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To: [Police Civilian Oversight Board](#)
Subject: One-Time Honorarium for the Police Civilian Oversight Board Chair
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Unsure if I'll be able to make the meeting, but will register in support, but also writing this letting to the committee in support of compensating Keetra Burnette for the work she has put in to bring everything to fruition.

This letter is said in the context of serving t five years on the Police Policy Ad-hoc committee, in being in the central mix in moving forward the 177 recommendations in such a way minimizing organized attempts to water them down, in pulling together disparate common council members to find common ground and get the IA and COB off the ground. In making sure the COB would be representative of communities most impacted by police violence and institutional racism. And in imagining ways the COB could be compromised by police, by those with bad intentions, who would engage in bad faith, by bureaucratic forces that default to governing within the status quo.

It is also sent in the context of serving with Keetra over the past 6+ years on the United Way Law Enforcement and Leaders of Color collaboration, in seeing her engage in good faith, set aside her ego, work collectively to find common ground, to manage people such as myself, being in the same room as former Madison Police Chief- and if you know me and the former, you know we do not get along at all. To manage other dynamics of personalities and people who conflict, and to manage the behind-the-scenes politicking some on the committee like to engage with.

In learning about the happenings, an emotion of disappointment washed over me, not only by the city but also it appears board and community members. At no point in my five years on the Police Ad-hoc did the city fail to provide the level of support Keetra was asking, at no point did they hand-tie our chairs from communicating with us- be it through city staff or as chairs themselves. Somehow, over the five years, we were able to keep communication and progress open without violating open meetings laws. We also were able to create small working sub-groups, without breaking open meeting laws. The chairs could communicate with each other. And we could communicate individually with the chairs.

The understaffing of paid staff of the city, should not mean more work is dumped into unpaid committee positions. It cannot mean this work is dumped on a Black woman, working the quite difficult task of police oversight. This is classical systemic and institutional racism. On that alone, a one-time honorarium should be awarded.

We wonder why our committees and boards lack diversity, yet create environments, many times from the city government, that are hostile to those very communities- especially Black women. The board would be prudent to make sure Keetra is compensated and that the city provides needed support, otherwise it will make your task more difficult, otherwise this will continue beyond Keetra to whoever replaces her. Otherwise, this entity will fall before it even gets going. But this takes setting aside ego, cus this really is not about Keetra, but what seems to be a mess of a jam the board is in. If this entity allows the city to fail in its support, the city will continue to do so. This isn't about Keetra, but about making sure there is needed support,

that what is going on is no longer, that you organize yourselves.

This brings me to this last part, which is perhaps the most important and goes past compensation. While this was prompted by the fact Keetra should be compensated, in my understanding, and observations from afar, it seems there is a lack of cohesion, and egos getting in the way. Egos as in the projection of self, of our wants and desires. This is something that we all fall victim to our own ego. When it happens, especially in such a situation, either we reassess, or we let the cycle of chaos keep ongoing.

The chair in Keetra, vice-chair, and the board should take aim, not at Keetra, but at the city and together collectively, and at yourselves individually- take aim to work on developing stronger and better lines of communication. Take aim at evaluating your own role in the difficulties of the board. It can be easy to deflect blame, to let egos and emotions get in the way, to point fingers without reflection. Yes someone may have done something to upset you, but that doesn't mean you can't do something- this is a community group where our actions and behaviors don't happen in isolation but feed off another. It can be easy to let anger, hurt, and aggression get in the way. It can be easy to let things devolve into individual agendas- we can represent the community, but ultimately we speak only for ourselves. We can let personal grievances, and community desires of who should have what, get in the way. Or, in the vain of what Keetra said that she was elected to serve as chair, we could embrace what is, set aside egos, find common ground, understand the common goals, take your (everyone one serving on the board and city staff) take responsibility for the miscommunications, mishaps, etc. To not blame others to see where you could have done better. re-set and reengage as a group. She was elected, we can understand what A (yes A) community wants, without undermining or disrespecting others on this endeavor.

These are all lessons learned over the 5 years on the ad-hoc- what is meant by this? We did not all get along, there were personal and ideological rifts, some times things did devolve, but when they did we stepped back, took a breath, and re-engaged in a compassionate way with one another. Five years of meeting, many times twice a month, of being diligent, compassionate, and understanding of one another- even if there were heated moments we always returned to this. Of choosing to decide to engage in good faith and not backdoor politicking or undermining of others.

