



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF DANE COUNTY

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Statement to the Police Civilian Oversight Board, July 27, 2023

Since 2016, the League of Women Voters of Dane County has followed City of Madison deliberations concerning police oversight. We made numerous statements to the Mayor, City Council, and city committees supporting the establishment of the Police Civilian Oversight Board and Independent Monitor. Once the PCOB was created, we have sent several emails to the PCOB focused on procedures to ensure public involvement in police oversight. Openness and public understanding are the goals for our testimony today.

A very basic principle of public understanding is to make sure that the public has adequate notice of meeting agendas and how to participate in the meetings. Every Friday, the City posts a meeting schedule for the following week. It is critical that the PCOB meeting be listed in that weekly schedule.

It is also critical that an agenda with numbered agenda items be available several days in advance of the meeting, so that members of the public can register their wish to speak on items, or their support or opposition to specific items.

The League strongly supports the City of Madison policy to post in Legistar every document that is used or discussed at a meeting. Providing links to these documents in advance makes it possible for Board members and the public to review the substance prior to the meeting, develop questions that can be raised during the meeting, and determine their position on any policy decisions that are required.

Board members need a link in the agenda to past Board minutes proposed for approval so that they can review the minutes ahead of time to make sure they accurately reflect the decisions that were made. This should include sub-committee minutes with any recommendations of the sub-committees. It would be extremely helpful if the IM report could be linked so that the Board and members of the public could determine if they had any questions about the report.

Members of the public who want to follow the deliberations of a city board would very likely look at the board's website to see what the Board is doing. As of last week, the first item on the website noted that applications for the PCOB are due in September of 2022. We urge the PCOB to post helpful information such as a list of the members along with their nominating organizations and terms. Links to the minutes of recent PCOB meetings would be useful. Also helpful for the public to understand how to participate would be the Special Rules for Board and Board Meetings determined in January 2021.

The League looks forward to working with the IM and PCOB to encourage public understanding of your very critical work.



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