on behalf of your office or for your municipality or other governmental body?  Yes  No

*(If you answered "yes" to the question, **STOP**. You need not complete the rest of this form, except that you must sign this form. If you answered "no" to the question, go on to the next question.)*

If you are being paid for your representation, or if your appearance is part of other paid duties, please be advised that:

1. Before you engage in lobbying as a lobbyist, you or your principal must file an authorization with the City Clerk.
2. Your principal is not permitted to authorize you to lobby unless you are registered with the City Clerk.
3. Your principal must file expense statements with the City Clerk for the remainder of the calendar year regardless of the amount spent on lobbying.

*(Please go to the City Clerk's website [www.cityofmadison.com/clerk/index.html](http://www.cityofmadison.com/clerk/index.html) or go to the Clerk's Office at Room 103 of the City-County Building, Madison, for more information.)*

Date Dec. 14, 2020

Signature *Steven Verburg*

Print Name Steven Verburg

**From:** [Steve Verburg](#)  
**To:** [Police Chief Search](#); [jrousseau@strangpatteson.com](mailto:jrousseau@strangpatteson.com)  
**Subject:** Urge selection of Ramon Batista  
**Date:** Monday, December 14, 2020 11:20:48 AM

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Members of the Madison Police and Fire Commission:

I'm writing to urge you to select Ramon Batista as Madison police chief.

But first, let me ask that you make your selection after the finalists have been interviewed by members of the public. This kind of public engagement will help our next police chief start off with broad community support.

However, if you make your decision today, I urge you to choose Mr. Batista. The more I review the finalist interview excerpts and other publicly available information, the clearer it has become that Mr. Batista represents an outstanding opportunity for Madison to address a glaring shortcoming that has been tolerated far too long.

I'm referring, of course, to Madison's sad status as one of the worst places in the country for racial equity in law enforcement. Politicians have been saying for decades that they would remedy this. Instead, it has gotten worse.

Vocal members of Madison's white majority have told you we should continue to ignore the damage we do to Black lives every year by arresting and prosecuting Black men, women and children far out of proportion to their numbers in the population. This vocal group, encouraged by police department and right-wing commentators, insists that Madison is burning, that it is a crime-ridden hellscape that can only be cleaned up by a police department with a zero-tolerance policy for residents of the city. But more arrests and incarcerations won't make us safer. Cynical manipulation of people's fear, prejudice, and insecurity has gotten us where we are today -- with an overreliance on police to solve every problem under the sun. It doesn't make us safer. It inflicts needless trauma on people's lives and perpetuates racial disparities.

We are on the cusp of doing something better by reallocating resources to build appropriate medical alternatives for people with addiction and mental health problems.

With the right police chief would also take steps to identify and address other kinds of overpolicing.

The 2017 OIR Group report was a comprehensive review of the Madison Police Department. The report found existing oversight of the Madison Police Department to be ineffective. Police officers are not being held accountable when they abuse their authority. The OIR Group identified one of the major reasons for this: The department settles complaints about officers internally, avoiding publicity about misconduct and abuses of authority. How does it do this? The police chief approves either no discipline or discipline that is so light that officers never appeal to the public forum provided by law, the PFC.

“The fact that no internal cases in at least six years have been brought to the PFC for review indicates a significant flaw in the disciplinary system,” the 258-page OIR Group report states.

“In our experience in working with numerous police agencies, *we have yet to encounter one like MPD* (emphasis added) where years have passed and no officer has challenged a disciplinary determination. It would be akin to a criminal justice system in which every defendant pleaded guilty.”

I am a believer in strong labor unions to ensure fair treatment of employees. Unfortunately in law enforcement, for a variety of reasons, we have lost effective checks and balances that allow proper management of the department. Madison Police Department needs a chief who will honor labor contracts but also use the authority granted to management to change department practices. Mr. Batista has demonstrated the courage to do this, and in so doing he has doubtlessly gained experience that will help him be successful if he is hired as chief here in a way that allows him to rally the public to the cause of improving law enforcement services.

We have a chance to get better if we have a police chief who with moral vision, courage, independence, and experience. Mr. Batista appears to have those qualities.

As others have said, Chris Davis would be a very poor choice for Madison for the reasons I discussed in my previous email to you. It's difficult for me to gauge the sincerity and commitment of the other two finalists to the urgent task at hand -- to use this opportunity to make all of us safer and begin to eliminate Madison's embarrassing racial disparities.

Thank you for your hard work and thoughtful attention to this.

Sincerely,

Steve Verburg  
1614 Wendy, Madison, Wisconsin