To be clear I am discouraging any inside/outside approach to organizing, something well versed in myself, keep doing it. one can do this, while also engaging in good faith, while also being transparent about it, while also not undermining someone because things didn't go your way. While not holding them responsible for people voting a different way. You can feel how you want about Keetra, but attempts to undermine will only lead to disfunction. Now, I don't know who or how undermining has happened, you might even think it hasn't, but what I can say, is if someone perceives something- such as being undermined- then the proper reaction shouldn't be to dismiss it, but to try and understand how such a perception came to be. This can only be done through setting aside ego, setting aside the need to be right, and being compassionate and understanding. And indeed, you may not have intended to or acted to undermine, but your actions may have done just that or perceived to be. again, you can be defensive, or engage in good faith, try to understand, and re-establish the common ground of the common work attempting to be achieved. This can only be done through clear, effective, and steady communication, from all members, and all sides. If you feel communication hasn't been clear going your way, engage not in retaliation, but in working to find ways to communicate better. Set up the infrastructure, with the city, and within yourselves. Set up the

mentality. Set aside the individual for the good of this group- because I think we can all agree, how important this group and y'all are. This is a monumental task that is quite fragile, meaning y'all must be strong, even in disagreement, and personal gripes- there is no team that has no personal gripes, there is no team that everyone is friends, even great teams. But no great team lets those gripes, or points of conflict get in the way of their shared goal.

In fact, someone nominated me for chair, and someone did play a little dirty trick making it so I wasn't elected. Could have caused chaos, could have undermined, but this did not happen. Instead, it was looking at how to have an impact in a different way, and also understood that the role of the chair was something that perhaps might have undermined efforts some of us were attempting to do. It would have dampened my voice because of the administrative duties. What is being said here, is feel how you feel, but engage with each other in a healthy way and you will get a healthy outcome. Even if you feel slighted, even if someone does something that feels dirty, you can put a stop to that cycle anytime you want by not engaging in the cycle, you can break that chain, or you can be another link in it, that is what is within our own agency.

And yes, I am only hearing one perspective here, but it is one I trust, even if there are multiple truths, which there always are, and this is one. And to be clear, the all, and the board, and setting aside ego includes her, it includes everyone. Meaning, I understand innately there are multiple truths and some might be thinking she can improve and respecting the likelihood of some receiving this holding those truths- living in being compassionate is holding that truth within myself and how I engage. And to be even more clear, this is said with an understanding that in groups everyone has a part to play. we are not individuals, we must see ourselves as a group. I point out the all to say we all have a role. Pointing out the all, to suggest group accountability. We must find ways to operate with compassion with one another. And it seems this group isn't. Agendas and egos are getting in the way. If you feel a certain way about Keetra, go ahead, just as I felt a certain way about members I served with, engaging in chaotic ways was not an option, as then I would have been prioritizing my own ego and not our shared goals. How can you make sure this group is as effective as it can be? Being petty is easy, we default to the illusions of our egos, even the best of us.

Personally, I don't care about the politics, any personal gripes, etc. There appear to be serious issues with this group, from how the city engages with it, to how y'all engage with one another. Can you say in reflection of yourself and your role, you're happy with how you've engaged with one another? Do you believe in the shared mission? Have you all even found your shared mission? Are you going to let powerful outside forces break apart a group of people who have worked so hard over the years to bring about change? To fail at community accountability because of internal politics? Maybe the city isn't intentionally behaving in such a manner, but the effect is one of divide and conquer- especially for the powerful lobbies putting pressure on all aspects of our local government to avoid accountability. And I say all of this as someone who knows a good chunk of y'all, who holds a lot of love for y'all, who holds a lot of respect for y'all- I also know a bunch of y'all have big strong personalities and opinions, which is part of why I love y'all. Folks come from different places, lives, and perspectives, this is a strength of y'all, or you could let it be your weakness. But if we believe our diversity is a strength, and a lot of y'all would say yes to that, then live it. Lean into your strengths of lived and learned experiences, of skills, of diversity. Y'all got this, but you gotta get out of your own way, the outside forces are enough don't make it worse for yourselves.

With much love and compassion for y'all, with much hope, y'all find a way through this journey to work cohesively together on this monumental task. Y'all can do this.

Matthew Braunginn