

**Title**

Creating a non-partisan Madison Election Advisory Committee.

**Body**

WHEREAS, voting is the foundation of democracy, and deserves a high priority among services provided by the city;

WHEREAS, as Thomas Paine said, the right of voting for representatives is the primary right by which all other rights are protected;

WHEREAS, involving the citizens of Madison to the fullest extent in election procedures will benefit the City of Madison, the State of Wisconsin, and the nation;

WHEREAS, it is critical to maintain strong public trust concerning election procedures, and maintaining public control over voting is vital to maintaining trust;

WHEREAS, future requirements for election procedures will bring new challenges;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Common Council create a non-partisan Madison Election Advisory Committee of five citizen members, the City Clerk and County Clerk (or their designees) who shall serve as ex-officio non-voting members. Citizen members shall be solicited from various groups interested in election procedures. The members shall be appointed by the Mayor, subject to approval by the Common Council. At the time the appointees are submitted to the Common Council for approval, information shall be included indicating the source of the recommendation, if any. Only eligible electors for Madison shall be considered for membership. Members may not hold or run for an elected office. The members shall be appointed to staggered two-year terms, with two of the initial citizen members appointed to one-year terms.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the tasks for the committee are as follows:

- 1) Evaluate current procedures for conducting elections.
- 2) Make recommendations for improvements in registration, polling places, voting equipment, election official training, ballots, absentee ballots, and tabulating votes.
- 3) Monitor elections for optimal and appropriate accuracy, convenience, fairness, and legality.
- 4) Evaluate and make recommendations on State and Federal law changes as it relates to elections.
- 5) Recommend methods to maintain proper balance between the security of elections, the openness of the process, and the right to a secret ballot.
- 6) Solicit public comments and recommendations.
- 7) Forward an annual report to the Common Council, Mayor, or City Clerk.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that while final authority resides in the officials as specified by state statutes, the Madison Election Advisory Committee shall have an important role in advising those officials, and that the City Clerk and the Committee shall work together to achieve high quality elections.

**Fiscal Note**

No appropriation is required.

Approved June 6, 2006, with this amendment:

“Citizen members shall not hold office or employment with the City of Madison, nor, for one year prior to being appointed to the Committee and while serving on the Committee, shall any member have been a member of a political party, an officer or member of a committee in any political club or organization or a candidate for any elective public office.”